

T O U R I S M
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M O U N T A I N B I K E
T O U R I S M

*The essential guide to developing, managing and marketing
mountain bike tourism product in BC.*

Mountain Bike Tourism

The Mountain Bike Tourism guide explains how to assess trail networks and how to develop, manage, and market mountain bike product. Research results on the mountain bike tourism sector in British Columbia are explained along with issues and challenges facing the development of the sector.

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Third Edition, June 2015

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Foreword by Mitchell Scott

It just happened. The mud-washed, root-strewn forests of Vancouver's North Shore, ridden by a rogue group of adventurers, have evolved in two short decades into one of the most sought after mountain bike destinations in the world.

We didn't plan for it. Nor could we have. But here it is. From Williams Lake to Fernie, from Kamloops to Whistler, Squamish, Rossland, Nelson, Golden, Prince George, Cumberland... the list of BC towns renowned for their mountain bike trails grows every year. Bikers come from Calgary, Washington, California, the UK, and Switzerland. They come because there are few other places on the planet that offer such an incredible combination of trails, scenery, and adventure.

Whether it's the best bike park in the world (Whistler) or the best cross-country epic in the world (Rossland's Seven Summits), BC has managed to foster every type of riding experience. Throw in a rich cycling history, burgeoning cycling communities and infrastructure — guide outfits, shuttle services, bike shops, and bike-friendly coffee houses — a trip to BC is not just a vacation, but a necessary pilgrimage for the discerning mountain biker.

For those of us who live here, who have grown up riding our bikes like the kid from Peterborough who grew up playing hockey, it's a culture segment that isn't going away any time soon.

And it's only positive. We forget that the bicycle is an amazing invention. And while our children are hell-bent on jumping them and sending them down steep mountainsides, they are still riding a bike, and that cycling ethic weaves itself into all parts of their lives. They ride their bikes to school, to a friend's, to the store...and then to the dirt jumps.

With mountain biking, British Columbia has a real opportunity to embrace what's happening here and to leverage it in an extremely positive way. Thanks to those early mountain biking pioneers on the North Shore, bike trails are now found everywhere in our province. From Rails-to-Trails, to commuter networks in all our cities and towns, to well-maintained mountain bike trails, to kids' jump and skills parks. There are success stories in our province than can be adapted and implemented to make mountain biking a safe, fun, highly rewarding sport for not just tourists, but for British Columbians themselves. We have the opportunity to be a world leader as a region that cherishes and celebrates the freedom, exercise and adventure that comes with what has been called, "the noblest invention."

As someone who's written about and experienced mountain biking in this province for two decades, seeing first hand how other regions like Utah, Idaho, and most countries in Europe have embraced the sport, it's time for BC to take some significant steps and assert itself as a world leader in mountain biking. Not just for its potential economic impact, but because it is good for us, the earth, and our communities.

Mitchell Scott is Senior Correspondent for Powder Magazine, BIKE Magazine, SBC Skier, and the masthead of Explore Magazine. He is a regular contributor to Outside, Blue, Hooked on the Outdoors, and the Globe and Mail. You can find his articles in publications in Japan, France, Britain and Germany.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Terms

Berm	A berm is a mound of dirt piled along the outside of a corner to create a banked surface that allows the rider to ride through tighter turns at higher speeds without sliding.
TTFs	Technical Trail Features that are generally man-made (e.g. ladder bridges, drops, jumps, log rides, etc.).
A-line style trail	This term describes a machine-built downhill trail that consists of berms and jumps. “A-line” is the name of the original Whistler Bike Park trail that was constructed in this style.
Authorized trails	This refers to a trail that has been formally recognized with a written agreement to permit mountain bike use with the land owners.
Skinny	A wooden beam or log, usually 25 cm (10 in) or less in width, raised off the ground.
Huck	A drop on a mountain bike trail.
Pump track	A series of bumps, jumps and berms in the shape of a small circular track. The objective of the pump track is to generate power and speed as the rider manoeuvres the bike through the course without pedaling.
Flow	Trails that absorb the rider’s full attention and create a feeling of enjoyment and energized focus. Flow trails are never a straight line, but instead will have many corners through undulating terrain that seem to conform to a natural rhythm of the rider.
Singletrack	Narrow trails, approximately the width of a bike, designed to minimize the impact on the land and guide riders through challenging and often inspiring terrain (as opposed to double track paths made by or for four wheel vehicles).

Acronyms

AM	All-Mountain
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BPBC	Bike Parks BC
CMIC	Canadian Mountain Bike Instructor Certification
DH	Downhill
DJ	Dirt jump
FR	Freeride
FRPA	Forest and Range Practices Act
IBH	Italy Bike Hotels
IMBA	International Mountain Bicycling Association
MBR	Mountain Bike Rider
MBTA	Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association
MBUK	Mountain Biking UK
MEC	Mountain Equipment Cooperative
MTB	Mountain Biking
NCCP	National Coaching Certification Program
NSMBA	North Shore Mountain Bike Association
RDMOs	Regional Destination Marketing Organizations
RMOW	Resort Municipality of Whistler
RSTBC	Recreation Sites and Trails BC
TAMS	Travel Activities and Motivations Survey
TSC	Trails Strategy Committee
TTFs	Technical Trail Features
UBCM	Union of British Columbia Municipalities
VCCP	Velo Cross Club Parisien (France)
WBP	Whistler Bike Park
WORCA	Whistler Off Road Cycling Association
XC	Cross Country

Table of Contents

1	Using the Guide.....	3
PART ONE		
2	What is Mountain Bike Tourism?.....	5
	Evolution of Mountain Biking.....	5
	Types of Mountain Biking.....	5
	Mountain Biking and Tourism.....	7
	The Core Product – Trails.....	8
	Success = Great Trails + Bike Infrastructure + Service/Hospitality.....	8
3	Why Develop Mountain Biking? The Business Case.....	9
	Cycling is an Important Recreational Activity.....	9
	Mountain Biking is an Evolving Sector.....	10
	Mountain Biking is a Travel Motivator.....	11
	Mountain Bikers are More Likely to Visit BC.....	13
	Mountain Biking Provides an Economic Return.....	13
4	What is Happening in British Columbia?.....	17
	The Product – Trails and Community-Based Product.....	17
	Issues and Challenges Facing Mountain Biking in BC.....	22
	Provincial Initiatives.....	24
PART TWO		
5	Has Your Community Got What It Takes?.....	26
6	Establishing a Partnership	27
7	Assessing Your Trail Network.....	32
	Prepare a Trails Inventory.....	32
	Determine Landownership.....	32
	Obtain a Profile of Existing Use	35
8	Creating a Sustainable Product – Developing a Management Plan	36
	Determine Trail Significance and Tourism Potential	36
	Building Partnership Agreements.....	38
	Address Liability and Insurance.....	39
	Determine Funding Sources	41
	Develop a Management Plan	43

Table of Contents

9	Beyond the Trails	44
	What do Mountain Biking Visitors Expect?.....	44
	Infrastructure.....	44
	Bike-Friendly Businesses	47
	Enhancing the Trail Experience	50
10	Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics	51
	Identifying Your Target Market	51
	Promoting Your Mountain Bike Experience.....	52
	Working with Mountain Bike Media Sources.....	53
	Media Relations.....	58
	Creating and Packaging Experiences.....	59
	Creating a Strong Web Presence	60
	Identifying Partnership Opportunities.....	61
	Appendices	63
	1. Whistler Cycling Committee – Terms of Reference	64
	2. Schedule F: Operational Standards – Mountain Bike Trails.....	65

1 Using the Guide

This guide has been designed to guide communities interested in developing mountain bike trails and promoting them to visitors. The guide highlights relevant good practices and resources that can assist

communities in establishing their own unique mountain biking experiences. **The guide is not a substitute for seeking professional legal advice related to liability.**

The guide is divided into two parts.

Part One provides an overview of mountain biking, the market potential and a summary of what is currently going on in BC. It provides communities with a context in which to make decisions regarding mountain bike tourism and product development initiatives for visitors and residents alike.

Part Two highlights the process and steps involved in moving forward with developing a mountain bike tourism product. It looks at the factors communities need to consider before they get to the stage of marketing and promoting an authorized and managed trail system to visitors.

Part One

2 What is Mountain Bike Tourism?

Evolution of Mountain Biking

One of the earliest references to off-road biking relates to a group of soldiers in the 1890s known as the 25th Infantry Buffalo Soldiers. The Buffalo Soldiers were based in Missoula, Montana and rode single speed bikes modified for long-distance travel with supplies over rough terrain. The bikes weighed about 32 kg – 54 kg (70 lb – 120 lb) when loaded.

In France, the Velo Cross Club Parisien (VCCP), comprised of about twenty young bicyclists from the outskirts of Paris who, between 1951 and 1956, developed a sport that was remarkably akin to present-day mountain biking.

The Mountain Bike Hall of Fame in Crested Butte, Colorado, attributes the evolution of mountain biking to a group in Marin County in Northern California in the late 1970s, who modified their bikes to get up and down the south bay hills.¹ Since then mountain biking has grown to become an outdoor industry giant with approximately seven million participants in the US alone.²

Technology has played a major role in the evolution of mountain biking. Hydraulic brakes, front and rear suspension, larger wheel diameter, and carbon frame sets have allowed more participants to access and ride more technically challenging terrain.

Types of Mountain Biking

Through the evolution of mountain biking and the advances in bike technology, several distinct disciplines within the sport have emerged. Popular mountain biking areas now offer opportunities for a number of riding styles with trails designed for specific types of biking.



Photo: Downhill Rider – Sun Peaks Resort

Downhill (DH): As the name implies, downhill mountain biking tests the rider's ability to follow a course that is predominantly downhill through a series of berms, jumps and other

features, and as fast as possible. Downhill riders are high risk takers and considered to be advanced in their riding skills. Riders often wear full face helmets and body armour protection. A downhill course is typically designed to be 1 - 2 km (0.6 - 1.2 mi) in length with a means to return to the top of the course other than riding, usually by vehicle shuttle or by chair lift in the case of ski resort areas.

Cross Country (XC): Single track trails and backcountry roads are typically used for cross country riding. Generally, cross country riders prefer long continuous routes of 10 - 80 km (6 - 50 mi) over undulating terrain that tests endurance and offers some technical riding challenges. The most common form of competitive mountain biking is cross country, which was introduced at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. It is also the most common form of recreational mountain biking in the US and Europe. Cross country bikes weigh less than other mountain bikes, often 10 - 13 kg (22 - 28 lbs).



Photo: Junkyard Dog XC race 2007 – SORCE Bike Club

¹ www.mmbhof.org

² 2011 The Outdoor Foundation, Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2012

2 What is Mountain Bike Tourism?

Types of Mountain Biking

Freeride (FR): Freeriding was conceived in British Columbia in the 1990s and, although it has now been mimicked in countries around the world, BC is still the hotbed for this discipline. Freeriding is largely a non-competitive form of mountain biking that arguably combines the best of XC and DH. Riders look for both natural and man-made technical trail features (TTFs) that challenge the rider's skill. Armour is often worn to protect riders from potential falls.

Balance, strength, timing, and finesse are all important attributes for negotiating *skinnies* (narrow bridges often made from naturally fallen trees), *hucks* (jumps made from dirt



Photo: North Shore – Jimmy Young

or natural rock outcroppings), *drops* (small escarpments in the slope of the terrain), and *rollers* (very steep slopes off rock formations or manmade structures) along the trail.

Dirt Jump (DJ): Dirt Jumping is very popular, particularly among youth. Dirt jump courses are usually set up in a more confined area with a small hill from which riders build up speed as they approach a series of dirt pile jumps. Typically there will be a progression of paths (also called lines), from easy to advanced, which the rider can choose as skill and courage increases. In some cases, forest trails may also feature a series of dirt jumps.



Photo: Dirt Jump Jam 2007 – SORCE Bike Club

A recent adaptation of dirt jumping is the **pump track** which involves a series of bumps, jumps and berms carved into the flat ground in the shape of a small circular track. The objective of the pump track is to generate power and speed as the rider maneuvers the bike through the course without pedaling.

All Mountain: Perhaps the most recent development in mountain biking is the All Mountain category. Bikes are designed to be very versatile: the All Mountain bike has the weight and easy pedaling of a cross country bike combined with the smooth handling of a dual-suspension freeride or DH bike. The creation of All Mountain bikes has facilitated a growing interest in epic backcountry riding that encompasses many of the qualities of both cross country and freeride featuring long single track trails over technically challenging terrain.



Photo: Comfortably Numb, Whistler – Pat Mulrooney Photography

Rails-to-Trails and Mountain Bike

Touring: Touring by mountain bike offers an alternative means for travelling from one community to another, generally over a number of days via backcountry roads, trails or abandoned railways. Since the 1970s many railways throughout North America have been decommissioned and reclassified as trails through a myriad of Rails-to-Trails programs.

These trail systems offer excellent opportunities for mountain bike touring through wilderness corridors linking communities together. The terrain is typically

Types of Mountain Biking

a mix of flat to gentle grade that appeals to a wide range of age and ability levels. In some cases vehicles are used to assist with carrying gear and supplies from one campsite or community to the next so that the riders can enjoy the ride and the scenery without the heavy load.



Photo: Kettle Valley Rail Trail near Christina Lake
– Maria Littlejohn

Mountain Biking and Tourism

One aspect in the evolution of mountain biking has been its shift from a localized recreational activity to a tourism product. Mountain biking is now one of several outdoor adventure activities in British Columbia recognized for its tourism potential and research indicates that significant numbers of mountain bike enthusiasts travel to go mountain biking (see Section 4 – What is Happening in British Columbia).

The province has one of the best international reputations for mountain biking innovation yet much more collaboration is required to capitalize on this image, overcome challenges and make BC a truly world-class mountain biking destination.

With the diverse landscapes of BC there is significant potential for the province to develop a wide spectrum of mountain biking opportunities through a community-based approach. From the rugged west coast experience to the open range of the southern interior, and from the vast forests of the north to the snow-capped peaks of the Kootenay Rockies, there is scope to expand the product base considerably. The addition of local culture and attractions within each region can provide unique appeal to individual communities as mountain biking destinations.

Creating a mountain biking destination requires a broad tourism vision and the collaboration of various groups within and outside the community. With a vision and

partnership structure in place, a community is in a much stronger position to critically review its product, and ensure that trails are authorized and ongoing management is taking place. This type of collaborative approach ensures that the issues of maintenance, risk management and insurance can be more readily addressed.

The final stage in building a mountain biking tourism sector involves marketing the product in an effective manner and working with other tourism sectors to add value to the overall visitor experience.

Good Practice – Whistler, BC – Dynamic community and year-round destination³

For a community originally built around alpine skiing, Whistler has become an unparalleled year-round destination with both residents and visitors alike benefitting from the array of outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities.

Over the last several years Whistler has worked hard to develop its summer product, including mountain biking, and summer visitation now exceeds winter visits.

Whistler receives approximately 2.3 million overnight and non-overnight visitors each year (approximately 44 per cent in winter and 56 per cent in summer). See more at: [\[link\]](#)

³ Tourism Whistler

2 What is Mountain Bike Tourism?

The Core Product – Trails

Trails are the core component and resource base of the mountain bike tourism product. As such, they should offer a unique experience that allows the rider to connect with the character of the land and even the local culture. This is seen in the increasing appeal of signature trails and unique landscape settings that have the ability to motivate mountain bikers to travel to a destination or region. Prime examples include:

- The Seven Summits Trail in Rossland, BC has achieved stature as the area's signature mountain bike trail providing breathtaking mountain vistas together with the challenge of seven ascents (and descents) in one epic ride.



Photo: David Diplock on Seven Summits, Rossland – Lee Lau

- A-Line trail in Whistler is known worldwide as the signature trail of the Whistler Mountain Bike Park. Spectators can watch from the village as expert riders descend A-Line to the base of the mountain.

- North Vancouver is famous for its unique technical trail features built in the rugged coastal rain forest to the north of the city.



Photo: North Vancouver – Cam McRae

- The Slick Rock Trail in Moab, Utah offers dramatic terrain associated with the area's unusual sandstone formations and the rustic nature of its mining past.



Photo: James Wakeling in Moab, Utah – Sharon Bader

Success =
Great Trails
+ Bike
Infrastructure
+ Service /
Hospitality

To truly capitalize on the success of a well-planned and well-constructed trail network, the community must also consider the needs and the abilities of visitors. A bike shop with bike rentals, the availability of convenient transportation to the trailhead, a selection of restaurants and accommodation all help to round out the mountain biking experience.

Service and hospitality provide that something extra that can exceed the expectations of the

visitor and wow them. Knowledgeable and skillful guides, courteous and attentive staff and a welcoming community are all critical ingredients.

These key elements will be discussed in greater detail in [Part Two](#) of the guide, which highlights the process for developing a mountain bike tourism destination.

3 Why Develop Mountain Biking? The Business Case

The benefits of mountain biking as a tourism product have been enjoyed to some extent by BC communities for over a decade, since mountain bike-specific trails began to emerge in the 1990s. The benefits are three fold:

ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL	SOCIAL
<p>One of the most compelling benefits of trails is their ability to provide an economic return to communities by attracting riders from out of town.</p>	<p>Active management and planning of trail systems has led to rehabilitation of natural landscapes and a decrease in unauthorized trail construction and use.</p>	<p>Engaging youth in biking-related projects and providing opportunities for families to recreate can play a role in promoting a healthy lifestyle.</p>

These benefits are becoming evident in traveller motivation studies and economic impact research.

