

**Introduction and Understanding:**

**How familiar are you with Access4Bikes' mission and initiatives to maintain and expand mountain bike trail access in Marin County?**

I was born and raised in Marin and belong to what you might call the first generation of true mountain bikers – not pioneers like Gary Fisher and the old Repack crew, but the first kids who grew up on what they started. For us a mud-crusted bike with thick, knobby tires and gears was not a novelty, it was normal. I have spent 40 years riding the trails and fire-roads of the Mt. Tam watershed. And while I have not been an active lobbyist for access, I support your organization's goals and have sought through my years of public service to find a fair balance for all: a balance among hikers, horse-riders and mountain bikers; a balance between use and conservation; a balance between preservation and appropriate infrastructure.

**What are your general thoughts on outdoor recreational activities like mountain biking? Do you support mountain biking as a way to promote community engagement and a healthy lifestyle?**

I've coached baseball at the Little League and High School levels for years. The sport is a great setting for youth development and building community. But specialized sports such as baseball or skiing take an amazing amount of skill and cost to participate - factors that quickly close off participation.

Mountain biking is different. It's how I experience the amazing topographic and natural landscapes of our shared backyard. And that experience is open to almost anyone. As I noted above, I've ridden for 40 years and hope I have at least another 20. That's a long arc for community building and youth development that few activities can match. It nurtures comradery, technical learning, outdoor adventure, conservation, ecology education, and respect.

**Support for Inclusive Access:**

**Access4Bikes is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, aiming to make trails accessible to all. How do you plan to ensure that your policies and decisions align with this commitment?**

Access and use on Marin Country trails are questions of balance. The popularity of mountain biking and the evolution of design and technology require a continuous conversation about shared use, safety and ecological protection. E-bikes add new considerations. I ride, but I've also worked on park and environmental issues in local government. Equitable access to our open spaces requires fairly weighing and representing the interests of all of us - bikers, hikers, and horse riders. That's how I will approach this question as and when it comes before the Board of Supervisors. Everyone deserves to experience our natural environment in the way that

brings them the most peace and pleasure. The right balance rests on respect and open-mindedness.

**Are you open to supporting initiatives that promote inclusivity and diverse representation in outdoor recreational activities, including mountain biking**

YES, OF COURSE. See above answer as to why this is so important in community building. All adventures that bring people together should be promoted and celebrated.

**Collaboration with Stakeholders:**

**Access4Bikes emphasizes collaboration with different trail user groups to share the trails. How would you facilitate constructive dialogue and cooperation among various stakeholders to achieve this goal? As an elected official, would you work with us to bring trail user interests that are in conflict together to find ways to equitably share the trails amongst all users?**

I will work with every interest group with equal devotion. We reach common ground and balanced solutions through dialogue. For me, dialogue is about inclusivity and listening. The past 40 years have taught us that this issue requires continuous renewal. We won't settle it once and be done. But all users share a common love for Marin's open spaces. That is the strong shared basis for working through access issues as they arise.

**Are you willing to actively participate in community events, such as trail work days and group rides, to better understand the needs of mountain bikers and ensure their interests are considered?**

As an Eagle Scout and community leader I have spent the majority of my life donating my time to my community. I recently helped calm and teach a property owner who wished to deny access to the MarinDuro event in Fairfax. I was able to use my community reputation to gain access to explain to this resident WHY the event was so important and to tell her I would personally be responsible to both communicate and watch out for her concerns and property. It is these relationships that I have spent a lifetime nurturing in order to make progress for all and creating clear communication and intentions to bond the community. To better understand the needs of mountain bikers you need to be a mountain biker. I grew up riding most of these trails as a young man, both before and after school, whether they were open to mountain bikes or not. I now understand the need for responsible ridership and the importance of protecting the fragile ecosystem and its inhabitants.

**Sustainability and Trail Maintenance:**

**Maintaining and expanding mountain bike trail access is a key focus of our organization. How do you propose to allocate resources and work with volunteers to ensure the sustainability and proper upkeep of our public trail system?**

For public trail access for mountain bikers, stewardship of the trails and publicity of such environment protections are CRUCIAL. Hikers and horses rarely participate in trail maintenance (to my knowledge) at the same level I have seen done by the mountain biking community. If the A4B community shows and advocates for mountain bikers to respect the natural environment and helping to police their own, it will go a long way to help prove that the increased access to the trails makes for a healthier environment. By closing access to sensitive areas at specific times of year to promote nature, (i.e.: spotted owl breeding, Red Bellied Newt protections etc.) it will show the environmentalists that the biking community also cares deeply for the flora and fauna that makes the watershed and other areas so special. This creates bonding between like minds which then leads to trust and progress between factions.

**What strategies do you have in mind to balance the preservation of natural habitats with the increased need and usage of trails for recreational purposes?**

This should be a priority of professionals from the Marin Open Space officials, rangers, land use experts, environmental experts, bikers, hikers, horse riders and the public. Such priorities might include:

- When should the trails be closed for spotted owl breeding
- When should creeks be closed for spawning
- Create bike only zones
- Create hiker only zones
- Create horse only zones
- Create mixed use zones.

