

Editorial

Wildfires Show Importance of Community in Maintaining Trails

Dry Santa Ana winds and high temperatures fueled more than 15 wildfires that burned simultaneously in late October in Southern California.

Before they were controlled, the wildfires scorched more than 800 square miles, including many of the region's most popular mountain bike trails.

The wildfires created an immediate

need for trail maintenance in Southern California. With the looming threat of winter storms, trail managers see only a small window in which to repair and secure damaged trails. Without healthy plants to hold the soil in place, many trails are in danger of washing out.

As an industry we can set an example by staying off closed trails. Once

trails have been reopened we can remind customers and riding buddies to stick to designated trails.

Moreover, local shops can sponsor trail maintenance days to repair and bolster damaged trail systems. We can use our customer database to recruit helping hands. We can also create a festive atmosphere for trail repair crews, drawing on the example set at

San Diego's Qualcomm stadium.

During the San Diego wildfires, media reported heartwarming stories of an outpouring of support from the local community. In San Diego, the evacuee shelter at Qualcomm received more donations of food, blankets and clothing than evacuees could use. In the midst of natural disaster, residents created a powerful sense of community.

Although the wildfires create an urgency about the need to rebuild trails in Southern California, the crisis highlights the universal need for regular trail user maintenance. We can rally ongoing support for building and maintaining trails by fostering a sense of community among mountain bikers.

Guest Editorial

The Next Big Thing: Everyday, Efficient Transportation

BY SKIP HESS

So it has been something like five months since I had a real job. I mean at least the kind where you have to show up every day. I will admit, it is fantastic. Probably everything you might imagine it is like to huck your job and just live for a while.

I have been around, on the fringes of everyday life. I have been riding around on my trusty KTM on roads less traveled. I have been down in the Caribbean and in Asia. Europe will be next, always staying on the fringe. I think I like it there; it suits me.

So as I have been vagabonding and contemplating my future, something is really starting to open my eyes: transportation. I mean everyday, get around transportation. Not Audis or Escalades but simple and efficient transportation. Here in America we are not very good at it, at least not yet. Everywhere else I go there are trains, trams, shuttles, ferries, scooters and yes...bicycles. OK, I said it. Bicycles.

In France there is this Velorution as they like to call it; Paris is awash with bicycles, and soon Lyon will be the same. And Hamburg, Vienna, Amsterdam and who knows where else. You see, they already know that oil is only going to become more expensive, that global warming is a common term, that congestion and parking is intolerable and that sensible, everyday transportation needs to be rethought.

Are we so behind the rest of the world? Not really. As a matter of fact, things are changing. Federal legislators are listening, ecological reality has set in, and the car is becoming a nasty word. What's the solution? Bicycles. Yeah, I said it again, bicycles.

Here is the catch: all of us bike people think like bike people, not transportation people. We think about composites and titanium, we think about the next BIG thing. We need to start thinking about creating a cycling culture that is:

- Accessible

- Easy
- Personally rewarding

I am hearing it in my head: the component manufacturers and the bike factories all asking me over and over again: What is the next BIG thing?

The transportation revolution is coming and we bike people have the most to gain. But we need to start thinking like transportation people. Because who else can do it? The oil companies? The car companies? The government? Come on. We can. Bike people.

So I say the next BIG thing is going to be us. Bike people thinking like transportation people. Giving everyday people solutions to everyday transportation, not just recreating and fitness or training and racing, but everyday bikes for everyday use.

I think I am going to start working on the next BIG thing.

*Skip Hess
Former president of Giant Bicycles
Bike Person, Industry Lifer*

WRITERS WANTED

Bicycle Retailer & Industry News welcomes guest editorials from our readers. If you have thoughts to share on topics of industry relevance, we'd like to hear them. Please contact our editor at:

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**Happy Holidays
from the BRAIN
staff and all
the best for the
New Year!**