1. Mountain biking IS a travel motivator and people WILL travel to destinations specifically to go mountain biking; and
2. Mountain bikers ARE well educated, affluent and the majority of them are over 30 years of age.

Cycling is an Important Recreational Activity

In 2009, the 2009/10 Outdoor Recreation Study was conducted to measure incidence of participation in various outdoor recreation activities in British Columbia.

– 19% of Vancouver Coast and Mountain residents reported participating in mountain biking during the past 12 months.

British Columbia Outdoor Recreation Mountain Biking¹

- In 2008/09, over nine-in-ten (91%) of British Columbia residents participated in at least one outdoor recreation activity during the past 12 months.
- Twenty-two per cent of British Columbia residents participated in mountain biking. Mountain bike participation levels varied by tourism region:
 - 38% of Cariboo Chilcotin Coast residents,
 - 36% of Kootenay Rockies residents,
 - 23% Thompson Okanagan,
 - 22% of Vancouver Island residents,
 - 20% of Northern British Columbia residents, and

- Of all British Columbians that mountain bike on trails, 64% of participants are male.

¹ Outdoor Recreation Mountain bike/cycling sector profile www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Research/Research-by-Activity/Other/ODR_Biking_FINAL.pdf.aspx

3 Why Develop Mountain Biking? The Business Case

Mountain Biking is an Evolving Sector

Research and trends indicate that mountain biking as a distinct product sector is evolving and has the potential to be a key part of a community's tourism experience. In preparing this guide a series of interviews were conducted with communities and the mountain biking industry, both here in BC and internationally. The following is a summary of trends and comments identified in the discussions.

- Advances in technology have translated into significant changes in the types of mountain bikes people are now riding. Technology has made the sport more accessible with entry level bikes becoming more affordable and user-friendly. These changes have inspired the evolution of new riding genres such as "freeride", downhill and all-mountain riding.
- The development of family-oriented mountain bike products is also growing, as mountain biking parents look for vacation experiences that give them the ability to get their children involved. The Lost Lake trails in Whistler are an excellent example of a family-friendly mountain bike experience with a progressive mix of green and blue XC trails next to a park with playgrounds and a lake to cool off in.
- The growth in lift-accessed bike parks at mountain resorts has stimulated further growth and interest in mountain biking. These resorts see the activity as a new means of driving summer destination visits and a potential core product outside of the traditional ski season. The Whistler Bike Park attracts more than 100,000 biker visits each year. Of the non-resident riders, 90% stayed overnight in Whistler.² As a result, mountain biking has surpassed golf as the top summer activity for overnight visits. In the US, a law passed in 2011 allows US

ski resorts operating on US Forest Service land to offer activities other than skiing which has contributed to even more lift access product in North America and an expanding DH market.

- In 2004, the IMBA launched IMBA Canada and opened its first Canadian office in Kitchener, Ontario. IMBA's Canadian office seeks to develop the following for mountain biking in Canada:
 - convenient access to appealing trails
 - trailbuilding expertise
 - a positive image
 - and political influence
- The industry is becoming more coordinated. In 2004, North Vancouver hosted the inaugural World Mountain Bike Conference with Sustainability as the conference theme. Delegates from across North America, the UK and elsewhere gathered to discuss the environmental, social and economic impacts of mountain biking.

"They take the work out of your vacation so you just ride and eat...and focus on the best trails in the area."

Ashley Korenblat
CEO, Western Spirit Cycling
Adventures

² Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study - Whistler Report 2006.

Mountain Biking is a Travel Motivator

The 2006 **Travel Activities and Motivations Survey (TAMS)** was a comprehensive survey of over 110,000 North American households, designed to examine the travel habits, activities and behaviours of Canadians and Americans over the preceding two-year period.

Extensive information was collected on destination choices and trip activities as well as travel motivations and planning behaviours.³ The results have been presented in two key ways:

- 1. Participation** – travellers who participated in a particular activity while on a trip.
- 2. Motivation** – travellers who were motivated to take a trip in order to do a specific activity.

American and Canadian Cycling Travellers (includes mountain biking)

- Cycling⁴ is a key activity for many travellers with 10.7 million Americans and more than 2.4 million Canadians reporting having cycled while on an overnight trip in the last two years.

Further analysis has been undertaken at the product sector level. The findings relating to cycling travellers are summarized below.

- More than **3.6 million North Americans** were motivated to take a trip in the last two years to go cycling. The overall North American **mountain bike motivated travel market is 1.25 million.**
- **BC attracted 258,000 mountain bikers** who were motivated to visit the province in order to go mountain biking.

Size of the Motivated North American Cycling Market & Travel to British Columbia

Cyclists	North American Overall	US Cycling Travellers to BC	Canadian Cycling Travellers to BC	Total Cycling Travellers to BC
Overall Cyclists	3,664,110	356,949	273,114	630,063
Mountain Bikers	1,249,596	154,179	103,791	257,970
% of Overall	34%	43%	38%	41%

Source: TAMS 2006: US and Canadian Activity Profiles: Recreational Cyclists and Mountain Bikers

³ 2006 Travel Activities and Motivations Survey (TAMS)

⁴ Cycling includes any type of riding e.g. road riding, mountain biking, rails-to-trails etc.

3 Why Develop Mountain Biking? The Business Case

Mountain Biking is a Travel Motivator

Mountain Biking Visitor Studies conducted in 2011 in both Rossland and Golden BC found that three-quarters (76%) of respondents in Rossland and 90% in Golden indicated that they were very likely to be driven by mountain biking as their main motivation for another trip in British Columbia.⁵

Demographic Profile of US and Canadian Mountain Bikers Motivated to Travel to British Columbia

- Mountain bike travellers to BC from the US and Canada are most likely to be male and aged 18-34. US and Canadian mountain bikers are well educated, with over half having completed post secondary education.
- Mountain bike travellers to BC are also very affluent with one-third of the US and almost half the Canadians having a household income in excess of \$100,000.

US and Canadian Mountain Bikers to BC Demographics

Cyclists	US to BC Mountain Bikers	Canada to BC Mountain Bikers
Unweighted Numbers	51	113
Adults 18+	154,179	103,791
Gender		
Male	74%	75%
Female	26%	25%
Age		
18-34	48%	43%
35-44	16%	19%
45-54	17%	24%
55-64	14%	14%
65+	5%	0%
Household Income		
Under \$40,000	14%	22%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	6%	6%
\$60,000 - \$99,999	28%	22%
\$100,000 +	33%	47%
Not stated	19%	4%
Education		
Less than Secondary	5%	1%
Completed Secondary	5%	1%
Some Post Secondary	28%	19%
Completed Post Secondary	59%	60%
Other	2%	-
Not Stated	1%	0%

Source: TAMS 2006: US and Canadian Activity Profiles: Recreational Cyclists and Mountain Bikers

⁵ Rossland Mountain Bike Visitor Study 2011 Results - March 2013
Golden Mountain Bike Visitor Study 2011 Results - March 2013

Mountain Bikers Are More Likely to Visit BC

- US mountain bikers are **three times more likely** to take a trip to BC for biking than the US traveller in general.
- Canadian mountain bikers are **nearly twice as likely** to travel to British Columbia for the purpose of mountain biking, than is the Canadian traveller in general.

Further information on the TAMS 2006 study can be found at www.destinationbc.ca/Research.aspx

Mountain Biking Provides an Economic Return

The first comprehensive and statistically-valid study focusing on mountain biking in North America was the Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study (2006) undertaken by the MBTA, which noted that:

Mountain biking on the Sea to Sky trail system provides a considerable benefit to host communities. For local residents, the trails provide a venue to participate in an active, healthy lifestyle, and increase the desirability of living in the area. Moreover, the trails are an attraction for residents of both neighbouring and out-of-town areas to visit the host communities, thereby providing support for local businesses and increasing the economic activity for the region.

The MBTA study surveyed riders at popular trailheads in the communities of North/West Vancouver, Squamish and Whistler and focused on non-resident riders. A total of 1,270 riding parties were intercepted, which resulted in 1,019 valid surveys for the three communities over the summer of 2006. The following are some salient findings regarding economic impact and rider characteristics.

Economic Impact Findings

- The trail systems of the North Shore, Squamish and Whistler, are estimated to have collectively generated \$10.3 million in spending from riders that live outside of the host communities over the period from June 4 to September 17, 2006.
- Spending by Whistler trail visitors accounted for the majority of the total, approximately \$6.6 million.

In addition to the public trail systems, the study also surveyed riders at the Whistler Bike Park (WBP) and Whistler's Crankworx Mountain Bike Festival.

- Non-resident visitors to the WBP, North America's most visited mountain bike park, spent an estimated **\$16.2 million** in Whistler.
- The Crankworx Mountain Bike Festival continues to grow, with more than 55,000 visitors attending the event in 2006, of which more than 23,000 travelled solely to attend the Festival. This resulted in non-resident expenditures in excess of **\$11.5 million**.



Photo: Kokanee Crankworx Festival, Whistler – Destination BC

Non-Resident Rider Characteristic Findings

- The majority of non-resident mountain bikers in the Sea to Sky corridor were aged 30-39 years (41%) with an additional 22% over the age of 40.
- More than three-quarters (77%) of the mountain bikers surveyed on trails in the Sea to Sky corridor were male.

3 Why Develop Mountain Biking? The Business Case

Mountain Biking Provides an Economic Return

Non-Resident Riding Party Characteristics

Characteristics	Total	North Shore	Squamish	Whistler Valley	Whistler Bike Park
Avg. Party Size	2.8	2.6	3.0	2.9	3.3
% on a day trip	80%	91%	79%	10%	11%
% staying overnight	20%	9%	21%	90%	89%
Avg. Nights of Overnight Parties	4.8	6.3	3.6	4.5	5.0
Age Profile					
18 and under	11%	5%	5%	24%	13%
19-29	27%	29%	25%	22%	25%
30-39	41%	47%	47%	27%	39%
40-49	17%	15%	18%	18%	19%
50-59	4%	3%	4%	7%	4%
60-69	1%	0%	0%	3%	1%
70 and over	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Gender					
Male	77%	85%	71%	65%	74%
Female	23%	15%	29%	35%	26%

Source: Sea to Sky MTB Economic Impact Study 2006

*Note: The Whistler Bike Park was also included in the study and the results from this have been presented separately.

Non-resident riders in Squamish and on the North Shore are drawn heavily from Greater Vancouver and other Sea to Sky communities. Whistler, as expected, had the most diverse origin of riders, with more than 60% originating from out-of-province.

Non-Resident Riding Party Origin, North Shore, Squamish & Whistler*

Origin	North Shore	Squamish	Whistler Valley	Whistler Bike Park
Greater Vancouver	86%	69%	28%	18%
Sea to Sky Corridor	2%	10%	3%	0%
Other BC	2%	8%	9%	13%
Other Canada	3%	6%	10%	10%
US	5%	8%	34%	41%
Overseas	2%	8%	18%	22%

*Note that multiple responses were allowed to accommodate parties of mixed origins, thus the totals may be more than 100%.

Mountain Biking Provides an Economic Return

Expenditures by non-resident mountain bikers in the Sea to Sky communities are significant, particularly for overnight parties. One finding of particular interest is that non-resident riders generate considerable revenue

for destination bike shops: a total of 14 bike shop purchases greater than \$1,000 were reported by the sample of 689 non-resident riding parties.

Riding Party Expenditures – per Party, per Trip

Location	North Shore		Squamish		Whistler Valley	
Type of trip (number of responses)	Sameday (325)	Overnight (32)*	Sameday (83)*	Overnight (22)*	Sameday (10)*	Overnight (92)*
Accommodation	\$0.00	\$292.81	\$0.00	\$95.72	\$0.00	\$629.57
Restaurant / Pub / Night Club	\$26.02	\$206.47	\$42.40	\$93.58	\$38.00	\$333.73
Groceries / Other F & B	\$7.05	\$56.09	\$6.66	\$89.61	\$3.50	\$105.08
Recreation & Entertainment	\$1.45	\$8.59	\$3.57	\$19.00	\$0.00	\$81.97
Bike Shop	\$39.77	\$245.38	\$184.21	\$109.35	\$167.50	\$58.81
Other Shopping	\$3.67	\$40.63	\$0.90	\$28.05	\$30.00	\$116.26
Own Vehicle Expenses	\$17.06	\$23.13	\$23.73	\$74.36	\$18.60	\$32.76
Rental Vehicle	\$1.23	\$56.25	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$36.07
Local Transport	\$0.47	\$21.88	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7.00	\$2.32
Other Spending	\$0.69	\$12.19	\$3.73	\$8.18	\$0.00	\$16.37
Total Per Party	\$97.41	\$963.41	\$265.21	\$517.85	\$264.60	\$1412.94
Avg. Party Size	2.5	3.2	2.9	3.0	2.8	3.1
Avg. Nights		6.3		3.2		4.5
Avg. Spend Per Person Per Day	\$39.12	\$48.32	\$92.09	\$53.94	\$83.79	\$93.48

* Caution – small sample

In 2011, two mountain bike visitor and economic impact studies were completed in Golden and Rossland, BC. The studies involved mountain bikers being intercepted and interviewed on trails, trail heads, and bike shops within each community. Following interviews, all eligible visiting mountain bikers were asked to participate in the follow-up questionnaire. Between July 1 and September 5, a total of 407 visiting mountain bikers in Golden and 216 in Rossland were interviewed.

The following are some findings regarding economic impact and rider characteristics.

Economic Impact Findings⁶

Mountain bike visitors to Golden spent a total of \$930,000, which had the following associated impacts on British Columbia:

- Total output (revenue) of \$656,000
- Gross Domestic Product of \$518,000 in all supplier industries

⁶ Destination BC. (2011). BC Input-Output Model: Mountain Biking in Rossland and Golden 2011.

3 Why Develop Mountain Biking? The Business Case

Mountain Biking Provides an Economic Return

Mountain bike visitors to Rossland spent a total of \$589,000, which had the following associated impacts on British Columbia:

- Total output (revenue) of \$362,000
- Gross Domestic Product of \$290,000 in all supplier industries

Out of the total economic impact, the largest share of expenditure was made by consumers on services related to mountain biking activities, such as accommodation, food, and transportation, rather than by providers of mountain biking product.

Mountain Bike Visitor Characteristics⁷

Mountain bike visitors to Rossland and Golden were likely to be:

- Well educated; 70%+ were likely to have attained a university degree or a college diploma
- Travelling without children
- Experienced mountain bikers
- Riding their own bike
- Campground/RV park was the primary accommodation type

⁷ Destination BC. (2011). Rossland and Golden Mountain Bike Visitor Studies 2011

4

What is Happening in British Columbia?

In the world of mountain biking, BC is legendary for its extreme riding, mountain scenery and strong mountain bike culture. Striking images of mountain biking in BC continually appear in popular mountain bike magazines and videos distributed all over the world.

In the early 1990s, purpose-built mountain bike trails were appearing around the province. Mountain bike technology was advancing rapidly allowing riders to improve their riding skills and access more challenging terrain. Through the passionate efforts of amateur trail builders, many of whom have achieved legendary status in the world of mountain biking, British Columbia has become an important trend-setting frontier.



Much of the province's success and reputation can be attributed to its home-grown talent. BC riders, bike manufacturers, writers, film makers and photographers are known around

the world and continue to be at the forefront of the industry. BC is recognized as the birthplace of freeride mountain biking and many destinations around the world build what are now commonly referred to as North Shore-style trails.

The Product – Trails and Community-Based Product

It is probably safe to say that every community in BC has trails and that most residents appreciate them.

“BC has huge potential; nearly every community in the interior has a mountain bike scene that has the potential to bring in tourists.”

Mike Brcic

Owner
Sacred Rides Mountain Bike Holidays

“BC leads the world with so many local communities of mountain bikers throughout the province that are passionate about their sport. They're really into it!”

Chris Winter

Owner, Big Mountain Adventures

The benefits that trails offer to the residents of a community can also represent an important part of the visitor's experience. However, as will be stressed throughout the remainder of this guide, it is important for communities to realize that before trails are promoted as tourism experiences they need to be properly authorized and managed.

Since the implementation of the Provincial Trails Strategy by Recreation Sites and Trails BC in 2008 there has been a marked increase in the number of authorized mountain bike trails in the province. As the inventory of well managed authorized trails on Crown land has grown so too has the number of communities promoting their mountain biking opportunities. (see www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca/default.aspx)

For mountain bikers and other outdoor enthusiasts, trails represent the core product of the destination; the more significant the trails, the more desirable the destination. Mountain biking trails that offer challenging terrain with distinctive geography and a variety of progressive technical features appealing to a wide range of abilities are important to downhill and freeride mountain bikers. Trails that offer challenging point-to-point options while traversing areas of natural beauty are qualities that cross country riders will seek out. Historic importance and ecological diversity are features that add significance to trails used for mountain bike touring.

As outlined earlier, mountain biking has branched into several distinct disciplines. Communities that are able to offer a range

4

What is Happening in British Columbia?

The Product – Trails and Community- Based Product

of mountain biking experiences in more than one discipline will be able to broaden their appeal. While not every community has the ability to be a destination for mountain biking, the activity does offer most communities the opportunity to broaden their tourism appeal and complement existing tourism products.

