Bushwalking & MTB Trails

Principles for Co-operation

Bill Gehling

Bushwalking Australia
Bushwalking Australia Inc

- Peak body for Bushwalking in Australia
- Members are state bushwalking federations
- Formed around 2001-03
- State federations and clubs go back to 1920’s
- Activities include canoeing, MTB riding, skiing
- Search and rescue service (NSW, Vic, Tas, Qld)
- Best known for insurance co-op
Other things about us

• “Broad church”, catering for broad range of ages and abilities within club network
• Trying to define the term “bushwalking”
  – also known as hiking, tramping and rambling
  – recreational walking
  – green walking
  – on-track (=trail), off-track, through-walking, day-walking
Facts about bushwalking

• Several hundred clubs
• 20,000+ members
• 200,000+ regular bushwalkers
• 2,000,000+ occasional bushwalkers
• No special skill required for beginners in easy terrain
  – MTB riders need more skill on a given terrain
  – Conflict with MTB’s occurs on easy terrain
Bushwalker concerns re MTB’s

• Speed & safety
• Environmental damage
• Older Bushwalkers/Younger riders
Speed & Safety

• Sightlines
• Downhill MTB riders
• Hearing impaired
Environmental

• Erosion
  – Water is the main agent (not tyres or boots)
• Trail Braiding
  – Ponding, mud, side-stepping (same for both)
• Off-track walking and low use trails
  – Isolated footfalls (vs tyre track groove)
  – Stepping over and between vegetation
  – Similar impact as native animals
Three Principles

• Case-by-case
  – No blanket prohibition
  – Or open slather

• Physical design and Control
  – Don’t rely on regulation
  – Bikes will be used where they physically can be

• Downhill MTB as a special case
Strategies

- Make trails “technical”
- Choose location (cross-slope)
- Construction (keep it simple)
- Sightlines (avoid fast bends)
- Width (prefer single-track)
- Evolution (don’t let tracks form in the wrong places)
- Manage spectators (avoid sensitive natural areas)
Ongoing Issues

• Conflict with bikes on Class 1 & 2 trails
  – Wheelchair accessible = bike accessible
  – Fast cycling speeds possible
  – Smooth surface
  – Quiet approach

• Downhill MTB tracks
  – Not shareable
  – Rules apply (eg one way only, specific times)
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  – City of Burnside (SA)

Linking Adelaide with Nature
  – Dept for Environ. and Natural Resources SA