

Bureau of Land Management's *Mountain Bike Strategy*



- BLM Policy recognizes Mountain Biking as an appropriate use of public lands under its jurisdiction.
- Each state will set a goal of trails and miles to be identified and marketed by the year 2000.
- In order to reach the goal, partnerships will be sought at local, state, and national levels.
- The BLM National Mountain Bike Outreach Action Plan will be used as a guide to develop local ideas.

During the past year, BLM has worked with a committee of bicyclists, representatives from bicycle industry groups, bicycle racing industry, and BLM employees to develop a mountain bike initiative for the Bureau. (See Appendix A for a list of the committee members.)

The overall program goal is:

BLM will identify and implement diverse mountain bike opportunities into the multiple use system of trails and roads by the year 2000.

These opportunities will be enhanced by a proactive, educational program emphasizing safety, fitness, ethics, and environmental protection and appreciation.

Specific components of the initiative include:

1. A Mountain Bike Policy for BLM that consists of the following elements:

- Mountain bicycling is a legitimate use, part of the family of trail uses.
- All roads and trails are open - unless designated closed. Riding is only allowed on roads and trails.
- A trail is defined as a marked linear path that enables a person to go from point A to point B.
- Trails are multiple use with exceptions clearly marked.
- Mountain bikes are prohibited in designated Wilderness Areas. In Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), consider the use standard of non-impairment as stated in BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review. Generally, mountain bikes should not be promoted in WSAs. When WSAs become designated wilderness, mountain biking will be prohibited.

- All trails will be included in transportation plans. This will enable us to provide trail maintenance money when needed in addition to providing the public with better information.

- Trails are a part of the normal planning process and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures must be followed.

- The International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) trails ethic will be adopted for brochures and trail signs. (see page 4)

- Deal with commercial mountain bike use through the normal BLM special recreation permitting process.

- Consistent trail descriptions will be used which include the following: Trail profile (elevation), trail length, surface description (rocky, gravel, sand, etc.), width of the trail (jeep road, single track, etc.), weather/seasonal conditions, average riding time, special considerations (include ratings as appropriate), vehicle access.

2. A Mountain Bike Strategy for BLM that consists of the following elements:

- Each state will set a goal of trails and miles to be identified and implemented by the year 2000. Identification of existing roads and trails, not development, is the primary goal.

- To reach the goal, partnerships will be sought at local, state, and national levels.

- The National Mountain Bike Outreach Action Plan will be used as a guide to develop local ideas. (Available as a separate handout.)

3. A Partnership Opportunities: Invest in Your Public Lands booklet that describes mountain bike accomplishments throughout the Bureau for 1992 and partnership opportunities for 1993. This is available as a separate handout.

Additional strategic ideas were identified with the assistance of external groups such as the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), BikeCentennial, Specialized Bicycle Components, Rodale Press, League of American Wheelman, etc. They are:

BLM will provide a system of trails that offers a variety of experiences for all aptitudes and skill levels. New trails can, of course, be developed, but identification of existing roads and trails, not development, is the primary goal.

- We will plan and develop trails in cooperation with local groups, giving consideration to both environmental concerns and economic benefits. We can locate trails so they produce benefits for communities without unacceptable or unnecessary impacts.

- The vast majority of BLM Lands will not be near metropolitan, urban areas. However, BLM areas that are in or near the California Desert, parts of northern California, Las Vegas, Boise, Phoenix, Tucson, Denver, Portland, and Salt Lake City will need to consider that bicyclists are looking for:

- Loop Trails
- Convenient parking areas
- Minimal Off-Highway Vehicle motorized travel
- Variety of difficulty
- Variety of scenery, accessibility (desert vs. alpine), uses (horse, ski, etc.)
- Within a two hour drive of their home

- In rural backcountry areas, users are looking for regional trail systems with lots of choices. They include:

- Trails that connect towns regardless of size or destination areas.
- Shorter loop trails within longer trail systems, especially around towns.
- Multiple use.
- Variety of difficulty.
- Variety of scenery, accessibility (desert vs. alpine), uses (nonmotorized, motorized, etc.)
- Seclusion.
- Commercial outfitted bicycle trip opportunities.
- Support facilities such as trailheads and mid-trail camping areas that can focus use in areas that can withstand repeated use.
- Interpretative facilities that stimulate a visitor to want to learn more about the surrounding natural, cultural, and historical resources. This is an opportunity for BLM to meld the Watchable Wildlife, Back Country Byway, Adventures in the Past Programs, etc., with bicycling.

BLM will use the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) trails ethic.

Each office should adopt and promote IMBA bicycle use trail ethics with users unless agreements have already been set up with local clubs to promote similar ethics.

1. Ride on open trails only.

Respect trail and road closures (ask if not sure), avoid possible trespass on private land, obtain permits and authorization as may be required. Federal and State Wilderness Areas are closed to cycling.