The various mountain bike components generally on offer include:

- Single track trails (XC, DH, freeride and signature trails)
- Rails-to-Trails networks
- Community bike parks
- Resort lift-access bike parks
- Bike camps and tour operators
- Festivals and events

IMBA Epic® Status

Epic® designation is provided by IMBA and represents some of the best riding available in a particular region. Online nominations are accepted annually, and as of 2013, more than 60 trails around the world have achieved Epic® status. Epic® designation has been provided to a variety of trails including backcountry adventures to innovative trails in urban locations. British Columbia has obtained three Epic® designations: Warner Lake, South Chilcotin Mountains, Seven Summits Trail, Rossland and Comfortably Numb, Whistler.¹

Signature Trails

These are the trails of iconic significance that come to define a community's or region's mountain bike culture. Generally they appeal to more advanced riders. Signature trails can range from epic cross country and freeride trails to elaborate trail networks and scenic rail or touring routes. Typically signature trails offer unique backcountry experiences, with stunning scenery and a strong sense of physical accomplishment (and bragging rights). Examples include:

- **Seven Summits Trail, Rossland**
Trail of the Year, Bike magazine December 2007. Over 30 km of point-to-point singletrack, built by the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society (KCTS). IMBA Epic® status. www.kcts.ca
- **A-Line, Whistler Bike Park**
This trail has set the standard for bike parks around the world. It is known for its fast flowing lines with multiple jumps and opportunities for “big air”. A-Line is now commonly used as a term to describe trails which have been designed to emulate the Whistler original. www.whistlerbike.com
- **Snakes and Ladders, Williams Lake**
Completely rebuilt in 2012, Snakes and Ladders is designed to be a signature all-mountain/freeride trail to represent the style of riding in the Cariboo region. www.ridethecariboo.ca/williams-lake/trails/snakes-and-ladders
- **Half-Nelson, Squamish**
One of BC's first flow-style machine-built trails that has brought new attention to Squamish's reputation as a mountain biking destination. When Half Nelson's cousin, Full Nelson, opened in May 2012 more than 2000 eager riders showed up on opening day. www.sorca.ca/trails
- **Frisby Ridge, Revelstoke**
High alpine trail with stunning mountain views that meanders through meadow flowers and ends at an alpine lake – open late July to September depending on snow levels. http://bikerevelstoke.org/enter/?page_id=13
- **Comfortably Numb, Whistler**
With 26 km of physically challenging Singletrack, it is a must-do ride for technically advanced cyclists, built by local trail building legend, Chris Markle. IMBA Epic® status. www.whistler.com/trails/bike

¹ www.imba.com

The Product – Trails and Community- Based Product

- **CBC Trail, North Vancouver**

The CBC trail has gained an international reputation as the classic North Shore trail. www.vancouvernorthshore.com

- **Rails-to-Trails and Mountain Bike Touring**

Abandoned railways, other low grade trails, and backcountry and rural roads are ideal for single or multi-day touring that can link a number of different communities.

- **Spirit of 2010 Trail Network**

The current trail network is hundreds of kilometres in length and includes the

Cowichan Valley Trail, the Kettle Valley Trail, the Columbia & Western Trail, the Slocan Valley Trail, Trans Canada Trail and the BNR Santa Fe Trail. www.trailsbc.ca

- **Galloping Goose Trail**

Located on southern Vancouver Island connecting Leechtown, Sooke, Victoria, Saanich, Sidney, and Swartz Bay. www.gallopinggoosetrail.com



Photo: Bellevue Trestle, KVR – Martin Littlejohn

Good Practice – Kettle Valley Railway Visitor Numbers Increasing²

BC Parks staff have indicated that the Myra-Bellevue Park and Kettle Valley Railway system is a major tourism destination, with participation estimated at 43,000 visitors in 2006.

Community Bike Parks

Community bike parks are very popular among youth and act as safe venues for skills development and camps. They are useful for developing and assessing a rider's skill level before going out onto more challenging trails.

- **Kamloops Bike Ranch**

www.city.kamloops.ca

- **South Surrey Bike Park**

www.sorcebikeclub.org

- **Gleneagles Skate/Terrain Park**

www.westvancouver.ca/parks-recreation/youth-centres/facilities/gleneagles-adventure-park

- **Burns Lake Bike Park**

www.burnslaketrails.ca

Some community skills parks, depending on their size and the number of features, have the potential to draw riders from outside the immediate community. The Burnaby Mountain Bike Skills Park which opened in May 2008 was designed as a destination area. It has a host of features including one of the world's largest wooden pump tracks that is free to the public.

www.burnaby.ca/Things-To-Do/Outdoor-Facilities/Mountain-Air-Bike-Skills-Park.html

Community bike parks can also play a key role in addressing other mountain biking-related issues such as illegal trail building which can create liability as well as environmental headaches for municipalities. Stakeholders in Burnaby hope their new facility will help achieve this goal too.

² City of Kelowna and Regional District of the Central Okanagan. (September 2007). *Mountain Bike Community Profile for the Central Okanagan*.

4 What is Happening in British Columbia?

The Product – Trails and Community- Based Product

Resorts

Many ski resorts now have lift-accessed mountain biking during the summer months for freeride and downhill mountain bikers and offer all-inclusive guiding and coaching packages. A significant number also have additional trails for cross country and areas for skills parks, including:

- **Whistler** www.whistlerblackcomb.com
- **Sun Peaks** www.sunpeaksresort.com/summer/bike-park
- **Silver Star** www.skisilverstar.com/summer/home
- **Kicking Horse** www.kickinghorsesort.com/summer-main/the-mountain/mountain-biking
- **Panorama** www.panoramaresort.com/mountain-bike-park
- **Fernie** www.skifernie.com/summer

Backcountry Adventure

The BC Backcountry Lodges and ski industry associations represent over 50 operators. Collectively they create a thriving winter business. Additionally, several companies are now offering guided mountain bike tours during the summer months, thereby extending their seasons. For example: www.tyaxadventures.com, www.chilcoteinholidays.com/product/mountain-biking-tours and www.retallack.com/backcountry-adventure/mountain-biking www.solmountain.com/summer/singletrack-mountainbiking.html.

Bike Camps and Tour Operators

A growing number of tour operators and bike camps are emerging as awareness of BC's potential as a mountain bike destination grows. Bike camps offer programs from beginners to advanced, while tour operator services range from local guiding to multi-day, all-inclusive tours featuring highly acclaimed riders as coaches and guides.

- **Endless Biking** www.endlessbiking.com
- **Big Mountain Adventures** www.ridebig.com
- **Sacred Rides Mountain Bike Holidays** www.sacredrides.com
- **Dirt Series Mountain Bike Camps** www.dirtseries.com
- **Bush Pilot Biking** www.bushpilotbiking.com
- **Bear Back Biking** www.bearbackbiking.com
- **Island Mountain Rides** www.islandmountainrides.com
- **Wandering Wheels** www.wanderingwheels.ca



Photo: Sun Peaks Resort



Photo: Endless Biking – Norma Ibarra

The Product – Trails and Community- Based Product

Niche Products

Tyax Adventures, located near Gold Bridge in the South Chilcotin area, operates the only known floatplane-accessed mountain bike tours in the world. Offering single and multi-day tours, and using highly-qualified pilots and guides, Tyax Adventures provides clients with a once-in-a-lifetime experience. *“All the riding in the South Chilcotin area is cross-country riding at its absolute best! Trails weave their way through some of the most beautiful terrain in the world.”*³



Photo: Tyax Adventures – Richard Jury

Festivals and Events

BC has a number of extremely popular mountain bike events, many of which have become legendary in the mountain bike world and attract riders from all over the globe.

- **Crankworx, Whistler**
Ten-day event; over 130,000 spectators
www.whistler.com/crankworx
- **Test of Metal, Squamish**
67 km (42 mi) Over 1,000 riders
www.testofmetal.com
- **BC Bike Race, Southwestern BC**
Seven-day stage race
www.bcbikerace.com
- **Single Track 6, Showcasing authentic mountain bike communities in Western Canada**
Six-day stage race
www.singletrack6.com

Events can generate a substantial economic impact for the host community. The Sea to Sky Economic Impact Study illustrated the 2006 economic impact that both the Test of Metal in Squamish (\$582,000) and Crankworx in Whistler (\$11.5 million) had on the local community.⁴

Good Practice – Kamloops, BC – Providing a diversity of mountain bike experiences⁵

Kamloops is an excellent example of a community providing a wide range of mountain biking experiences. These include:

- Community bike park – Phase I of the Kamloops Bike Ranch features a fast-flowing downhill trail with a multitude of table top jumps and berms rated for the expert rider, a jump park for expert and intermediate riders, and a BMX track built according to Canadian Cycling Association standards.
- Single track trails – the openness of the terrain surrounding Kamloops provides many opportunities for single track trails. Largely set on grassland and pine forests, designated trails are smooth and offer beautiful views of the river valleys and lakes. Many parks in the area offer cross country mountain bike trails, such as Kenna Cartwright Park.
- Freeride and downhill trails – There are numerous options for freeriding in the area including a number of commercially operated freeride and downhill mountain biking venues.

³ www.tyaxadventures.com

⁴ Western Canada Mountain Bike Association. (2006). *Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study*.

⁵ www.Kamloops.ca

4 What is Happening in British Columbia?

Issues and Challenges Facing Mountain Biking in BC

This section highlights some of the key challenges and issues facing mountain biking in BC. Ideas and examples for addressing these will be covered in [Part Two](#) of this guide.

Unauthorized Trail Networks

In many BC communities mountain biking grew and developed under the radar, largely ignored until issues began to arise with landowners/managers, local residents and/or other trail user groups.

Historically, landowners or managers often perceived mountain biking as a high-risk activity and believed it best to either not allow it at all, or to simply not acknowledge it in order to minimize duty of care or liability issues that could arise. Neither approach has proved to be successful, so land managers and clubs are now working more closely together to develop systems for maintaining trails and managing risk. As a result, land managers have a much better ability to control the activity within acceptable limits.

Establishing authorized trail networks continues to be a challenge in many communities throughout the province; however, since 2008, Recreation Sites and Trails (part of the Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations) has been working closely with communities to authorize mountain bike trails on Crown land. Authorized implies that partnership agreements have been entered into with landowners and that mountain biking is an accepted activity on the specified trail supported with specific trail management practices such as signage, maintenance, and properly built technical trail features.

Liability and Insurance

Issues around liability and insurance have prevented the province and many BC communities from pursuing a more proactive role in supporting mountain bike tourism. This is largely attributed to technical trail features (TTFs).

Concerns about risk are valid if trails and TTFs are not managed properly. In communities where land managers and local

mountain bike clubs have worked closely to develop fair management agreements, with both parties sharing an interest in the trails, the liability issue becomes less of a concern. Equitable management agreements provide greater control over what TTFs are built, where and how.

The process of establishing an authorized trail network, and suggestions for overcoming the issues and challenges presented above are detailed in [Part Two](#) of this guide.

Good Practice – Burns Lake, BC – A “can do” attitude for working around the TTF issue

According to Kevin Derksen, president of the Burns Lake Mountain Bike Association (BLMBA), his organization has worked closely with the Burns Lake Community Forest (BLCF) and Recreation Sites and Trails BC, part of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, to come up with a winning partnership that allows access to a combination of private land and Crown Land for trail building within the Province’s guidelines.

A 65 ha (160 ac) parcel of private land was acquired by the BLCF in 2006 and it is this parcel that contains the community bike park with dirt jumps and TTFs. The BLCF has provided land, the Regional District provided grant writing support and the BLMBA builds and maintains the trails. Additionally, BLMBA manages TTFs on Crown Land trails as well which includes the Boer Mountain Recreation Site covering 4,000 ha of single black diamond classification.



Photo: Burns Lake – Burns Lake Mountain Bike Association

Issues and Challenges Facing Mountain Biking in BC

Volunteer Maintained Trails

Mountain bike clubs are often formed so that local riders have a voice in the community to advocate for recreational trail access and to address concerns from other area stakeholders. Local mountain bike clubs accept a major responsibility for trail maintenance on the trails they ride, organizing trail maintenance programs (trail days) and encouraging local volunteer participation.

However, clubs often lack the resources to fully meet the requirements made of them by the landowners. It could also be argued that the clubs should not be assuming the responsibility, and in some cases liability, for helping to provide a recreational amenity for the community.

Diversity of Stakeholders

The stakeholders involved in mountain biking represent a very diverse range of interests and there is a need for greater understanding between the various groups. Recognition of the benefits of a well-managed and maintained trail system, respect for local residents and other trail users, and facilitating a close working relationship with landowners are key to creating a shared vision. When it

comes to the creation of a mountain biking trail system in a given area, there are generally many different interest groups and points of view to be considered. It is important that the benefits of a well-managed and well-maintained trail system be recognized and shared, that the voices of local residents be respected and that close working relationships with landowners be developed.

Environmental Impact

Environmental concerns can arise from high-volume trail use, trails located in environmentally sensitive areas, illegal trails, and from poor trail construction or lack of maintenance. These issues have led to the creation and adoption of trail building standards and principles such as:

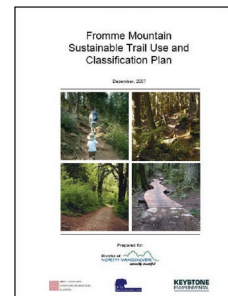
1. IMBA's Trail Solutions Guide (2004) www.imba.com/catalog/book-trail-solutions
2. Natural Surface Trails by Design – by Troy Scott Parker, (2004) www.natureshape.com/pubs/nstbd.html
3. Whistler Trail Standards (2003) www.whistler.ca/images/stories/PDF/Resort%20Experience/Cycling_Committee/trail_standards_first_edition.pdf



Photo: Trail Day on CBC, North Vancouver – NSMBA

Good Practice – District of North Vancouver, BC – Fromme Mountain Sustainable Trail Use and

Classification Plan (Dec. 2007)⁶



The District of North Vancouver's (DNV) Fromme Mountain Sustainable Use and Trail Classification Plan 2007 adopts an eco-based approach that places environmental concerns at the forefront. The plan points out that trail construction and maintenance has the greatest potential for adverse environmental impact on the forested mountainous areas of the DNV, even

more than recreational use. As a result, there are a series of Best Management Practices recommended for the trails that are modeled on the fundamental principles of sustainable trail design explored by Troy Scott Parker in his book Natural Surface Trails by Design (2004). www.dnv.org/article.asp?c=988

⁶ District of North Vancouver. (2007). *Fromme Mountain Sustainable Use and Trail Classification Plan*.

4 What is Happening in British Columbia?

Provincial Initiatives

There are two key provincial initiatives that have had a profound impact on the way mountain biking is developed at the community level.

1. Mountain Bike Trails Policy

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) developed a Mountain Bike Trails Policy in collaboration with stakeholders. The MFLNRO's policy is to accommodate the demand for recreational mountain biking within British Columbia's existing network of multiple use recreational trails, and to authorize new trails, provided:

- the trails and facilities are properly located, safe and do not result in significant user conflicts or environmental damage, and
- the proponent is willing to make a long-term commitment to manage the new trails. www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca/partnering-with-us

2. Provincial Recreational Trails Strategy

The MFLNRO, in collaboration with BC Parks and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, initiated development of a provincial trails strategy in early 2007. The [Draft Recreation Trails Strategy for British Columbia](#) was released for public review

in the fall of 2008 and was fully adopted in May 2013. It describes an action plan for developing and managing a sustainable, world-class network of recreation trails in BC. The action plan was developed by a multi-agency Trails Strategy Committee, comprised of stakeholders and government representatives.

Following public release of the Draft Strategy, a comprehensive public review process was undertaken in ten communities across the province. More than 1,400 people took the opportunity to participate in the review process. All input received during the public consultation process was reviewed by the Trails Strategy Committee and changes to the draft strategy were made prior to its formal endorsement.

