

Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona
P.O. Box 4486
Chino Valley, AZ 86323
WWW.BCHCAZ.ORG



Alan Quan & Reta Laford
Forest Supervisor and Acting Forest Supervisor
Prescott National Forest
344 S. Cortez St.
Prescott, AZ 86303-4398

Dear Alan and Reta,

Please find enclosed a resolution regarding mountain bikes on Prescott National Forest non-motorized trails, which was unanimously approved by Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona and the Prescott Saddle Club.

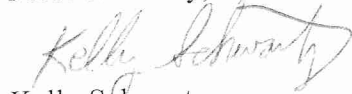
With the growing popularity of mountain biking and local interest in promoting tourism directed towards mountain biking, our concerns over the safety risks their speeds pose to other non-motorized trail users has prompted this action. In urban settings, bikes share the roadway with cars and motorcycles subject to the same speed limits and traffic laws. They do not use the sidewalks with pedestrians. It seems a reckless contradiction to have them on the same trails in the National Forest as pedestrians, horses and dogs, with no speed limits and no enforcement. Bike speeds more closely approximate those of motor vehicles rather than pedestrians and horses. The underlying assumption in trail sharing is that rustic trail characteristics result in slower bike speeds. The unexpected consequences are that these very characteristics present a more exciting and thrilling challenge, much to the dismay and sometimes, terror, of other trail users.

Since 80% of PNF users are non-motorized and there are more miles of motorized trails than non-motorized, it seems a logical solution to have bikes and mountain bikes shift to using the motorized trails. The absence of a motor aside, bikes are high tech speed machines and are more accurately viewed as off highway vehicles. A more logical trail classification would be "Mechanized" trails and "Non Mechanized" trails as opposed to the present classification of "Motorized" and "Non-Motorized."

The overall economic impact of the equine pleasure horse industry in Yavapai County is in excess of \$389 million dollars annually and pays taxes of \$7.1 million dollars annually, excluding property taxes. Over 96.4% of horse owners prefer trail riding, for which trails are required. At the State level the pleasure horse industry has an economic impact of \$820-\$900 million dollars. Nationally, there are 3.9 million horses with a total overall impact of \$32 billion. It can be assumed pleasure horses are predominately trail horses. With private and state land becoming more and more unavailable for riding due to development, the PNF trails are increasing critical to support this local industry. Conversely, every municipality in the state can't seem to spend enough money fast enough, building bike paths and lanes. Suddenly, it seems

there is an exponential increase in bikes trails, everywhere, and a corresponding decrease in safe, bike free trails for the rest of us. It's a very concerning situation for those of us who, with or without horses, cannot recreate in an urban setting.

Most Sincerely,



Kelly Schwartz
President
Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona



Deb Stephens
President
Prescott Saddle Club

cc: Corbin Newman, Regional Forest Supervisor
Senator Kyl
Senator McCain
Congresswoman Kirkpatrick
Laura Jo West, Bradshaw Ranger District
Bruce Fahrni, Recreation Team Leader, Prescott National Forest
Jason Williams, Trails, Wilderness, Dispersed Recreation Manager
Linda Jackson, Chino Valley Ranger District
Prescott City Council
Yavapai County Board of Supervisors
Jan Hancock, AZ Horse Council
Jim Buchanan, President, Back Country Horsemen of Arizona
Spike Hicks, Chair, Yavapai Trails Committee

Mountain Bike Blog Postings

General

- “i've hit 63mph or 105kph on my mountain bike in the hills. and no i'm not talking ****, about a 16% gradient for a little over a kilometre. i never been down it on my road bike 'cos it doesn't have nice disc brakes. Pedalling, they're geared well to go about 50kph then you start to spin a bit too much. you can hit 60 if you sprint it with a nice tail wind”

Granite Mountain (*Dogs are required to be on leash on Granite Basin Trails.*

Hikers and horses travel under 5 MPH)