The biking community needs to partner with such a range of stakeholders to make sure the environment needs come first – all the time. This is the key for the biking community to silence the environment only group concerns. Bring the environmentalists on board and partner with them so that their concerns are thoroughly heard, distilled and addressed.

**Public Engagement and Education:**

**Access4Bikes encourages responsible trail usage. How would you support educational initiatives that promote trail etiquette and safe riding practices to reduce conflicts and ensure public safety?**

This one is simple: outreach and education. This needs to start when kids are old enough to make choices and participate in mountain biking on their own. We all have seen kids on their e-bikes on their way to and from school and recognize the dangers of riding without proper understanding of negative outcomes from disregarding safety and best riding practices. There is a huge uptick in child biking injuries compared to the past as nowt the youth are not only disregarding safety like ignoring stop signs and right of way, but they are also now doing so at exceedingly high speeds often with extra riders on board and improper safety helmets.

Outreach and promotion of all biking events must include safety instruction, but also sustainability practices to make sure the youth and all riders understand the privilege they are being granted to share our wild spaces with other recreation groups. If respect is shown to other groups and the environment, then conflict should be reduced. Understanding and trust therefore work in union to make for a better experience for all users.

**Do you have any ideas for innovative ways to engage the community in discussions about trail access, while also addressing concerns from various user groups?**

Community outreach and presence is paramount to success in the shared outdoor recreation experience. Large groups of riders participating in parades, information tables at farmers markets, school assemblies and events and other local gatherings are important to bring opposing viewpoints forward to be heard, distilled and considered when opportunities to bond present themselves.

**Legislation and Advocacy:**

**Are you willing to advocate for the development and revision of local ordinances that support responsible mountain biking while ensuring the protection of natural resources?**

The old ways of the world all need to be adapted to the current needs of our population. We no longer smoke on planes, teach cursive handwriting, or let children ride in the back of trucks. Why? Simple, the answer is that these antiquated ideas are not practiced or safe any longer. The most important thing I think we can do for our youth is to get them off the devices and into the physical outdoors for active and healthy participation in exercise and nature. I already mentioned that I have spent a lifetime supporting the Mt Tam watershed and nature in general. If these areas are not advocated for, then they will be lost to development and special interests.

If mountain bikers and their advocacy groups can show the love and protection of these special places to match those of the hikers, horse enthusiasts and environmentalists, then everyone wins. It is vital to show a love for the physical environment BEFORE the needs of bikers. Only then will the contrarian heat see that you care as much as they do and by playing by the agreed set of rules, trust will be gained, and the community will bond.

**How would you collaborate with Access4Bikes and similar organizations to lobby for state and federal funding to support trail development and maintenance?**

The Biking Community needs to work with leadership of the County to continue to advocate for their cause. Community Development staff and Open Space leaders should constantly look for state grants to apply for to build the development and maintenance as they are, just as important as any other major infrastructure needs. Transportation funds should not only go to major highways and overpasses, but they should also go to recreation.

**Personal Connection to Mountain Biking:**

**Do you have any personal experience with mountain biking or outdoor recreational activities that influence your perspective on trail access and conservation?**

I got my first Bianchi Grizzly Mountain bike in 1985. I worked at Corte Madera Cyclery in east Corte Madera when it was bought by Sammy Hagar. They allowed me to clean up the shop each weekend and put my earnings toward the bike (which they gave me before I had fully paid it off!). This mountain bike had thousands of miles on it a year at the age of 13. I never stopped. The entire Mt Tam watershed was mine regardless of the trails being legal or not. I felt like a bandit when I was using the word "poaching" to my friends other than describing how my East Coast born father preferred his eggs.

We never got caught but were chased a few times and scolded many times by hikers. We always were polite though, but it simply was too good to not ride. We used the logic of "unlawful" to keep our bodies strong, our minds sharp and our adrenaline pumping. We knew what we were doing - going off the acceptable trails was not "legal" - but at that age we were unlikely to understand the WHY these trails were protected from biking. An older, wiser adult soon learns that sustainability and environmental stability allow returned access to these parts. The short-sighted urges of my youth are now replaced with greater responsibility.

**How would your personal experience contribute to your ability to support and advance the goals of Access4Bikes?**

I grew up and became a physical and mental product of my environment. It is easy to promote and support any cause when you are righteous in your passion for it. Mountain bike riding has been a 40-year passion for me, and I have lived experiences to share as to why trail access is so important to advance these goals. You do not have to teach or tell me why it is important to support and advance the goals of A4B... these are my lived experiences.

**Closing Remarks:**

**Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding your commitment to promoting inclusive access to trails and supporting the mission of Access4Bikes?**

As a 40-year mountain bike rider, parent, coach and school board trustee the most important gift we adults and leaders can pass on to our children is access to the same physical outdoor spaces that make Marin County not only the birthplace of mountain biking, but also the wonder of nature and the need to protect it for future generations. It is my firm belief that getting more mountain bike enthusiasts on the mountain will bring more to fall in love with the sport, and learn the importance of protection, access, stewardship, and service back to your community. I think this service and stewardship is being lost on this generation of children and I believe that mountain biking is the exact sport needed to bring us together and connect all our communities. It is the tie that binds us....so Let's Go!