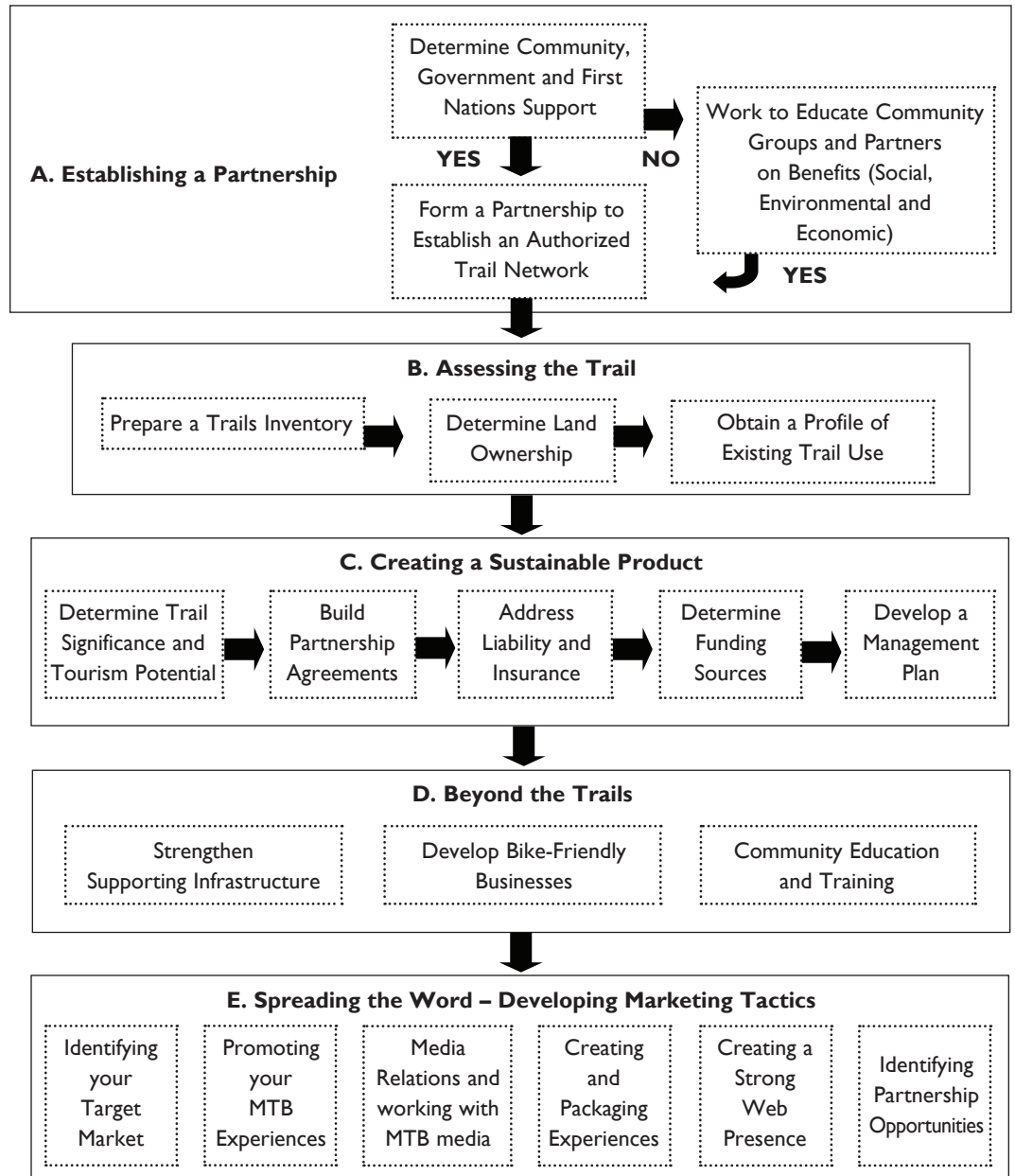
The impact of both the policy and the Trails Strategy has led to the creation of new opportunities for local recreation and tourism promotion in communities across the province.

Part Two

5 Has Your Community Got What it Takes?

Determining whether to proceed with developing a mountain bike tourism product requires consultation with stakeholders to assess support for the project within the community and broader region. It also requires a realistic assessment of the existing trail system to determine whether mountain biking will be a key product or more of an ancillary activity.

The previous diagram provides an overview of the entire process. The remainder of this section sequentially outlines how each of these steps should be undertaken. Communities should assess where they are in the overall process as a starting point for moving forward in a strategic manner. For example, some communities may be able to start at “C. Creating a Sustainable Product”, if they have already established a community trails partnership and assessed their trail system.



6 Establishing a Partnership

“Successful trail systems involve collaboration between land managers, volunteer groups, and local stakeholders, such as businesses, private landowners, environmental organizations and community leaders.”¹

Identify the Players

Whether the initiative is led by a volunteer group, the municipality or a local tourism society, the lead organization cannot go it alone and will need to form partnerships and collaborate with others to achieve its vision of developing a mountain bike product in the community.

The first step in developing mountain bike tourism is to determine the level of support that organizations and individuals within the community and surrounding region have for the concept and the extent to which they are prepared to become involved.

Following is a core list of potential stakeholders, however there will likely be others in your own community who could be involved:

- Local Municipality
- Regional District
- First Nations
- Landowners
- Local bike club (e.g. trail maintenance/building volunteers)
- The Crown – Regional and District Recreation Officers
- Local destination marketing organization (DMO)
- Other key trail users
- Local businesses (e.g. bike shop, guides, accommodation)
- Industry (e.g. bike and bike accessories manufacturers)

Engaging First Nations

Where First Nations land is involved, engaging and creating partnerships is critical to establishing a sustainable trails network. First Nations are key partners at

the community level and are often one of the more significant land managers.

First Nations involvement ensures that the trail systems developed are sensitive to First Nations cultural, archeological and historical sites in the region.

Good Practice – Lil’wat Nation and Pemberton Valley Trails Association (PVTA) – First Nations Agreements²

The PVTA and Lil’wat Nation reached an agreement for long term cooperation of crown lands managed by the Lil’wat Nation. The Lil’wat Nation allows recreational access to the lands and the PVTA provides liability insurance to give the Lil’wat Nation peace of mind. The Lil’wat Nation is also on the PVTA board to ensure its interests are maintained.

Form a Trails Committee

It is a good idea to formally establish a Trails Committee and give it a name. While mountain biking is the focus of this guide and the goal is to establish and maintain mountain bike trails, there is a need for a holistic approach to trails management as many trails are multi-use. Other trail user groups should be at the table to ensure that planning for mountain biking is a more open process.

One of the most important initial factors is to clearly define the group’s mandate and scope. Many committees have “Terms of Reference” that give the participants a clear picture of why they are there and what they are trying to achieve. A sample Terms of Reference from the Whistler Cycling Committee is included in [Appendix 1](#).

¹ International Mountain Bicycling Association. (2007). *Managing Mountain Biking. IMBA’s Guide to Providing Great Riding*

² Ministry of Forestry, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. (April, 2008). *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreational Trail Strategy*.

6 Establishing a Partnership

The Trails Committee will have tasks and projects to work on so it is a good idea to clearly outline who will be responsible for what within the group. Some of the tasks associated with this could be shared or rotated periodically. Appointing one person to manage communications is critical to ensuring everyone is kept informed about progress and what is coming up.

Getting Everyone on the Same Page

An important step in the process of promoting your community as a mountain bike destination is determining how the community perceives tourism in general, and mountain biking specifically. Trails for residents and recreation are one thing, but how do people feel about trails for tourists or about tourists using community trails?

Key questions for the Trails Committee and partners to consider include:

- What is the community vision for tourism?
- What are the community's tourism priorities, if any?
- How are tourism and trails identified within the Official Community Plan?
- Will the municipality provide resources for trails used to attract visitors?
- How do the volunteer groups associated with trail maintenance perceive tourists on the trails?
- Are local businesses supportive of bike tourists?
- Is there interest from the wider tourism industry to build packages around new mountain biking opportunities?

Good Practice – City of Rossland – Blending Trails and the Community Vision

“Building a vision” – Stewart Spooner of the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society explains that in the early 1990's, Rossland City Council and key individuals from the area began looking for ways to revitalize the local economy. They focused on “health and wellness”, given existing natural and cultural assets, including Red Mountain ski resort and an extensive but undeveloped trail system.

During 1993-1994, as part of the City's official community planning process, the Parks and Recreation Committee recommended that the City develop the existing trail network in a formal way. Subsequently the concept of developing the trail system became part of the Official Community Plan and Council commissioned a Trail Master Plan.

Now the community is beginning to see the tourism benefits. Kim Dean, director of the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society cited, “Businesses in town are definitely noticing an increase in mountain bike tourists to Rossland. It's become the world-class amenity we originally envisioned.”³

³ Scott, Mitchell. Bike. (December 2007). *Trail of the Year*.

Defining the Scope – What to Include?

Although it may require more work up front to gather the partners, the benefits of looking beyond the community to a regional trail system are often well worth the effort. Some of the most successful systems in BC and internationally are based on a regional model. Working collectively as a region can expand the overall product-offering, create a more extensive trail network and strengthen the subsequent marketing efforts once the product is in place.

Good Practice – Sea to Sky Trail – Taking a Regional Approach to Trails⁴

first conceived in 1991, the Sea to Sky Trail is a non-technical, multi-user mountain bike trail connecting Squamish to D'Arcy. Future phases expand the trail from Horseshoe Bay to Lillooet. With multiple regional partners, including Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, Trans Canada Trail, Whistler Blackcomb Foundation, Village of Pemberton, District of Squamish, Regional Municipality of Whistler, and the province, support for this project continues to be strong. In partnership, the trail has evolved to include a strong signage program that celebrates the natural setting and human and cultural history of the area, which enhances the environmental, social and cultural benefits for both visitors and residents.

Good Practice – 7stanes, Scotland⁵

The 7stanes project is a well-known success story within the mountain biking industry. The project entailed building seven mountain bike centres in the south of Scotland over a period of three years. The 7stanes project, however, was not completed in isolation; it was part of a broader national cycling strategy.

The success of the 7stanes is due primarily to its regional approach. The creation of seven centres in seven communities, each with its own unique experience, created a regional product in southern Scotland that gave bikers an excellent reason to travel to the region and stay several days. This would not have been possible with just one centre acting alone.

⁴ www.seatoskytrail.ca

⁵ www.7stanesmountainbiking.com

⁶ Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association. (2006). *Sea to Sky Mountain Bike Economic Impact Study*.

Educating Partners – Demonstrating the Value of Trails

Many municipalities and community groups are not directly engaged in tourism or in managing or maintaining trail systems. As a result, there is often a need to educate and raise awareness of the potential social, environmental and economic benefits that a well-managed trail network can provide (see [Section 3 - Why Develop Mountain Biking?](#)).

The ability to produce legitimate numbers that demonstrate the value of trails is key to breaking down barriers and negative perceptions within a community. Presenting examples of mountain bike tourism success stories from other communities, as well as specific data illustrating mountain bike tourism's actual and potential revenue contribution, can greatly assist efforts to gain support and funding for trail initiatives.

Good Practice – Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study⁶

In 2006 the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA) coordinated a regional economic impact study for mountain biking in the Sea to Sky corridor. This study identified the value of mountain bike-related activity in the region based on user surveys conducted with trail riders over the summer months.

The results provided valid economic impact data for the region that clearly demonstrated the value of trails in Whistler, Squamish and the North Shore: \$10.3 million in spending by riders living outside the host communities over the period of June 4 to September 17, 2006. The study also provided demographic information challenging the notion that mountain bikers are not valuable visitors to a community. The vast majority of riders were over 30 years old and spent, on average, from \$39 (Squamish) to \$122 (Whistler) per person/per day, on an overnight trip.

6 Establishing a Partnership

The community of Kamloops recognizes the importance of trails for citizens and visitors alike, supporting the creation of the Kamloops Bike Ranch.

“The construction of the Kamloops Bike Ranch will provide a world-class mountain bike facility for residents and visitors, promote fitness and appreciation of the natural environment, and build on the City of Kamloops’ profile as the Tournament Capital of Canada.”⁷

As already emphasized, the value of mountain bike trails goes beyond their economic potential as tourism products. There are also many social benefits that provide significant value to communities. Mountain bike trails can be viewed as recreational assets much like a skating rink or swimming pool. They provide opportunities for residents to improve their health and well-being. They also represent a healthy means for youth to explore their own abilities and build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Good Practice – Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship – Downieville, California⁸

The Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of trails, and access to those trails, in and around the Sierra Buttes area. They advocate for a “Healthy Trail System” which:

- improves local economies
- promotes active lifestyles
- enhances recreational opportunities
- sustains greater year-round residency.

Good Practice – 7stanes, Scotland⁹

Forestry Commission Scotland conducted an evaluation in 2007 and found that there were just under 400,000 visitors, putting it in the top 20 most popular visitor attractions in Scotland. A large portion, 80% of these visitors are non-local.

Good Practice – North Shore Mountain Bike League⁹

The North Shore High School Mountain Bike League (NSMBL) is one of the oldest secondary school leagues in North America. This successful, flourishing and inspiring program includes mentorship, stewardship and friendship - all centered on creating the opportunity for high school-aged kids to ride and race mountain bikes cross-country with their peers.

⁷ www.kamloopsbikeranch.com

⁸ www.sierratrails.org

⁹ EKOS Limited and Tourism Resources Company. (October 2007). Report for Forestry Commission Scotland.

Good Practice – Sprockids¹⁰

The Sprockids Program is a multi-tiered approach designed to provide participants with the opportunity to experience success on a variety of levels. Through the sport of mountain biking, students develop a strong sense of self-esteem, while discovering the potential within themselves.

Sprockids has developed a program based on integrating mountain biking into every aspect of the school curriculum. The program can be used to make learning exciting and relevant in math, language arts, science, social studies, art, PE, personal planning, environmental studies, home economics, industrial education, counseling, and anger management.

The Canadian Cycling Association now offers Sprockids as a nationally co-coordinated program that teaches four skill areas of cycling: safety, etiquette, riding (1st and 2nd gear), and bicycle maintenance.

Key attributes of the program include:

- participants have the ability to progress in all areas of the program at their own pace
- participants record progress in their personal “Passport”
- trained leaders instruct and evaluate
- teaches life skills - goal setting, problem solving, decision making, etc.
- develops positive philosophy - cycling and learning as life-long activities
- promotes values - respect for others, empathy, appreciation and responsibility for the environment.

¹⁰ www.sprockids.com

7

Assessing Your Trail Network

Trails are the core component of the mountain biking experience and in order to promote them, trails must be authorized. The first step is to determine what you have, who the partners are, and how you propose to maintain and manage the trails.

“Your product is the trails, so if it’s not authorized, you have no product”

Ashley Korenblat
CEO, Western Spirit Cycling
Adventures

Prepare a Trails Inventory

Document the existing trail network on a trail-by-trail basis. For each trail you will need to consider:

1. Location – is it within the region and covered by the partners you have at the table?
2. Landownership – who is the landowner?
3. Is there any formal or informal agreement in place for mountain bike use?
4. What is the current status of use (e.g. trail users as well as other industry use in the area) and is there any actual (or potential for) conflict between mountain biking and other users?
5. What type of trail is it (e.g. cross country or downhill)?
6. Does it contain any technical trail features or man-made obstacles (e.g. log rides, ladders or drops)?

7. What is the level of difficulty (e.g. beginner to expert)?
8. How sustainable is the trail? Consider, for example, the impact on the natural environment and surrounding residential neighbourhoods.
9. Other trail attributes (e.g. scenery).

It would also be beneficial to list other mountain bike products, services and infrastructure that could support the trail experience:

- Bike parks (skills, dirt jump, pump track, street/urban)
- Bike shops, guides and rentals
- Other supporting businesses (e.g. bike-friendly accommodation that includes secure storage, bike wash, tuning station, etc.).

Determine Landownership

Working closely with local land managers and having them onboard as partners is fundamental to establishing an authorized trail system. Without landowner support and permission, authorized trails are not possible. Local groups or organizations need to be well-organized and demonstrate that they have the capacity to responsibly manage and maintain the trails.

Private Land

Dealing with private landowners to obtain mountain bike trail access can be a challenge, given that landowners often have limited knowledge of the activity. Private landowners’ concerns are usually related to liability and groups should be prepared to answer

questions and demonstrate how they can minimize or eliminate risk.

There are many good examples throughout the province of agreements and partnerships between municipalities, local clubs and private landowners that provide access to trails on private land.

Crown Land

Ninety-four per cent¹ of the land in British Columbia is provincial Crown land. Approval and management of Crown land trails is now the responsibility of the MFLNRO – Recreation Sites and Trails Branch. The Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) is the primary legislative tool used to approve trails

¹ www.for.gov.bc.ca

Determine Landownership

on Crown land. Sections 56 and 57 of the FRPA, provide two avenues for approval of Crown land trails:

Section 57 Authorized Trails:

Under section 57, the Minister may authorize the construction, rehabilitation or maintenance of a trail. A trail authorized under section 57 is not required to be given legal consideration in forest planning. Before the Ministry authorizes the trail, the proponent must provide a submission to the satisfaction of the District Recreation Officer (RSTBC) that the trail construction or management will not cause:

- significant risk to public safety;
- unacceptable damage to the environment; and
- unacceptable conflicts with other resource values or users.

Section 56 Established Provincial Trails:

Trails are deemed “established” by an order of the Minister under section 56 of the Forest and Range Practices Act. The trails are typically mapped for public awareness and established trails must be given consideration in forest management and planning. Rules under the FRPA may be posted and are enforceable. Establishment of a trail does not guarantee conservation in the same sense as a park or protected area.

Prior to authorizing or establishing trails, Recreation Sites and Trails BC undertakes a process to consult with First Nations, government agencies, and other tenure holders (including forest licensees) that may be impacted by the trail.

Recreation Sites and Trails BC manages trails through partnership agreements with local organizations. Often trails will only be considered for establishment where a potential partner has stepped forward, such as a local bike club. Proponents of the partnership agreement must agree to specific trail management operational standards including annual inspections (see [Appendix 2](#); Operational Standards – Mountain Bike Trails)

The Province is able to provide a General Liability Insurance Policy and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Policy to its partners. To be eligible for coverage, individuals, societies, corporations, or First Nations groups must have a formal partnership agreement with the Province for the management and maintenance of trails. Trails must be established under section 56 of the Forest and Range Practices Act.

For guidance on issues related to developing trails for commercial use on Crown land see www.for.gov.bc.ca/Land_Tenures/tenure_programs/programs/adventure_tourism/index.html.

Keep Trails Simple

Perceptions regarding mountain biking are often a stumbling block to negotiations with land managers. As mentioned in [Section 4](#), many only see the extreme stunts and jumps and are naturally very concerned over the potential liability and risk to which this type of biking exposes them.

However, in reality many of the trails on private, public and Crown land do not contain these structures. If a community is looking to develop a mountain biking trail on Crown land, under the current policy in BC it should focus its efforts on cross country-style trails that appeal to a broader market and do not have the liability issues associated with Technical Trail Features (TTFs).

