



May 4, 2016

To: Monterey County Parks Commission

From: Jeff Lindenthal

Dear Commissioners:

I currently serve as the Head Coach of the Salinas High School Cowboy mountain bike team. I have been involved with the team for 7 years and during that time the team has grown from 12 students participating to the 43 boy and girl student athletes we have on the team this year. We feel fortunate to live in an area that affords such great mountain biking in both the Toro Regional Park and Ft Ord areas.

While competition in the NorCal High School League is a big focus of our team it is by no means our exclusive focus. One of the central themes we work on all season long is trail etiquette. Our League even provides training (which all 3 Cowboy coaches have taken) on how to interact with equestrian trail users and hikers. We practice three times a week on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and Saturday mornings. We emphasize to our student athletes all season long how important it is to share the trails and how to respectfully interact with other trail users such as slowing speed or stopping, greeting them, and in the case of equestrian encounters stopping until the rider gives us approval to pass.

This season we have had several positive comments from the community on their interaction with our team out on the trails. We take great pride in that and share all the feedback we receive, positive and negative, with the team. We are also active in trail building and each of the last two seasons we have donated time to MORCA to help maintain local trails.

We are really pleased to see the recommendation of the Toro Park Trails Working Group to improve the process for volunteer work crews to perform trail maintenance. All our students have community service requirements they need to perform and I know our team could donate hundreds of hours of labor each season to helping maintain the trails we love to ride.

Our student athletes learn valuable life lessons through their experience with the Cowboy mountain bike program. We see tremendous gains in self-confidence, self-esteem, and fitness over the course of a season of mountain biking. We have 20 adult volunteers, all certified by the League and by the High School, helping with our team and reinforcing the skills we teach and trail etiquette we preach.

In closing, I would like to suggest that you convene a special meeting or focus group to allow students from the local mountain bike teams to share their experience with you and describe first-hand the enjoyment they get out of riding trails in Ft Ord and Toro Regional Park, and the trail etiquette they try to abide by. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Lindenthal", written in a cursive style.

Jeff Lindenthal
Head Coach, Salinas High School Mountain Bike Team
13562 Paseo Terrano, Salinas, CA 93908