

Dear Park Board member,

I am writing because I am a community advocate of the outdoors- where everyone and anyone is able to enjoy our trail system. One of the aspects that I LOVE about riding my bike in La Crosse is that you can see some pretty amazing views. Our trail crews have done an amazing job of maintaining trails that were built over the past couple of years- they are SO quick to get out in the morning to remove a tree that has fallen or fix other issues that anyone from the community reports. That is NOT seen in other communities that have shared use trails. Many times a trail is built and over the seasons there is major overgrowth on their trail systems. We are so lucky to have created a healthy trail crew. But the trail crew was NOT built overnight- volunteers do not just happen- it takes community- it takes initiative and endurance for the organizers to rally the troops.

The reason I lead with the gazabillion hours that our volunteers have done and the amazing trail systems they have maintained is because adding more trails to our city will take even more volunteers and organizing for this to be done year after year. I have worked with kids and youth from all abilities for the past 12 years and one thing I know is that they are SO good with buying into volunteering if they are a part of the journey. We are at a point with our environment that we need to do SO much more to protect and maintain what we have. Although I agree with the opposition that the Birch trail is private- off the beaten path- quiet. It doesn't have longevity. It is the spirit of the youth and the way youth experience and feel that they are connected to a place that will ultimately drive them to remember- to protect- to maintain their sacred places.

Getting kids on bikes outside experiencing jaw dropping views is worth it. The Birch trail creates an incredible green trail that is friendly for beginner riders. But I'm also not just talking about kids- I am talking about making more of our trail systems accessible for all users. How neat would it be for adult beginners to have a trail like Birch trail? Having a trail like the Birch trail being shared would open it up for an adaptive mountain bike rider (aMTB). They would be able to ride out on this trail- a green trail- that is doable. We need more accessible trails for adaptive riders and we need more trails that are friendly for kids. If we get more buy-in from our youth and more vital parts of our community- we create more community members who are getting outside, doing the trail work, learning about the land and fighting to protect the little we have left.

I am an Adventure Team Coach/Volunteer.

I am a mother of two small children.

I am a trail volunteer.

Sadie Kuhl