First Nations

In some cases, development, authorization and maintenance of trails may impact Aboriginal right and title to those lands. Therefore, meaningful involvement and collaboration with First Nations communities is vital to an approved and viable trail network. Furthermore, partnerships with First Nations can provide new opportunities for communities and businesses looking to develop mountain bike tourism.

www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate

7

Assessing Your Trail Network

Determine Landownership

Good Practice – City of Terrace and Terminal Developments Limited – Private Landowner Agreement

The City of Terrace recently completed the development of a new mountain bike trail on Terrace Mountain that crosses municipal, crown and a large private land parcel. The City and the owners developed a license agreement and, in return for trail access, the City:



Photo: Terrace Mountain Trail – Brutus McCarron

- Pays the owner an annual license fee.
- Pays the owner's annual comprehensive general liability insurance premium for the trail.
- Identifies and holds harmless the owners from and against all liabilities.
- Maintains its own comprehensive general liability insurance in support of the indemnity for not less than \$5,000,000 per act or occurrence.

Municipal Land

Generally, trails and bike parks on municipal lands are the responsibility of the municipality. The municipality treats these as community-based recreational amenities and covers the management, maintenance and liability associated with operating them.

“The growth of these healthy and youth-positive recreational (bike) activities should be supported and encouraged, particularly given the minimal costs of developing and maintaining non-traditional bicycle recreation facilities in comparison to other, more traditional recreational facilities.”²*

Once you have established the ownership of the land, here are some tips for approaching owners and managers. Do your homework and come prepared to answer these key questions:

- Who is going to ride the trails?
- Who is going to maintain the trails?
- Who is going to monitor use of the trails?
- What is the landowner's exposure in terms of liability?

* Non-traditional bicycle recreation is defined as off-road mountain biking (cross-country, free-riding, skills, dirt jumping, pump track riding, etc.) and BMX riding (urban riding, dirt jumping and racing).

² City of Surrey. (February 2007). *City of Surrey Bicycle Recreation Facilities Strategy*.

Obtain a Profile of Existing Use

A key component of assessing your trail network is determining existing use. Ideally this would entail a survey of trail users to get a profile of the different user groups and an estimate of volume for each trail. As part of the user assessment you should attempt to differentiate between current resident versus visitor use of the trails. This information will be important for determining where resources will be focused and which trails will be promoted to visitors.

An economic impact study could gather the trail user information required for an inventory, and would also give the community some valuable data on the value of its trails.

Trail Use Conflicts

Having developed an appreciation of current use, the Trails Committee should seek to clarify any existing or potential trail user conflict that needs to be addressed. IMBA, in its [Guide to Managing Mountain Biking](#), has an entire section on managing user conflict that looks at understanding different types and causes of conflict, and how to implement practical solutions. As mentioned in the *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy* (April 2008), the most common form of conflict is between motorized and non-motorized users. The key to reducing the potential for conflict is to employ a range of management tools:

- User group involvement
- Code of Conduct
- Education
- Signage
- Designated trails use
- Enforcement of regulations.

8 Creating a Sustainable Product – Developing a Management Plan

Determine Trail Significance and Tourism Potential

Having completed the assessment of the trail, the next step is creating a sustainable tourism product.

Tourist versus Local Needs

Deciding on which trails to include and promote for tourism requires careful consideration. What tourists are looking for is not always the same as what residents will want. Due to the mountainous nature of its terrain, BC has challenging trails. Trails ridden by locals are not necessarily appropriate for a visitor who might not have the same skill level or be used to the type of technical riding available in many BC communities.

Trails such as those located in the Resort Municipality of Whistler's Lost Lake network are perfect for beginners and offer the opportunity for progression from wide crushed gravel trails to singletrack. This diversity of product helps to make mountain biking more accessible and broaden the potential market.

However, BC has a competitive advantage when it comes to technical trails and these should still be regarded as a key asset for the experienced rider niche market.

Assessing Trail Significance

The following matrix provides a starting point for the consideration of which trails will be promoted to visitors. Bear in mind that once a trail is on a map, people will know about it and go looking for it. Trails could be graded on a scale of 1 through 10, based on the following attributes, in order to determine their potential tourism value.

Following a trail-by-trail analysis, communities should then take a step back and consider broader goals related to the entire trail network.

Determine
Trail
Significance
and Tourism
Potential

Trail-by-Trail Review Matrix

Trail Attributes	Brief Description of Attribute	Rating (1-10)			
		Trail A	Trail B	Trail C	Trail D
1. Scenic Value	The trails provide scenic vistas and connect with their natural surroundings.				
2. Challenge / Flow	The trails provide riders with an appropriate challenge and offer changes in grade and flowing corners.				
3. Accessibility	The trails are easily accessible from the town centre via a short riding distance (eg. 1-3km) or a short vehicle shuttle.				
4. Linkages and Connectivity	Trails connect with others in the network offering further options to riders.				
Total					

Entire Trail Network Criteria

Attributes	The Question
1. Variety	Do you have a mix of trails that appeals to different riding abilities and genres?
2. Connections	Do you have connections between trails and the ability to customize the experience?
3. Fun	Are the trails fun?
4. Signature Trails	Do you have a particular trail that will drive people to your community, specifically for the purpose of riding? Something you can build your promotion around?

8 Creating a Sustainable Product – Developing a Management Plan

Building Partnership Agreements

The core component of a sustainable mountain bike trail product is the partnership agreement created with landowners and other key organizations that provides the public with access and sets the tone and scope of what is possible with the trail network. International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) outlines ten partnership principles that communities should consider as they work towards crafting an agreement.

Writing Partnership Agreements

Agreements with land managers are critical to creating an authorized and sustainable tourism product. IMBA advocates that partnership agreements should be kept simple and easy to understand.

This experience is echoed by the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society (KCTS). The trail access agreements KCTS prepared were based on plain language and respect, with the landowner's rights paramount, and the responsibilities of the Society clearly outlined. Private landowners found the language and content acceptable, which in turn made it possible for the KCTS to obtain the agreements.

Good Practice – IMBA's Ten Partnership Principles¹

1. Write specific agreements
2. Start simple
3. Have patience
4. Respect each other's viewpoint
5. Be civil
6. Plan for ongoing communication
7. Adapt to change
8. Upgrade knowledge and skills
9. Focus on the vision not the past
10. Local knowledge solves local issues

Formal versus Informal Agreements

The type of agreement is largely dependent on the parties involved and the degree of understanding and support for mountain biking within the community.

Generally (and ideally) a formal agreement will provide an element of certainty and will clearly outline the obligations of the parties involved.

However, formal agreements with volunteer organizations may not be the most practical solution and can be a significant burden if such a group does not have sufficient capacity or access to resources to maintain trails on an ongoing basis.

IMBA – the Five W's of Partnership Agreements

1. Who (partners)
2. Why (purpose)
3. Where (location)
4. What (responsibilities)
5. When (duration and timelines)

Refer to IMBA.com for examples.

Good Practice – City of Surrey

The City of Surrey and the Surrey Off-Road Cycling Enthusiasts Society (SORCE) have an excellent partnership that does not include any formal agreement. The City acknowledges that it is the City's role to provide recreational opportunities for the residents which includes mountain biking parks and trails and that SORCE does not have exclusive use of the facilities. SORCE provides volunteer labour to do some of the maintenance required on the trails and in the parks, but is not ultimately responsible for the operation or the liability associated with the facilities.



Photo: South Surrey Bike Park – Jay Hoots

¹ IMBA. (2007). *Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA's Guide to Providing Great Riding*.

Address Liability and Insurance

Any agreement with a landowner will make reference to liability and exactly who is indemnified in the event of a claim. Organizations (and their directors) named on agreements should do their due diligence and make sure they know what their land use agreement and insurance policy covers. Be aware that insurance policies offer no protection for negligence, so appropriate steps need to be taken to ensure that risk is minimized and that there is a proactive effort to educate and inform the users.

Two key points:

1. Talk through the policy with your insurance provider to ensure you know what you are covered for and what your obligations are as a provider.
2. If you are still uncomfortable with the policy or exposure to liability, seek legal counsel.

There are several different approaches within communities to deal with this issue. The liability is either covered by the landowner, the user or the municipality. The approach adopted depends on the type of landowners involved. The following is an overview of the legislation and types of policy available:

Occupiers Liability Act of BC – This act governs the obligations of a land manager towards anyone who comes on to that land in BC. Revisions to the Act in 1998 determined that a landowner or “occupier” has no “duty of care” to a person with respect to the risks willingly assumed by that person, other than: a duty not to create danger with intent to do harm to the person or damage to the person’s property and, a duty not to act with reckless disregard to the safety of the person or the integrity of the person’s property. Furthermore, it states that a person who enters premises for the purposes of recreation is deemed to have willingly assumed all risks.²

While the Act is considered to provide reasonable protection to landowners as a defense in the event of an injury or incident, it has not yet been tested in a BC court. Relying on the Act as your defense might well lead to you being successful in a court if challenged, but without insurance you will still incur significant legal fees if you have to defend yourself against a lawsuit.

General Liability Insurance – Liability insurance for trail use clubs, particularly those involved in trail management, is available from some insurance providers (e.g. OASIS Outdoor Adventure & Sport Insurance Solutions Inc.). These policies can insure clubs for liability arising from events like club rides, trail maintenance, trail patrols and other club activities. They can also provide coverage from completed operations, which means that if a club builds a trail and is subsequently sued by a trail user on the basis of that trail building, the policy will cover defense of the suit.³

Directors and Officers (D&O) Insurance
For volunteer clubs it is important that club directors and officers are covered by a separate insurance policy over and above any General Liability policy they might hold as an organization. D&O Insurance will provide additional coverage that may not be available under General Liability, for example, when the alleged mismanagement of a sports organization results in economic injury to another party or when another party’s rights under provincial or federal law have been violated.

IMBA Canada Insurance – IMBA Canada’s third party liability coverage of \$5 million is provided by Oasis Insurance and underwritten by Lloyds of London. This provides clubs with coverage for trail work and recreational use of trails. However, clubs must still do their due diligence to ensure they are happy with the coverage and that they are taking the necessary steps to mitigate the risk and accurately document trail work.

² Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. (April 2008). *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy*.

³ Recreation Sites and Trails. (April 2008). *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy*.

8 Creating a Sustainable Product – Developing a Management Plan

Address Liability and Insurance

Municipal Insurance – This is provided through the Municipal Insurers Association British Columbia (MIA). It is generally used to cover municipal infrastructure including recreational amenities which, as a rule, covers bike parks on municipal land and often extends to trails. In addition to municipal insurance, municipalities will generally require clubs that are involved in maintenance to have their own liability insurance for their members.

Authorized Trails on Crown Land; Insurance for Agreement Holders – As mentioned earlier in the section on Crown Land, the Province is able to provide a General Liability Insurance Policy and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Policy to its partners. Unlike the previous coverage and mountain bike trail agreements, partners managing mountain bike trails are no longer required to acquire their own coverage and name the province as an additional insured as a condition of the agreement. Now, the Province will provide coverage (\$2 million general liability) free of charge. In order to meet the terms of the agreement and qualify for insurance, partners are required to complete annual reporting requirements including initial and annual inspections of trails and TTF's and may be required to complete an annual operations plan as described in Schedule F (see Appendix 2).

Managing Risk

A key component of liability and insurance is mitigating the risk associated with trails. In addition to trail design, other factors to be considered include trail standards, comprehensive signage and coordinated risk management, which together provide a safer environment for users and minimize landowners' exposure to liability in relation to trail usage. This more comprehensive approach to risk management is becoming more prevalent within BC.

“The practice of risk management does not intend to eliminate risks, but instead to identify, reduce and manage them in order to decrease both the risk to the user and the potential liability to the land managers or partners.”⁴

The *Whistler Trail Standards* published in 2003 is one of the most widely referenced set of standards in the industry. The document outlines guidelines and standards for the environment, the development of trails, signage, TTFs and fall zones. The Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trails Strategy is adopting the Whistler standards.



Photo: Jay Hoots

⁴ Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. (April 2008). *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy*.

Determine Funding Sources

Lack of funding and resources for trails is a challenge for trail managers, municipalities, clubs and volunteers; securing funds requires a coordinated and innovative approach by all partners. Obtaining some level of municipal or regional district funding is key to the sustainability of a trails system, while ongoing efforts to access grants and provincial funding are also required. In addition to these funding sources, the private sector can play an important role in donating resources and volunteering time.

Municipal Funding – There is a strong case to be made for the public funding of trails. The City of Surrey Cycling Strategy 2007 highlighted that “the estimated total capital cost of the short-term improvements and upgrades recommended in the City of Surrey Bicycle Recreation Strategy ranges between \$360,000 and \$420,000, which is less than the cost of one sand-based grass sports field.”⁵

Furthermore, municipalities like Surrey, Whistler, Squamish and the District of North Vancouver are at the forefront of a change in municipal values and related policies, whereby trail networks are now beginning to be viewed as recreational amenities, much like sports fields. More municipalities will inevitably be

called upon by local tax payers to provide funding and resources for trail management. Regional districts provide a number of mechanisms to support or fund trails either through the addition of a specific property tax (as is the case with the SLRD) or through a regional recreation function.

Bike Clubs – While clubs and user groups can provide some funding for trails, primarily through in-kind labour, membership fees and fundraising initiatives, their capacity to do this is limited. Experience in the Sea to Sky corridor suggests that since the trail building boom of the 1990s, clubs have struggled with “volunteer burnout” and the original core group has moved on to family and other work-related commitments. As a result, in-kind labour for trail days is becoming scarce while the number of riders is actually increasing.⁶

Commercial Operators – Operators are also an important component of a trail system. Commercial operators are required to hold land use tenure in order to operate on Crown lands. Without tenure, operators do not have a contractual agreement with the Crown to pay fees and maintain trails.

Good Practice – North Shore Mountain Bike Association (NSMBA) – Trail Adoption Plan (TAP)

Vancouver’s North Shore trails have legendary status, but have some serious challenges when it comes to management and maintenance. The network crosses 3 municipal boundaries, incorporates Crown, Regional District and BC Parks land, receives some of the highest trail user volumes in BC and is situated in coastal rain forest. Faced with limited funding and volunteer capacity, in 2011 the NSMBA introduced the TAP program. TAP encourages local businesses and organizations to adopt a trail to support its ongoing maintenance.

Trail adopters agree to an annual trail adoption fee (\$2750 in 2013) and providing volunteer support for up to six trail days throughout the year. In return, the adopting group receives guidance and instruction from a professional trail builder, recognition on signage at the trail head, updates on their trail’s progress on social media and in the NSMBA newsletter, as well as good karma and bragging rights for supporting a valuable community resource.

“Utilize this opportunity to connect with the community and build spirit within your organization. Feel free to share your Adoption with a key partner to grow that relationship and share in the pride that comes with ownership.” Mark Wood, NSMBA

TAP enlisted over 25 local businesses and organizations in 2013 and continues to grow. The Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association (FVMBA) and the Watcom Mountain Bike Coalition (WMBC) in Washington State have also implemented the TAP model.

⁵ City of Surrey. (February, 2007). *City of Surrey Bicycle Recreation Facilities Strategy*.

⁶ Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. (April 2008). *Sea to Sky Corridor Recreation Trail Strategy*.

8

Creating a Sustainable Product – Developing a Management Plan

Determine Funding Sources

In addition to the legal tenure requirements, the commercial operators interviewed as part of this project also demonstrated a very strong social and environmental ethic. This translates into programs and practices that the operator voluntarily provides, so as to give something back to the communities in which they operate.

Examples include:

- Cash donations and use of equipment to local bike clubs.
- Donation of bike vacation packages to clubs for use as fundraisers.
- Paying employees while they are doing trail work in communities.
- Half-day of trail building included in client tour packages.
- Percentage of tour revenues donated to local projects.

The Mountain Bike Industry – Many bike shops and related local businesses also actively support trails in BC communities. Local manufacturers also maintain a strong community and advocacy focus in BC. For many years the Mountain Equipment Cooperative (MEC) has provided funding to the North Shore Mountain Bike Association (NSMBA) to support a number of projects such as the construction of a bridge on the Baden Powell Trail and to produce trailhead signs with ratings that indicate trail difficulty. In addition to funding, MEC also supports its own “trail day” whereby MEC staff volunteer their time to maintain trails – the model upon which the NSMBA’s Trail Adoption Plan was created.

Good Practice – Municipal Bike Parks – partnering with the private sector⁷

The development of bike parks presents many opportunities to partner with the private sector. Supplies such as construction materials and earth-moving equipment are needed to complete projects. Two examples demonstrate the benefits of this type of partnership:

- The Merritt Bike Park was built on land provided by the City and local businesses provided “in kind” donations of construction materials and volunteer labour, valued at \$30,000.
- Hartland Bike Park washrooms were built in 2003 by the Construction Association of Victoria as a community project, with 27 private sector businesses providing goods and services - plumbing, electrical, concrete, lumber and painting.

Good Practice – Red Bull Canada supports the creation of Full Nelson in Squamish, BC

Red Bull Canada provided funding to support the completion of a trail extension in Squamish. They then organized an official opening and invited mountain bikers from across the land to the Full Nelson bike trail opening on Saturday, May 5th, 2012. Built by a number of dedicated volunteers, the extension is just over a kilometre long. The trail is a golden dirt snake run that rolls, swerves, dips, and dives down the 1-km extension to Half Nelson. A BBQ was held during the day for all riders and spectators. Bike manufacturers were on site with demos from Giant, Rocky Mountain and Devinci. Shuttles services were provided, plus a chance to meet and ride with Red Bull pro riders including Brandon Semenuk, Stevie Smith, Thomas Vanderham and Andrew Shandro. Over 2000 riders participated. All proceeds of the day were donated to SORCA - the Squamish Off-Road Cycling Association.

