Community Trails Update Scott Bender , November 14, 2013

The Issue:

The community has experienced a dramatic increase in mountain bike usage on the community mixed-use trails. Recently, there have been a few near misses involving these bikes and community residents who were walking the trails. As one result, a number of community members have inquired about either trying to ban bikes from the trails altogether, or implementing procedures to ensure both biker and hiker safety. After assessing any potential biker ban, it has become evident that Muir Beach as a community does not have the enforcement resources to close the trails to bikes only. Lessons learned from NPS, State Parks and the Marin Municipal Water District are that enforcing bike bans becomes an exceedingly difficult and expensive proposition.

The Plan:

After lengthy formal and ad hoc discussions within the community, including the last two CSD board meetings on August 28th and November 13th, the CSD board’s decision was to attempt to manage the situation as best as possible within the limitations of our resources. The elements of this include:

* Segregating bike and pedestrian traffic where possible, especially on the “upper” trail leg where we have seen the highest biker speeds
* Where biker trail segregation is not possible, managing speed by introducing trail features that force bikers to slow down
* Attempting to prevent bikes from using a number of the community trails, including the community center path itself, and the very steep trail section directly across from the community center

Progress to date:

Over the weekend of November 9-10, a great group of community members and friends worked on the first phase of the upper trail improvements. They cut a new bike trail – to separate bike traffic from pedestrian use – from the Starbuck private drive staircase down to Seacape, introduced features to force the bikes onto that trail, and installed appropriate signage. We would like to publicly thank the Bowyer family (Bret, Ian and Bob), Aran and Jackson Moore, Brad Eigsti, Chas Kingsbury, and the Bender family (including Christian, Suzanne, and Adrianna) for spending a significant amount of weekend time working to create this new trail.

In addition, we placed “No Bicycles” signage at the top of the Community Center ramp in an effort to eliminate this totally inappropriate usage by bike riders.

Next Steps:

Over the next few weeks, we will complete the upper trail changes to install features that slow the bikes down, including signs designed to warn them to control their speed. We will assess other problematic trail segments in the community to determine how to prevent or at least manage bike traffic on those trail segments, and then make whatever changes make most sense. We are confident that there will be follow-on activities as well, to be determined by observation of mitigation activities to date.