

Dear City of La Crosse:

I am very concerned about the mountain bike trail that is being proposed off of 29th St. south between Bliss road and Ebner Coulee.

My main concerns are:

1. Water and erosion exacerbated
2. Building and maintenance of the trail
3. Use of the trail by abusive riders
4. Access to the trail and parking
5. Loss of animal habitation
6. Dependence on a non-governmental group overseeing the trail
7. Safety and security on the trail and off

There are reasons nothing has been built behind my house. I am concerned that there have been no geological studies of this area. The bluffs around here have unstable rock structure with the very friable sandstone. It wasn't too many years ago that a sizeable boulder struck a house at the next bluff over on Bluffside. The water that comes off the hill during the Spring melt is formidable and has filled our window wells, pushed our garage wall in and pushed out and knocked down retaining walls. Fortunately we haven't had any mudslides like those around Stoddard and Brownsville.

Erosion is a main concern with establishment of this trail. The bikes and hikers will create ruts and root exposure. This will allow the water to get in and erode the soil. As more users come the trail will naturally get wider especially if users are trying to avoid puddles and make by-pass routes around wet areas. La Crosse's rainfall is highest during the Spring to Fall months. This would be the time that the trail would be most used. This combined with an average 43 inches of snowfall annually makes March and April run-off a particular concern. We must not underestimate the power of water and what the freeze-melt cycle can do to exposed earth.

Building of the trail is a concern because if it isn't done correctly it can exacerbate the erosion. Who will do the job right? Maintenance of the trail is an important consideration. Who will maintain the trail and how frequently will it be maintained? Who will pay for the maintenance? Who will oversee that the maintenance is done correctly? Who will insure longevity in this maintenance?

Use of the trail by abusive riders, those that don't pay attention to the rules of the trail, is another concern. Those thrill seeking abuser may decide that they need an extra challenging downhill off the trail, those that dig their rear wheel hard in the trail to make an extra sharp turn, those who don't warn a slower trail user that they're coming from behind – these are easy examples of abuse. From what I've seen from some of the postings, there are some mountain bikers who don't care about other users. These types can develop rerouting or bilateral trails in areas that are tight and create more potential erosion and also cause accidents

Access to the trail and parking near the trail are another concern. Are people expected to ride their bikes to the trail to gain access? This creates a problem because 29th street street is not wide and half of it slants downhill from the middle more than any other street I've seen in La Crosse. Also there is

considerable speeding on our street because people use it as a by-pass of the lights on Losey Blvd. to get from Bliss road to State Road and vice versa. Since the hill is quite steep from the road, bikers will be coming off the trail fast and it will be difficult to stop and look for traffic at the road. Of particular concern are the young and novel users of the trail. Parking around here is on the street. Again the street is very narrow when cars are parked on both sides. Visibility will be reduced as cyclists come off the trail when cars are parked nearby. Another concern is in parking in front of driveways when parking is in high demand.

Currently we see lots of deer and fox, squirrels, opossum, and turkey in and around our backyard. What will happen to their natural habitat as bikers ride through? Will they be driven out or killed trying to leave the area?

It bothers me that there is a non-governmental group that is pushing this. They have not been around that long and the structure of their organization is in question. If they are responsible for building or maintenance, what expertise do they have? How long will they be here? Is this just a fad that for the moment is their focus until another challenge whets their palate? Who do you go to when they are the problem. Their web-site says they are dependent on volunteers to do maintenance. They say they have certified trail builders – what does that mean? There is nothing on their website that tells about their organizational structure – who’s president, secretary, treasurer? – when do these change - is there membership voting? How are they funded? If they already have 50 miles of trails and maintain these, how stretched will their volunteers be to maintain even more? Will the city guarantee continued maintenance should ORA dissolve? Who pays for materials for maintenance and trail building?

Above I expressed my concern about safety coming off the trail onto the road. Will there be police surveillance to protect users of the trail since parts will be remote? Who will be responsible for the biker who falls and breaks something? Will there be signage regarding when the trail is open? Will there be liability insurance by the city in case of injury or worse? Will there be a fence to separate the trail from homeowners similar to what is along Pammel Creek?

On the internet is a good research paper from East Tennessee State University regarding a mountain bike trail running through their campus. I would encourage you to read it.

<https://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3304&=&context=etd&=&sei-redirect=1&referer=https%253A%252F%252Fwww.bing.com%252Fsearch%253Fq%253DMountain%252520bike%252520erosion%252520East%252520Tennessee%2526qs%253Dn%2526form%253DQBRE%2526sp%253D-1%2526pq%253Dmountain%252520bike%252520erosion%252520east%252520tennessee%2526sc%253D0-35%2526sk%253D%2526cvid%253D1540C73CFAA7473EBEA995712F0E35D1#search=%22Mountain%20bike%20erosion%20East%20Tennessee%22>

There are also a number of other articles regarding abuse of the trails and erosion on the internet.

Below I've copied some pictures regarding mountain bike produced erosion that are on google:





If the city and the ORA are so sure that there is no negative impact regarding this proposed trail, I would like to see the city and ORA pledge that they will pay for any damage to our property from erosion and anything else related to this trail. I would also like for the city and ORA to guarantee they will pay our asking price for our home should we decide to sell and cannot get our asking price due to this trail.

Sincerely,

William Haviland

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