⁷ City of Kelowna and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. (September 2007). *Mountain Bike Community Profile for the Central Okanagan*.

Develop a Management Plan

With the first four steps underway, the final phase is the development of a management plan that pulls the various components together and addresses ongoing maintenance and management issues.

Identifying an appropriate approach to ongoing management, with adequate funding and resources, can be one of the biggest challenges associated with developing a sustainable trail system.

Management will ideally be a shared responsibility between landowners, municipalities, regional districts and local clubs and volunteers. The role of each of these partners will vary depending on the local circumstances and the overall makeup of the trail system while reflecting their respective capacities and available resources.

The Management Plan

Trails that are promoted for tourism should have an appropriate management plan in place that addresses the following factors:

- overall goals and objectives
- land use policy
- trail authorization process
- trail capacity
- other trail users
- risk management
- environmental impacts
- inspection schedule and maintenance
- funding model

The plan should clearly identify who is responsible for carrying out each part of the plan and include a system for recording and reporting results. The plan should also be based on Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are well documented by IMBA.



9 Beyond the Trails

What do Mountain Biking Visitors Expect?

Mountain bike visitors, like many other travellers, are seeking experiences that will provide lasting memories and an escape from the busy pace of everyday life. These experiences should engage people in a personal way so, in developing the product, it is important that other less tangible factors associated with the destination and the overall experience be given full consideration.

According to IMBA¹, mountain bikers want experiences that provide:

- connection with nature
- escape from society
- fun and the opportunity to feel the flow of a trail
- challenge that tests the rider's technical skill
- exercise that strengthens the body and mind
- variety of trails that have their own distinctive personalities
- connections to other trails and routes that create a range of possibilities
- camaraderie between friends and new acquaintances

- a sense of belonging from trails that welcome mountain bikers
- convenient facilities that make the rider's experience complete.

Interviews with several BC and international mountain bike tour operators have suggested that many have been particularly successful in attracting repeat customers, with some attributing 60% of their total clientele to repeat business.² However, to achieve this level of success operators have focused on continually developing new experiences and seeking new riding destinations in an ongoing effort to keep their product fresh. The tour operators interviewed identified a number of key attributes that they look for in a destination, over and above great trails. Communities also need to:

- have an accessible trail network
- be friendly and welcoming
- provide good amenities, especially accommodation and dining options
- be easily accessible via major highways and airports (shuttles available)
- offer access to good local partners and guides.

Infrastructure

A high quality trail system designed to encourage destination bikers should also be supported by appropriate infrastructure that makes it easy to enjoy the trails. The infrastructure should include information sources for pre-trip planning, trail maps, signage and information kiosks, community bike paths and bike routes, and a variety of additional bike-friendly conveniences.

The infrastructure required to create a welcoming bike-friendly community can involve significant capital costs. These projects should be identified in the community's overall trail management plan and in other public infrastructure planning initiatives. Often local businesses and community organizations will help support such initiatives for their social and economic benefits.

¹ Managing Mountain Biking; IMBA's Guide to Providing Great Riding – 2007

² Interviews with BC and International Mountain Bike Tour Operators – April 2008

Information Sources

The mountain bike consumer is very web savvy. It is therefore important that communities have comprehensive tourism websites to convey all necessary trip-planning details to potential visitors and a web-based system for responding to inquiries in a timely manner. Information should be updated frequently and represent an accurate snapshot of what the visitor can expect. The information presented on destination websites also needs to be accessible and easy to use. Switzerland's

mountain biking site provides an excellent example of a well organized website with all the necessary information for bike trip planning.

www.mountainbikeland.ch/en/welcome.cfm

Further, the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association has a BC mountain biking website featuring mountain biking communities, resort bike parks and trip planning information.

www.mountainbikingbc.ca

Good Practices – Moab, Utah – DiscoverMoab.com

What to See

- Arches National Park
- Arts
- Canyonlands National Park
- Colorado Riverway
- Dead Horse Point SP
- Movie Sites
- Museums
- National Forests
- Rock Art Sites
- Sand Flats/Slickrock Trail
- Wetlands
- Wineries

What to Do

- 4 Wheeling
- ATV Riding
- Family Fun
- Fishing
- Golfing
- Guides & Outfitters
- Hiking
- Horseback Riding
- Motorcycle Touring
- Mountain Biking
- Photography
- River Activities
- Scenic Drives
- Scenic Flights
- Skydiving
- Winter Activities

Where to Stay

- Bed & Breakfasts
- Campgrounds
- Condos
- Guest Houses
- Hotels & Motels

MOUNTAIN BIKING IN MOAB

Welcome to the home of the greatest mountain biking on the planet. Moab offers a huge variety of trails for mountain bikers of any experience level, from beginners looking for a scenic ride through beautiful canyons and mesa tops, to seasoned bikers looking for the ultimate challenge.

Moab is well known for the world famous, and highly technical, Slickrock Bike Trail. This challenging 9.5 mile trail is considered by many to be the ultimate mountain biking experience. Moab, however, also contains an assortment of easy and extremely scenic biking trails. The Bar-M Loop Trail, for example, provides a great introduction to the varied terrain and beautiful scenery adjacent to Arches National Park. Look around this page and create your own mountain biking adventure!

SELECTED TRAILS

The following trails represent just a sample of the numerous trails in the Moab area. Please note that these descriptions and maps are meant to serve as an introduction. Before embarking on any trail make sure that you have a detailed trail map. Detailed maps can be purchased at many of the retail establishments in Moab, and at the Moab Information Center on Main & Center

DETAILED MAPS

Once you arrive in Moab, detailed trail maps and guides are available for sale at the Moab Information Center (MIC). Located in the center of Moab, on Main & Center Street, the MIC staff is always happy to assist you.

If you would like to purchase information prior to your visit, visit the Canyonlands Natural History Association website:

www.cnha.org

PUBLIC LANDS

These lands are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. If you have any specific questions about current conditions or regulations, contact them directly:

**Bureau of Land Management
Moab Field Office
82 East Dogwood**

The American Mecca of mountain biking that became famous among mountain bikers for its technically challenging Slick Rock Trail has developed from a small mining town that shunned weekend adventurers into one that now embraces them.

Although there is a high level of market awareness of Moab, and the community has been transformed into a multifaceted destination that caters to a wide range of interests, it still makes a significant effort to welcome visitors and keep them informed. DiscoverMoab.com is a main source of information for planning a trip to Moab and offers complete listings of all services with details on parks and trails, including maps.

Source: Kimberly Schappert, of the Moab Trails Alliance

9 Beyond the Trails

Infrastructure

Maps

Maps of the trail network are essential. Not only are they invaluable information sources for visitors, but they are potential revenue generators to help sustain the trails themselves. General trail area maps and trail information can be made accessible online, with more detailed maps available for purchase at local businesses and visitor information outlets.

Signage and Directions

Both the trails themselves, and key roads and pathways leading to the trails should be well-marked. If trails are not directly accessible from the community then signage along roads should point visitors toward the trailhead at appropriate junctions.

“People are looking for a good experience and clear signage can help facilitate this so they don’t get lost”

Ashley Korenblat
CEO, Western Spirit Western Spirit
Cycling Adventures

Trail Head Facilities

Amenities for riders at the trailhead are especially important for visitors to the community. Where appropriate, washroom facilities and vehicle parking should be accommodated. Sheltered kiosks are an important consideration at main trailheads of the more extensive trail networks.

They should include a welcome message, area map showing all connecting trails, riders’ code of conduct or trail etiquette, and any relevant notices regarding current trail conditions, work-in-progress or trail closures.

Secure Storage and Bike Racks

It is not uncommon for mountain bikes to be worth more than \$4,000 so naturally, riders look for a secure place to leave them while doing other things within the community. Hotel or other accommodation businesses in a bike destination area should be encouraged to provide a secure locked storage area for bikes and should promote this in their marketing material.

Communities should also offer solid bike racks conveniently and visibly placed in public areas. Whistler, for example, has bike racks throughout its retail and restaurant areas as well as centralized lockers so riders can easily explore the Village without worrying about bike security.

Good Practices – Hartland Bike Park - Capital Regional District, BC³

Hartland Bike Park’s popularity not only reflects its mountain biking terrain and technical training area, but also the infrastructure associated with the Park, including the available parking, washrooms, information kiosks with maps, bike wash and air hose available for riders at staging areas.



Photo: Hartland Bike Park trailhead facilities – SIMBS

³ City of Kelowna and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. (September 2007). *Mountain Bike Community Profile for the Central Okanagan*.

Bike-Friendly Businesses

Existing tourism businesses can, without great expense, provide simple value-added conveniences that are appreciated by mountain bike visitors, making them feel welcome and enhancing their overall experience.

Transportation

Transportation to and within a community is an important consideration for mountain bikers, particularly for international visitors and those not driving directly to a destination.

Shuttle services can be a viable business and offer convenience for both tourists and local riders seeking one-way transportation to the trailhead or the top of a downhill trail. Shuttle services also enable multiple runs and the ability to ride more trails in a shorter space of time. Such services can be developed as additional offerings for bike shops, bike tours or guide companies. Proper licensing is required to carry passengers commercially in BC.

Scheduled bus service companies such as Greyhound Canada are also beginning to work with the mountain bike industry. Greyhound Canada offers a Whistler Bike Park package that includes return bus fares from Vancouver and a Whistler bike park pass. Bicycles receive special treatment and are carried unboxed (charge \$10.00 each way), subject to space availability. www.greyhound.ca/en/WinterSpecials/Whistler/Packages.aspx

Airline baggage regulations for bicycles can vary greatly between airlines. The highest charges are generally seen on American carriers – up to \$110.00 one way, while some airlines still allow bikes free of charge.

Communities need to promote their rental services, if available, so potential visitors are aware that bringing their own bike is not the only option.

Bike Shops

Bike shops act as a hub for the local riding scene and visitors alike, as they are staffed by riders that know the trails and can provide visitors with the information they need. They also offer visiting bikers the option of professional repairs and servicing while they are on vacation.

Bike shops provide a social connection for riders by organizing evening group rides, training sessions and shuttle services. Many are also involved in sponsoring local mountain biking events.

Good relationships and ongoing communication with local bike shops is necessary to ensure that these key stakeholders are kept engaged in the ongoing development of mountain bike facilities.⁴

“BC has the advantage of fantastic bike shops throughout the province, that’s not the case in other destinations.”

Chris Winter

Owner, Big Mountain Adventures

Accommodations

There are a number of examples of accommodation providers catering to mountain bikers with extras such as secure bike storage, a bicycle repair stand and work area, a place to wash bikes, and laundry facilities. Some offer mountain bike videos for guests to watch and provide local expertise about current trail conditions and where to ride.

⁴ City of Kelowna and District of the Central Okanagan. (September 2007). *Mountain Bike Community Profile for the Central Okanagan*.

9 Beyond the Trails

Bike-Friendly Businesses

International destinations such as Italy and Scotland have taken this a step further with accommodation consortiums like Italy Bike Hotels and Visit Scotland's Cyclists Welcome program. Both promote accommodations offering a range of bike-specific amenities, packages and customized tours. Locally, Tourism Whistler offers an online search to find accommodation that cater to bike-specific needs. www.whistler.com/activities/biking/accommodation.



Photo: The Riding Fool Hostel – ridingfool.com

Good Practices – The Riding Fool Hostel – Cumberland, BC

Located in historic downtown Cumberland, the Riding Fool Hostel occupies an 1895 heritage building which served as the Village hardware store prior to being tastefully restored and converted into a hostel, bike shop and café.

Good Practices – Accent Inns – Bike Love

Mandy Farmer, CEO of Accent Inns, is an avid mountain biker. Her passion for biking and the growing cycle tourism market led to the creation of a new service program implemented at all Accent Inn hotel properties in BC. Their Bike Love program offers:

- Ground floor rooms you can store your bike in.
- Bicycle wash and tuning station with a professional-grade bike stand.
- Advanced tool kit at your disposal.
- Rags for cleaning your bike.
- A laundry room in case it's not just your bike that needs washing.

www.accentinns.com/special-offers/pets-bikes-more/bike-love

Good Practices – Visit Scotland – Cyclists Welcome Program



Cyclists and mountain bikers staying in Scotland will benefit from **Visit Scotland's Cyclists Welcome** program which aims to ensure that participating accommodation venues

offer a range of specified services designed to attract cyclists. More than 1,000 establishments now participate in the program and offer the following in addition to normal services:

For full-service accommodation:

- A separate space available for drying outdoor clothing and footwear so clothes can dry overnight
- A lockable covered shed for bike storage
- Details of the nearest bike shop
- A hot drink available on arrival
- A late evening meal (available until 8 pm) if there are no other restaurants or cafes within one mile; a late night snack offered after 8 pm
- Early breakfast option from 7 am, or for very early leavers, a tray the night before
- A packed lunch and a filled water bottle, if requested
- A supply of information on local bike routes, local public transport and a weather forecast for visitor reference.

For self-catering accommodation and hostels:

- A separate space available for drying outdoor clothing and footwear so clothes can dry overnight
- A lockable covered shed for bike storage
- Details of the nearest bike shop
- Information on local bike routes
- A telephone number for weather forecast
- Facilities for washing clothes or location of the nearest coin laundry
- Details of the establishment's Ordinance Survey co-ordinates (if outside a village).

www.visitscotland.com/quality-assurance/welcome-schemes

Bike-Friendly Businesses

Tours and Guiding Services

Guided services using professional local riders and local knowledge enhance the visitor experience. Customized tours, from hourly to full-day guided tours with lunch provided, can give visiting riders the opportunity to experience the best a community has to offer in a short space of time.

Guiding can be a business on its own or can be part of an existing business such as a bike shop or tour company. It is very important that guides have excellent local knowledge and outgoing personalities. They should also be qualified mountain bike instructors, have appropriate first aid certificates and be covered under a comprehensive liability insurance policy.

Mountain Bike Instructor Training –

The Canadian Mountain Bike Instructor Certification (CMIC) has been unavailable for some time now and the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP), developed over 20 years ago, is outdated.⁵ However, in May 2008 Endless Biking, a Vancouver based company offering a variety of mountain bike related services and programs, announced it would be offering mountain bike instructor training.

Endless Biking's Mountain Bike Instructor Training (MBIT) is currently recognized by:

- Capilano University
- College of the Rockies
- Whistler Bike Park
- The Dirt Series
- Yukon Cycling Association
- North Vancouver High School MTB Racing League
- Evergreen MTB Alliance
- Zep Techniques
- Ways 2 Ride
- Professional Mountain Bike Instructors Association

Bike Rentals

Given the cost and hassle of transporting bikes within North America on scheduled flights, the option to rent a quality mountain bike in the destination community can be appealing. The type of riding and terrain within a destination may also require an area-appropriate rental that has been set up (e.g. tires, suspension) for local conditions.

Rentals can also be a saviour for visiting riders who suffer a serious mechanical issue with their own bike or for those who happen to be visiting the destination for another purpose and decide they would like to ride. Bike rentals are often available through the local bike shop, however due to liability concerns only a few offer this service.



Photo: Wandering Wheels

Good Practices – Wandering Wheels, Revelstoke, BC⁶

Wandering Wheels offers local shuttle service to the top of Revelstoke's world class downhill trails as well as drop off at the Frisby Ridge XC trail. 3 hour evening shuttles offer unlimited riding at local DH trails while cross country shuttles drop off riders at the Frisby Ridge Trailhead providing an epic high alpine experience followed by a thrilling ride back to town.

⁵ Endless Biking May 2008 www.endlessbiking.com/2008/05/eb-now-offering-mtb-instructor-training.html

⁶ www.wanderingwheels.ca/shuttles.htm

9 Beyond the Trails

Enhancing the Trail Experience

Many destinations are engaged in innovative programs and initiatives to enhance or maintain the trail experience. These include bike skills parks, training and education programs and combining biking with other experiences such as public art.

Bike Skills Parks

Bike skills parks are the perfect complement to trails. They provide an area for riders to hone their skills and develop their riding abilities. Bike skills parks should be designed within specific standards, yet allow riders to be creative and develop confidence.

Training and Education

Investing in rider education and volunteer education and training are two key areas that can lead to an enhanced trail experience for users. Initiatives include:

- Trail kiosks that include trail etiquette pointers.
- Bike shop and visitor centre hosts with the local knowledge to advise visiting riders.

- Inviting an IMBA trail crew to assist with training, education and actual trail building.
- Enlisting professional help to assist with bike park construction and lead to informal volunteer education and training opportunities.



Photo: Inter River Bike Park, North Vancouver
– Jay Hoots

Good Practice – North Shore Mountain Bike Association (NSMBA) – Trail Etiquette⁷

The seven commandments.

1. Ride on open trails only.
2. Respect other trail users.
3. Respect the environment.
4. Always stay on the trail.
5. Ride don't slide.
6. Pack it out.
7. Know your limits.

Good Practices – Fruita Colorado – Sustainability – “Keep Singletrack Single”⁸

According to Troy Rarick, without sustainability you are doing a disservice to mountain biking and to your community. Local businesses depend on keeping the trails narrow as singletrack is what people come to Fruita to ride.