“There is a *great* loop out by Granite Mountain. It feels flat on the way out and downhill all the way back. Magic if you ask me. There are some technical sections on the way out but most riders could clean them and they are few and far between. This trail is all about smooth speed. This trail would be fun for anyone, beginner to expert. At the halfway point you hit the Granite Basin Lake and get a nice view of the cliffs on Granite Mountain. The way back is steady downhill with some great turns and jumps. You can average 20 mph almost the whole way down. The trail is hard packed with the occasional patch of sand or loose stuff. You are in the pines almost the whole time with the occasional wash/stream crossing. This is one of my favorite loops. Watch out for horses because they also use this trail. Total loop is around 9 miles.”

“Time to start down on Willow trail #347. YaaaaHoooo! What a roller coaster. This section of trail is just plain fun. There are rolling twisting turns and some jumps for getting some air. This makes the climb worth it. Cranking in and out of the Ponderosa Pines and the Cedars and Alligator Junipers and the Oaks and Manzanitas. Spots of snow and ice in the shadows add a fun dimension to the ride. Hit 20 mph here. All too soon this part is over at about 1 1/3 miles of downhill. Trail junction. #347 heads on north and down 2 ¼ miles to another trail or go left here on 348 connector back towards the main trail. I take the left and do the gentle climb for ½ mile to a junction with 352. I don't ride 352 much as it has a lot of loose stuff and sharp switchbacks but connects with the Mint Wash Trail. Today I take it as I just don't feel ready to pack it in. Just want to stretch the ride. Crank along on this guy and am hitting some loose stuff”

RESOLUTION
MOUNTAIN BICYCLES ON THE PRESCOTT
NATIONAL FOREST NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

WHEREAS the Prescott National Forest non-motorized trails were not designed, engineered or built to be safe at speeds attainable by mountain bikes; and

WHEREAS Prescott National Forest non-motorized trails are also used for hiking, dog walking and horseback riding; and

WHEREAS the aforementioned activities of hiking, dog walking and horseback riding represent traditional, slow paced, and passive trail uses; and

WHEREAS Prescott National Forest non-motorized trails are generally steep, rocky, and have blind corners, drop offs and loose rocks; and

WHEREAS Prevailing mountain bikes speeds more closely approximate those of Off Highway Vehicles than hikers and horses; and

WHEREAS Prescott National Forest does not have or enforce speed limits on trails; and

WHEREAS speeding bikes are a safety risk to other trail users that is well documented elsewhere around the country; and

WHEREAS banning horseback riding on non-motorized trails will not mitigate the safety risks posed by speeding bikes to other non-motorized trail users, hikers and dog walkers; and

WHEREAS failure to regulate speed on non-motorized trails constitutes a “de facto,” trail restriction or closure to hikers, dog walkers and horseback riders who avoid unsafe trails; therefore,

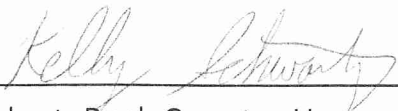
BE IT RESOLVED THAT Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona and the Prescott Saddle Club strongly condemn any effort to restrict or ban horseback riding on non-motorized trails; and

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona and the Prescott Saddle Club strongly condemn “de facto” trail restriction or closures resulting from a failure to regulate and enforce speed limits on trails; and

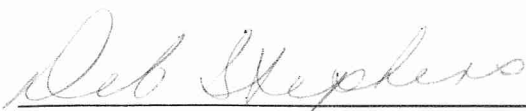
BE IT RESOLVED THAT Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona and the Prescott Saddle Club support greater use of multi-use, motorized and forest service roads by bicycles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT should the Prescott National Forest be unwilling or unable to enforce a speed limit on non-motorized trails, said trails are to be closed to all mountain bikes.

Dated this 11 day of March 2010.



President, Back Country Horsemen of Central Arizona



President, Prescott Saddle Club