Over the Edge Sports (Troy's bike shop) believes that local businesses have a responsibility to educate visitors. The store has a host available Friday to Sunday to help people plan their rides and to inform them of the importance of preserving the trails.



Photo: 7stanes – Scotland Forestry Commission

Good Practices – 7stanes Art Project⁹

Southern Scotland's myths and legends are reflected in seven stone sculptures in place across the 7stanes mountain bike centres.

These sculptures are now being used to drive business to the sites with competitions to encourage visitors to the 7stanes forests.

⁷ www.nsmba.ca

⁸ www.imba.com

⁹ www.7stanesmountainbiking.com

10 Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics

This section provides an introduction to aspects of marketing and a review of mountain bike-specific media options for a community looking to promote mountain bike experiences. It is important to note that developing marketing tactics for mountain biking will be only one element of a broader tourism marketing plan. Underlying much of the discussion is an emphasis on adopting a regional approach as this will generally make better use of existing resources, allow for the leveraging of funding and will create opportunities for developing a more diverse and expansive product.

Identifying Your Target Market

The key marketing focus for the majority of mountain biking communities in BC should be regional. Consider the potential of the population within a 800 km radius of your community – the IMBA Ride Centers use a 500 mile radius as a rule of thumb.

Clearly Whistler is an exception with its ability to draw over 62% of the non-resident riders on the Valley Trail system from outside BC¹. This reflects the diversity of the trail system and the community's international reputation for a wide range of mountain-based product.

In 2011, visitor and economic impact surveys were conducted in Rossland and Golden, BC. Destination British Columbia's research department published results for each of the studies in April 2013. The methodology for the studies were based on the 2006 Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study. Reports for Rossland and Golden can be found at www.destinationbc.ca/Research/Research-by-Activity/Land-based.aspx#.Uh4WdBukpio

What type of rider will your trails attract?

This depends on a number of factors including but not limited to:

- The types of trails in your community (beginner to expert, downhill or cross country, etc.) and how you promote them to visitors.
- How your community is positioned with other nearby communities (e.g. working together to promote a regional product/experience).
- The range of bike-friendly accommodation options available.
- Access to the community from major centres.

- Access from within the community to the trails.
- Supporting infrastructure and amenities for bikers.
- Availability of mountain bike services such as guides and bike camps.
- Other things to do that complement the bike experience: activities and attractions, culture and arts.

The value of research – know your visitor.

Research will help a community make informed decisions about their marketing tactics and, as a result, provide a product that better meets visitor expectations. **Part One** of this guide highlighted current research into recreation and, more importantly, mountain bike-motivated travel that can assist communities in developing marketing initiatives.

Primary research is also an invaluable tool for planning and marketing. Ask visiting bikers about their experience and what they are looking for in a mountain bike destination. While primary research can be costly there are ways to undertake it in a cost-effective manner. Technology (e.g. Personal Digital Assistant – PDAs) and assistance from Destination BC's Research, Planning and Evaluation department and the Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA) can support communities in implementing simple user-surveys to gauge rider feedback on the trails and community amenities. This information will prove invaluable for future planning and marketing initiatives.

¹ Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study – Whistler Report (2006)

10 Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics

The MBTA's economic impact model, piloted in the Sea to Sky Corridor in 2006, gathers not only market and demographic information to assist marketing initiatives, but also provides economic impact figures to demonstrate the value of mountain biking in the community.

Promoting Your Mountain Bike Experience

What image do you want to portray?

Great images that convey the essence of the community's mountain bike experience and are somewhat unique will capture the attention of potential visitors. Many photos in mountain bike magazines and other bike media are focused on the rider and there is often no context for the reader or viewer. Photos that capture the surrounding landscape and other singular community or geographical elements, as well as riders, are generally preferable though an advertisement with multiple images which will give you more flexibility. Communities should also consider the people (age and gender) and the style of riding they are portraying in their promotional images.

What type trails do you offer?

By this stage in the process you will already have assessed the nature of your trails and their associated levels of difficulty. Ensure that your marketing message accurately portrays the mountain biking experience and the level of skill required.

Many tourism destinations cater to the beginner/intermediate rider and have made a conscious effort to promote accessible and not overly technical trails. Justifiably, BC has a reputation for more challenging to extreme terrain. Communities will need to consider the type of riders they are looking to attract and the implications. Keep in mind that the variety of trails is often an important consideration for mountain bikers when deciding on a destination.

Whistler is an excellent example of providing variety for riders; with everything from beginner crusted gravel trails around Lost Lake, to expert epic singletrack rides, to the Whistler Bike Park's downhill and freeride trails.

Additional Resources

Destination BC Image Bank

The Destination BC image bank provides access to a wide variety of free-of-charge images of BC. These images can be used by the tourism industry and travel media for the purposes of developing materials that promote travel in BC. For more information go to www.imagebank.destinationbc.net

Tourism Business Essentials – Ads & Brochures that Sell

Destination BC has developed an *Ads & Brochures That Sell* guide which focuses on two important business tools – brochures and print ads. Whether you do it yourself or work with a designer, this guide will help you understand how to create compelling, attractive promotional material, and how to avoid common mistakes along the way.

For more information on other *Tourism Business Essentials* guides and workshops, visit the [Tourism Industry Programs](#) section of the Destination BC website.



Promoting your Mountain Bike Experience

Trail recognition

Building the trail's stature and profile in the marketplace brings not only kudos and creditability to a community, but also serves as a valuable marketing tactic. IMBA Epic designation is one such form of recognition – e.g. Comfortably Numb, Whistler, BC. Another avenue is to nominate trails to mountain biking publications or other outdoor interest groups that run “outstanding trails” competitions – e.g. Bike Magazine's 2007 Trail of the Year: Seven Summits Trail, Rossland, BC.

BC could also look at developing criteria for identifying trails that exemplify the very best in trail building and riding experiences in the province, and subsequently develop a “must ride” list for destination mountain bikers. This concept is similar to Colorado's Fourteeners. The Fourteeners consists of 53 peaks within Colorado State that are above 4,267 m (14,000ft), attracting climbers back year after year to tick one more name off their list (www.14ers.com). The Colorado Fourteeners are one of the best-known “peak bagging” lists in the world (www.peakbagger.com).

Working with Mountain Bike Media Sources

Advertising and promotional costs can be significant and careful consideration needs to be given to selecting the most appropriate and cost-effective media. This section identifies a number of key mountain bike-specific media opportunities for promoting your community's product.

Mainstream versus Mountain Bike-Specific Media

One of the initial marketing decisions will likely be the pros and cons of mainstream versus mountain bike-specific media. The outcome of this decision will depend on the type of mountain bike product your community offers and your target market. For example a community with more challenging and technical trails would likely favour mountain bike-specific media that speaks to the experienced rider, while a community with easier trails that are readily accessible would promote its product to a more mainstream audience.

Numerous mainstream or outdoor/recreational media options are available to BC communities through partnership advertising with their Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs). British Columbia has five RDMOs representing communities across the province. www.destinationbc.ca/BC-Tourism-Industry/Regional-Partners.aspx

Communities and resorts may also choose to become partners in Mountain Biking BC, a cooperative marketing program specifically designed to showcase the province's diverse mountain bike tourism experiences to both main stream and mountain bike-specific audiences. Mountain Biking BC partners are featured as unique destinations on www.mountainbikingbc.ca, represented on Mountain Biking BC social media channels and at several consumer shows and events throughout the year, as well as benefit from ongoing advertising and media campaigns that promote BC as a mountain biking destination.

The Web and Online Channels

Online advertising through mountain biking websites and forums can be a cost-effective and timely method for reaching a broad network of potential mountain bike travellers. This form of advertising requires ads (web banners) designed to conform to website ad specifications or the writing of articles that could be submitted or posted to online publications or forums.

The price for an online advertisement varies according to the length of time the ad is displayed (e.g. monthly), its location on the website (e.g. top of the home page), or by the number of impressions that the banner receives from the website's visitors (e.g. CPC – cost-per-click or CPM – cost per mille/thousand impressions).

10 Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics

Working with Mountain Bike Media Sources

Key Websites	Comments
NSMB.com	Originally geared to the local North Vancouver scene this website now has a worldwide audience. The site focuses on freeriding, extreme and North Shore style riding. Good regional market coverage.
PinkBike.com	This Canadian based website now attracts a large worldwide audience. Somewhat similar to NSMB.com with good regional market coverage.
Mtbr.com	Has been a key source of consumer reviews for mountain bike products for many years. The site also produces a monthly e-newsletter with large North American circulation.
BikeRadar.com	This website caters to all biking disciplines: road, mountain, commuting and family. The website claims to be “the comprehensive bike website, serving the world’s community of cyclists – a constantly updated mixture of news, product reviews, routes and user-generated content.” The website has editors in Europe, North America and Australia. It also publishes a monthly e-newsletter.
Print Magazine Websites	All mountain biking magazines also have their own websites that create further opportunities for marketing.

Social Networking Sites, Blogs and Forums

An important source of information for mountain bikers is word of mouth. As a result, social networking sites offer an excellent opportunity to connect with other mountain bikers and to see and read about their experiences first hand. Social networks provide a place on the Internet where people meet to chat, socialize, debate, and network. The most popular sites are YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.

These online communities offer the same opportunities to connect with potential mountain bike visitors through local biker blogs or by establishing forums (e.g. a Facebook group) for visitors to share their experiences about a destination or activity.

Working with Mountain Bike Media Sources

Mountain Biking Publications

Traditional print advertising in mountain bike publications and magazines can be expensive once design costs are factored in. Full page colour ads in the key mountain biking publications generally range between C\$1,500 and C\$5,000.

BC is already well represented in many of the publications listed below through

articles, photography, and to a lesser extent advertising. However, due to the high cost, print advertising is largely restricted to the major commercial players and DMOs (e.g. Whistler Bike Park and Tourism Whistler). In 2013, almost three million Americans visited BC and stayed overnight, representing our largest market.² The main North American mountain biking publications, all US-based, include:

MTB Publications	Circulation	Comments
Mountain Bike Action	155,000	Covers cross country to downhill and has the largest circulation of the bike publications. The readership is 97% male, but older and more affluent than other magazines: average age 43; average income \$107,000.
Dirt Rag	51,000	Described as a mountain biking lifestyle magazine that contains original art, passionate stories, investigative articles, and honest product reviews based out of Pittsburgh, PA. Dirt Rag uniquely combines a grassroots connection to its readers and coverage of neglected niches of the bicycle world with typical glossy magazine style connections in the industry.
Decline	n/a	A gravity racing, all mountain and freestyle biking magazine that appeals more to the younger biking demographic with its glossy, high resolution pages.

The United Kingdom is the third largest overseas market and top European market to BC and the source of over 190,000 international visitors to BC in 2013.³ Two of the UK's top mountain biking publications are Mountain Biking UK (MBUK) and Mountain Bike Rider (MBR).

² USA tourism market profile, October 2013

³ UNITED KINGDOM tourism market profile, June 2014

10 Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics

Working with Mountain Bike Media Sources

Consumer Shows

There are various outdoor and bike specific consumer shows that offer exposure to key BC visitor markets. These should be considered on a partnership basis (see the section on [Identifying Partnership Opportunities](#) below).

The majority of these consumer shows take place February and March in preparation for the upcoming summer season. Many of the Canadian outdoor shows are well attended by community tourism organizations as well as RDMOs. There are opportunities to work with RDMOs, to include mountain bike product under their regional promotions at these shows.

Consumer Shows	Location	Comments
The Outdoor Adventure and Travel Shows (March)	Vancouver, BC	This show incorporates the Vancouver Bike Show with a large mountain bike component and attracts a good number of consumers from the Metro Vancouver area interested in the outdoors and biking.
	Calgary, AB	This show largely focuses on the Calgary market with a strong interest in BC product. This is a key market for the Kootenay Rockies and Thompson Okanagan regions.
Toronto International Bicycle Show (February/March)	Toronto, ON	This event is totally focused on biking and bills itself as Canada's largest bicycle consumer show.
Crankworx (August)	Whistler, BC	This ten day mountain bike festival is the largest freeride mountain biking event in the world. There is a consumer show component to the festival with booths located throughout the Whistler Village. Crankworx attracts an estimated 55,000 unique visitors from all over the world. This is a good forum for other BC communities and resorts to showcase product to an international bike audience.
Sea Otter Classic (April)	Monterey, CA	This multi-day event known throughout the world as the cycling season's premier kick-off event, draws nearly 10,000 professional, amateur and recreational athletes, 50,000 spectators, and more than 200 media representatives from around the globe. California represents one of BC's biggest markets and has a huge number of active mountain bikers. Due to the size of this event a strong presence (e.g. booth with excellent signage and location) is needed to capture the attention of spectators. Partnerships with established BC operators or manufacturers are key to success at this event.
Seattle Bike Expo (March)	Seattle, WA	Seattle represents a key market for BC. Mountain biking represents about 10-20% of the exhibitors at this show. Manufacturers, tour operators, charities, and DMOs attend this show.

Note: The observations and comments contained in this table are based on MBTA experiences at all of these shows.

Working with Mountain Bike Media Sources

InterBike is North America's largest bicycle trade event and show, gathering 1,200 cycling-related brands and representatives from over 4,000 bicycle retail stores. Total attendance at the 2014 show was more than 24,134.⁴ The show is held annually in Las Vegas, Nevada and is an ideal opportunity for checking out the latest and best gear in the mountain biking world. However, this is not a consumer show and is not recommended as a venue for communities looking to promote their tourism product.

Film and Video Production

British Columbia has long been featured in mountain biking films and videos. Many professional riders and adventure film makers live in BC and are inspired by the natural

beauty and terrain that the province has to offer (as does their audience). In the past, filming locations were often not disclosed due to unauthorized access. In recent years, film makers have begun to work more closely with communities in the province that recognize the tourism benefits of being a featured location. Whether it is a short video (3-7 minutes) to be posted to the web or a feature mountain bike film (45-60 minutes), before entering into an agreement communities should make sure they clearly understand the focus of the film's content, the distribution of the finished product and its intended audience, and if additional benefits such as access to b-roll footage for their own promotional use is available.

Good Practice – Second Base Films – From the Inside Out



Second Base Films is a collaboration between Anthill Films and The Coastal Crew. They approached the MBTA in 2010 about the concept for a BC focused mountain bike film that would feature communities around the province. The film would have international distribution on DVD, Blu-ray and iTunes as well as enter a number of international adventure film festivals. Six BC communities signed on as locations; Whister, Rossland, Squamish, Fernie, Shuswap, and Powell River. Each community also received one minute of HD b-roll footage. The film was a great success with audiences around the globe.

Estimated impressions:

• DVD and Blu-ray views	253,000
• Digital download views	326,000
• Film Premiere attendance	21,000
• Promo video views (teasers)	1,269,000
• Website visits	54,000
• Film poster impressions	75,000
• Bike Mag advertising (2 full page ads)	360,000
Total Impressions	2,358,000

*Impression estimates provided by Anthill Films – March 2012 Wrap Report

⁴ www.interbike.com

10 Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics

Media Relations

Strive to create a strong media relations plan that will attract travel writers and generate editorial on your community. This can be achieved by working closely with your RDMO to identify appropriate media and compelling story angles.

A number of BC communities have been successful in generating editorial coverage. Burns Lake, for example, was featured in the November 2010 edition of Bike magazine. The full eight page article entitled “When Pigs Fly” focused on:

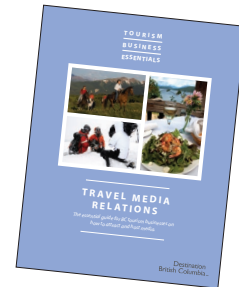
“A small town far from the city stokes passion, determination and cooperation, creating a new mountain bike destination that is as incredible as it is out of place.”⁵

Additional Resources

Tourism Business Essentials – Travel Media Relations Guide

Destination BC has developed a FREE *Travel Media Relations* guide which will instruct you on how to build long-term relationships with the media and how to assist them to produce a good story. This guide is part of Destination British Columbia’s informative *Tourism Business Essentials* series of how-to guides.

For more information on other *Tourism Business Essentials* guides and workshops, visit the [Tourism Industry Programs](#) section of the Destination BC website.



⁵ When Pigs Fly, an article by Riley MacIntosh in Bike Magazine, November 2010

Creating and Packaging Experiences

Effective packaging is a critical aspect of developing and promoting mountain bike tourism experiences in the marketplace. This involves presenting the product to visitors in a format that they will find appealing and that will entice them to visit. This section discusses a range of concepts, emphasizes a regional approach and looks at the various components of a package.

Regional Clusters

The concept of regional clusters has advantages for promoting mountain biking experiences. Communities located in close proximity to one another can offer a wider variety of trails, attractions and services to broaden the visitor experience and the potential market. A regional partnership that includes a lift-accessed bike park will amplify the appeal. The clustering concept also enables communities to pool funding and resources for development and promotion.

IMBA Ride Centers – IMBA recently created a program designating areas with exceptional trails and services for mountain bike visitors as official IMBA Ride Centers®. The program encourages partnerships and helps harness support from the bike industry. Communities can apply to be part of the program. Silver Star Resort near Vernon, BC was added as a Silver Level Ride Center in 2014 and Burns Lake, BC has been designated a Bronze Level Rider Center. More information on evaluation criteria and the application process is available through IMBA.

www.imba.com/model-trails/ride-centers

Touring Routes and Roadtrips – An extension of the regional cluster concept is the development of road trips and touring routes. The province already promotes nine major circle driving routes through BC.⁶ There is an opportunity for communities to partner and develop their own mountain bike roadtrips and itineraries that can subsequently be promoted to travellers. These are likely to be regional in nature – for example the Powder Highway – a cluster of alpine, backcountry, cat, heli and nordic skiing operators marketing together to promote a route rich in deep powder.⁷

Good Practice – Mountain Biking BC – Seven Day Giveaway Contest



Photo: South Chilcotin
– John Wellburn

Mountain Biking BC has created a contest that introduces its audience and subscribers to new road trip ideas - each year featuring different regions of BC and diverse riding options. The winner of the contest gets to bring a guest and take part in a fully supported week of incredible singletrack riding through breathtaking BC scenery. The group consists of the winner and guest, two professional guides, writer and photographer. Media articles and online postings are generated from each trip. In 2013, over 4000 people from more than 50 countries entered the online contest.

2013 Itinerary: Wells - Barkerville - Williams Lake – 100 Mile House – South Chilcotin – Whistler

2012 Itinerary: North Vancouver – Penticton – Rossland – Nelson – Cowichan Bay – Cumberland – Hornby Island

2011 Itinerary: Squamish – Pemberton –Whistler –Victoria – Revelstoke – Salmon Arm – Vernon – Kamloops – Whistler

⁶ www.HelloBC.com

⁷ www.powderhighway.com

10 Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics

Creating and Packaging Experiences

Mountain Bike Package Options

Communities have the opportunity to establish packages both locally and by working with external travel trade specialists that provide community-based mountain biking tours.

Packaging offers value to visitors seeking an easy, trouble-free experience, particularly in emerging mountain bike destinations where knowledgeable guides and service providers can add real value to the visitor experience.

Independent mountain bike tour operators

– These packages are usually all-inclusive: transportation, guides, meals, and accommodation. Communities seeking to attract tour operators need to provide a compelling experience for potential mountain

bike consumers that will be competitive and attractive in the marketplace. The experience being sold extends beyond great trails to include community ambience, attitudes towards mountain bikers (e.g. welcoming), amenities (e.g. restaurants and accommodation) and other unique selling features that would enhance a visitor's experience.

Local partnerships – Complementary local businesses can get together and offer accommodation-based packages that may include two to three-night stays, with value-added elements such as free trail maps and select meals. Options for bike rental and shuttle service may also be part of the local package.

A strong website presence is a key component of a tourism marketing strategy, given the high level of Internet use for trip planning and vacation bookings. Relevant, accurate content and high quality photos will give potential visitors a good overview of the mountain bike product in the community.

As part of your web strategy, consider tools for generating user-based content (e.g. blogs and social networking site links) and for communicating directly with visitors (e.g. e-newsletters). Creating a media section on your website will also assist in attracting media interest. Look for strong support from the local bike industry and tourism companies and arrange for reciprocal web links, at the very least.

Several excellent examples of destination websites for mountain biking are:

- Switzerland's www.mountainbikeland.ch/en/welcome.cfm
- Whistler's www.whistler.com/bike
- British Columbia's www.mountainbikingbc.ca

- Cariboo region's www.ridethecariboo.ca
- Oregon's www.rideoregonride.com
- Park City, Utah's www.mountainbikingparkcity.com

HelloBC.com – Destination BC's website receives more than nine million visitors annually and is based on a menu-driven model where consumers are able to search for activities, products and communities of interest.

www.HelloBC.com has mountain biking listed under the "outdoor activities" section and provides a high level overview of biking in the province with additional links to more specific information on products or communities. Communities should work with Destination BC's online content specialists to ensure that the content accurately presents the experience in the community.

Creating a Strong Web Presence

Identifying Partnership Opportunities

Development and marketing dollars go further when communities and stakeholders pool finances and resources to create a regional partnership. Furthermore, regional partnerships open up potential provincial funding sources and are favoured by economic development trusts like the Northern Development Initiative Trust and the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

With BC's diverse landscapes and mountain biking opportunities there is potential to offer a host of regional mountain biking experiences, each with its own unique character. The key to developing these regional partnerships is identifying a lead agency to take on the coordination role. Coordination would entail managing day-to-day activities, communicating regularly with the partners, ensuring timelines and commitments are met and delivering a consistent message to the marketplace.

One or more of the following three organizations will likely be central to any regional marketing initiatives in BC. All three share the goal of enhancing BC's mountain biking tourism experiences and serve as resources for communities looking to develop and market their product.

1. [Regional and Local Destination Marketing Organizations](#)

British Columbia has five Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs): Tourism Vancouver Island, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, Northern British Columbia Tourism Association and Kootenay Rockies Tourism, and a multitude of local tourism marketing organizations like Tourism Whistler and Tourism Rossland.

These organizations play a key role in promoting regional and local experiences and work directly with individual product sectors

such as mountain biking. Examples of RDMO mountain biking specific initiatives include:

- A current example of the promotional support from RDMOs is the "Mountain Biking Lives Here" video series which highlights the unique mountain biking experiences in each of the province's 6 regions. 3 episodes were released in 2014 with the final 3 coming out in 2015.



2. **Destination British Columbia**

Mountain biking is featured as a key outdoor adventure product in Destination BC's Outdoor Adventure Guide, published annually. Destination BC also has a product sector development program, Experiences BC, designed to assist existing product and cultural sectors as well as encourage businesses to form sectoral alliances. The program offers tools and resources to jointly produce a multi-year sector tourism plan and a research-based marketing plan.

10 Spread the Word – Developing Marketing Tactics

Identifying Partnership Opportunities

Since 2006, Experiences BC has worked closely with the MBTA and its community and resort partners to provide matching partnership funding for marketing and research of BC's mountain bike tourism products.

In 2009 the MBTA and many BC mountain bike stakeholders participated in Destination BC's program, Experiences BC, to develop a broader provincial sector marketing plan that included not only resorts, but communities and tourism operators across the province. The [BC Mountain Bike Tourism Plan](#) was released in 2010 with a vision for BC "to be recognized as the most diverse mountain biking destination in the world."

3. **Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA)**

The MBTA is a non-profit organization, mentioned throughout this guide, with a mission to help facilitate the development and marketing of BC's mountain bike tourism potential. The organization has made considerable strides in providing research to identify economic benefits and market opportunities for BC communities and resorts. The MBTA represents over 100 mountain bike tourism stakeholders around the province.

The MBTA has worked with resorts offering lift-access mountain biking since 2006 and now also works with over 20 communities with authorized trails. The MBTA is guided by an active board of directors who represent a broad cross section of the mountain bike tourism sector and the five tourism regions in the province. The MBTA has taken a lead role in implementing the Provincial Mountain Bike Tourism Plan (2010) on behalf of mountain bike communities, regions, operators, and resorts across the province.

For a copy of the [BC Mountain Bike Tourism Plan](#), visit MBTA's website. www.mbta.ca

Appendices

1 Appendix - Whistler Cycling Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE – JULY 2011

Guiding Documents

- Whistler Transportation Cycling Plan – endorsed by Council in 2006
- Whistler Recreational Cycling Plan and Trails Master Plan – endorsed by Council in 2006
- Whistler Cycling Policy – adopted by Council in 2004

Cycling Vision Statement

“Whistler is recognized as one of the top biking towns in North America, where residents and visitors integrate cycling into their daily lives.”

Resort Community Cycling Goals

- Provide a network of sustainable mountain biking trails for residents and visitors.
- Provide a Valley Trail network to efficiently link all neighbourhoods, commercial areas and parks.
- Grow the contribution of cycling to the resort economy.
- Support Whistler’s cycling infrastructure with information, services and programs.
- Facilitate transportation cycling as an alternative to automobile usage.
- Encourage cycling to build community and promote the health and well-being of residents.
- Collaborate with Corridor partners to develop the Sea to Sky region as the mountain biking capital of Canada.

Whistler Cycling Committee

A collaboration of cycling stakeholders to coordinate progress toward Whistler’s cycling vision, goals and objectives as articulated in the cycling plans. Coordinated planning will be carried out by the committee as a whole and the Cycling Trails Subcommittee.

1. Whistler Cycling Committee Objectives

- Plan and secure trails as part of the network of mountain biking trails.
- Plan the Valley Trail network to efficiently link all neighbourhoods, commercial areas and parks.
- Promote Whistler’s cycling product to realize measurable benefits to the resort economy (increase number of cycling visitors, length of stay, \$ spent). Plan and promote cycling events. Establish Whistler as a premier mountain biking destination.

- Improve facilities, programs and information (maps, websites, signage, accommodation, business awareness, bike parking/storage, bike transportation, etc.) that support Whistler’s cycling product and meet the needs of both visitors and residents.
- Implement plans to facilitate transportation cycling as an alternative to automobile usage, including a network of on and off-road cycling routes, end of trip facilities and programs for cycling encouragement, awareness and safety.
- Support the interests of Whistler’s road cycling community and visiting road cyclists.
- Advise and lobby senior levels of government regarding cycling issues in Whistler and the Corridor.

2. Cycling Trails Sub-Committee Objectives

- Plan new and upgraded trails as part of the network of mountain biking trails.
- Ensure that trails are maintained for rider experience, environmental protection and liability protection of the land owner and trail manager.
- Secure the land base for long term trail development and use.
- Provide signage that satisfies liability requirements and user route finding needs.
- Update and monitor implementation of the Cycling Trails Master Plan.

2 Operational Standards – Mountain Bike Trails



Recreation Sites
and Trails BC

SCHEDULE F: OPERATIONAL STANDARDS – MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Partnership Agreement No.

Mountain Bike Trail Management Objective

British Columbia is renowned for high quality, innovative and exciting mountain bike trails. Trail building techniques that add challenge and excitement define the character of BC trails. A primary objective of the Province is to provide safe and sustainable mountain bike trails without compromising the exciting and challenging character that them. Partnership Agreement Holders for mountain bike trails are required to adhere to these Operations Standards to ensure the Province achieves its objective for maintenance, management and provision of mountain bike trails on Crown land.

Trail Maintenance Objectives

Trail maintenance is carried out to:

- a) *Provide user safety* – Safety considerations should always be the first priority. Unsafe conditions should be corrected or normal use restricted.
- b) *Protect the environment* – Environmental and trail damage should be corrected and actions taken to prevent further damage.
- c) *Provide high quality user experiences*

Trail Management Guidelines and Standards

Construction and maintenance of mountain bike trails must be carried out according to established best practices and standards. The Ministry's preferred guidelines for construction and maintenance of mountain bike trails are described in:

- a) Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack. www.imba.com/catalog/book-trail-solutions

Additional specifications for trail and feature construction and management can also be found in Chapter 10 of the Recreation Manual. www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca/documents/manual/chapter10.pdf

Trail and feature classification and TTF standards, adopted by the Ministry are detailed in the *Whistler Trail Standards, First Edition*.

Trail Maintenance Requirements

Annual trail maintenance efforts should be focused early in the mountain bike season to ensure each trail is safe, properly signed, clear of obstructions and free of environmental concerns. Following preseason maintenance, regular maintenance should focus on priority areas and as required. The following trail maintenance requirements must be carried out:

- a) **Signs**—all signs will be checked prior to the season of operation to ensure they are in place and visible and any additional signs required to meet the objectives of this Agreement should be installed. Special attention must given to risk management signs including trail rating and TTF signs.
- b) **Deadfall**—at the beginning of the trail season and on a priority basis cut out windfall and deadfall over the trail, remove wood a minimum of 0.5 metre from the tread centre and dispose downhill when possible.
- c) **Brushing**—on a priority basis remove all juvenile trees and woody brush for 0.5 metre on either side of tread centre within three centimetres of ground level. Scatter the cut material out of sight of the trail.
- d) **Erosion control**—clean-out and repair any existing water bars and ditches as necessary to drain water away from the trail and prevent erosion.
- e) **Litter cleanup**—remove litter and garbage at the trailhead and along the trail.
- f) **Limbing**—remove tree limbs to allow 2.5 metres of overhead clearance above the trail, with 1.0-1.5 metres total clearance width. Scatter cut limbs a minimum of 1.0 metre from the trail edge, out of sight where possible. Ensure limbing cuts are clean, without scarring the main trunk of the tree.
- h) **Trail tread maintenance**
 - Drain/harden mud holes and boggy areas.
 - Complete washout and/or slump repair.
 - Grub rocks, roots, stumps as necessary to allow grooming during operating season.
 - Undertake surface repair as required.
- g) **Hazard tree identification**—report potential hazard trees to the district recreation officer.
- I) **Trail closures**—establish and carry out trail closure procedures where trails become unsafe, or require repairs to prevent environmental damage.
- j) **Drainage structure maintenance**—conduct inspections for potential blockage of drainage structures including culverts, cross-drains, water bars, grade dips and ditches, and carry out any maintenance as required.

2 Operational Standards – Mountain Bike Trails

Difficulty Classification

Trail Classification

All mountain bike trails must be classified according to level of difficulty, based on the standardized mountain bike trail difficulty classification system (green circle, blue square, black diamond). Specific criteria for determining the level of difficulty is described in *Whistler Trail Standards, Environment and Technical Trail Features*, First Edition. Trail ratings will be based on the highest level of difficulty of mandatory, unavoidable portions or elements of the trail. Ratings should consider angle of descent, obstacles and technical trail features (where TTF's offer alternate "ride-arounds" the overall trail rating may be less difficult than the TTF- see next section).

Difficulty trail ratings for mountain bike trails on Crown land may not exceed most difficult (black diamond). Expert unlimited trails (double black diamond) are not permitted.

Technical Trail Features Classification

All TTF's must be rated by difficulty according to the *Whistler Trail Standards*. All TTF's rated as most difficult (black diamond) or higher must have a TTF warning sign posted prior to the feature. TTF warning signs are recommended for more difficult (blue square) TTF's.

In some cases, Technical Trail Features or obstacles on a trail may exceed the difficulty classification of the trail. In these cases, the TTF must be signed, and an alternate route or "ride around" must be available that is consistent with the overall trail classification. TTF's with ride arounds may only exceed the trail difficulty rating by one level i.e. a green trail might have a blue TTF but cannot have a black diamond TTF even if a ride around is provided.

Consistent with *Whistler Trail Standards*, overall trail difficulty ratings may not exceed most difficult (black diamond), however, elements of a trail may be rated **expert unlimited** (double black diamond) under the following conditions:

1. Each proposed feature rated **expert unlimited** must be approved by the District Recreation Officer (DRO).
2. No feature or element that is **expert unlimited** is mandatory or unavoidable.

3. Any feature or element rated **expert unlimited** must have a clearly defined and signed alternate route around. The alternate route should follow the main flow of the trail, whereas the TTF should require a deviation from the main flow.

4. Signage at least 10m prior to the feature (or prior to the junction of the main trail and alternate route) will indicate the presence of an **expert unlimited** feature (double black diamond), and provide directional signage to alternate route. Example:



5. Any gap jumps will be located on detours, off the main and obvious flow of the trail.
6. Where possible features that exceed most difficult ratings will start with skill filters that will limit accidental entry by novice riders.
7. Excessive gaps, drops or other features that pose an unacceptable risk will not be approved at the discretion of the DRO. The number of **expert unlimited** TTF's on an individual trail should be a small proportion of the TTF's and will be limited at the discretion of the DRO.
8. All elements of a trail that exceed most difficult will be inspected twice annually.

Partnership Agreement – Mountain Bike Trail Initial Inventory and Inspection

Each Partnership Agreement for mountain bike trails will include a requirement for an initial inventory and inspection of the trail and all associated TTF's to ensure the trail and features meet RST Standards and guidelines. Minimum information required for the initial inventory and inspection will include:

1. Area Map showing each named trail in the agreement.
2. For each trail:
 - a) Length
 - b) Point of Commencement (PoC)
 - c) Point of Termination (PoT)

2 Operational Standards – Mountain Bike Trails

3. For each TTF on a trail:
 - a) Unique ID
 - b) Lat/long or GPS coordinate
 - c) Feature description
 - d) Dimensions
 - e) Difficulty Rating (according to WTS)
 - f) Meets standard (Y/N)
 - g) Mandatory (Y/N)
 - h) Works Required
 - i) Inspected by:
 - k) Photo of feature

RST will make an inventory and inspection template available for use by partners, however RST will accept other formats provided the minimum information is provided.

Partnership Agreement – Mountain Bike Trail Annual Inspection Program

Each year following the completion of the Initial Inventory and Inspection, groups with trail partnership agreements for mountain bike trails will be required to complete and submit an annual inspection of each trail and TTF (the DRO may increase frequency to two annual inspections if required). Annual inspections will, at a minimum, include:

1. For each trail:
 - Date inspected
 - Inspected by:
 - Trail condition (poor, fair, good)
 - Required maintenance
2. For each TTF
 - Trail name
 - Unique ID
 - TTF condition (meets standard/requires maintenance)
 - Maintenance required
 - Date inspected
 - Inspected by:

RST will make an annual inspection form available to all partners however RST will accept other formats provided the minimum information is provided.

Annual Operations Plan/Mountain Bike Trail Management Plan

As described in Schedule E- Annual Reporting, an annual operations plan is required for partners with mountain bike trails. At the discretion of the District Recreation Officer, approved multi-year Mountain Bike Trail Management Plans will satisfy this requirement.

Guidance for the development of annual operations plans or Mountain Bike Trail Management Plans can be provided by the Ministry.

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Destination British Columbia 12th Floor, 510 Burrard Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6C 3A8