2. Leave no trace.

Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Even on open trails, you should not ride under conditions where you will leave evidence of your passing, such as on certain soils shortly after a rain. Observe the different types of soils and trail construction; practice low-impact cycling. This also means staying on the trail and not creating any new ones. Be sure to pack out at least as much as you pack in.

3. Control your bicycle.

Inattention for even a second can cause problems. Obey all speed laws.

4. Always yield trail.

Make known your approach well in advance. A friendly greeting (or a bell) is considerate and works well; don't startle others. Show your respect when passing others by slowing to a walk or even stopping. Anticipate that other trail users may be around corners or in blind spots.

5. Never spook animals.

All animals are startled by an unannounced approach, a sudden movement, or a loud noise. This can be dangerous for you, for others, and for the animals. Give animals extra room and time to adjust to you. In passing, use special care and follow the directions of horseback riders (ask if uncertain). Running cattle and disturbing wild animals is a serious offense. Leave gates as you found them, or as marked.

6. Plan ahead.

Know your equipment, your ability, and the area in which you are riding - and prepare accordingly. Be self-sufficient at all times. Wear a helmet, keep your machine in good condition, and carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. A well-executed trip is a satisfaction to you and not a burden or offense to others.

While BLM can provide resource knowledge, help resolve conflicts, obtain legal access etc., we will need help from trail users to identify opportunities, generate support from local communities, and complete trail projects. We recommend the following partners be involved at the start of a project:

- Trail user groups.
- Commercial groups in local, state and regional area.
- Other agencies.
- Land owners.
- Local and regional tourism offices including Chamber of Commerce, Welcome Centers, etc.
- Commercial partners such as:
 - Bicycle Manufacturers.
 - Local bicycle dealers.
 - General retail outlets (outdoor wear, binoculars, calendars, cross-country ski, etc.).

Potential products that are needed:

- Trailhead and trail signs.
- Other trail needs such as water bars.
- Parking areas.
- Educational tools (grade school kits, bumper stickers, water bottles, etc.).
- Educational displays in stores such as outdoor sports outlets or local bicycle dealerships.
- Brochures.
- Maps.
- Resource Area Bicycles.
- Video.
- Volunteer Mountain Bike "rangers".
- Trail maintenance.
- Restrooms.

BLM needs to communicate to our publics that we are serious about trails. We also need a consistent way to communicate trail information to the public.

Use consistent trail descriptions that include the following:

- Trail profile (elevation)
- Trail length
- Surface description (rocky, gravel, sand, etc.)
- Trail width (jeep road, single track etc.)
- Weather, seasonal conditions
- Average riding time
- Special considerations (include ratings as appropriate)
- Vehicle access

The following ideas can also facilitate BLM accomplishing this task.

- Use ideas from a prototype planning guide for local communities called "Trails 2000." This was developed and written by several concerned trail users in Durango, Colorado.
- Develop other educational tools (video, brochures, maps) to disseminate information at bicycle retailer and dealer outlets.
- Hold trail meetings in retail/dealer shops.
- Provide examples and encourage bicyclists to write accurate mountain bike guidebooks. Work directly with publishers when possible.
- Coordinate with user groups such as the League of American Wheelman (L.A.W.) education specialist, IMBA, BikeCentennial, Bicycle Institute of America, NORBA etc. (Project already underway at national level)
- Maximize use of partners and volunteers.
- Work with local and state tourism groups.
- Conduct familiarization tours of trails for writers.
- Provide information at special events such as festivals and races.
- In urban areas, work with community planners to ensure continued access to public lands as subdivisions continue to grow.
- Communicate with traditional public land users. Ask for their input at the planning stage.

A N a t i o n a l
Mountain Bike Outreach Action Plan
for The Bureau of Land Management



Outreach Action Plan

The following program goal explains to our publics and BLM employees where we want to be by the year 2000. The action plan identifies six audiences that we need to work with to accomplish our overall goal. Major objectives, messages, actions, and tools are identified for each target audience.

Local BLM offices can use this outline as a guide for developing a specific outreach action plan.

Overall Program Goal

BLM will identify and implement diverse mountain bike opportunities into the multiple use system of trails and roads by the year 2000.

These opportunities will be enhanced by a proactive, educational program emphasizing safety, fitness, ethics, and environmental protection and appreciation.

ACTION PLAN BY TARGET AUDIENCE

1. CYCLIST ORGANIZATIONS

We determined this audience to be critical in achieving our goals. Cyclist organizations include local bicycle clubs, League of American Wheelman (LAW), International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), BikeCentennial, etc. It has been proven repeatedly with other recreation user groups that we can accomplish more with their input at the start of a project or plan. We can save dollars by obtaining their support early, put in trails they will use, and recruit their volunteer time to accomplish projects.

Objectives

- Help BLM identify routes that will be of interest to cyclists.
- Distribute information to cyclists on route locations, ethics, work assistance needs, and public input opportunities.
- Provide useful input as management plans are developed.
- Provide assistance with rider education and ethics programs.
- Help support funding for BLM's efforts in the political arena.

Messages

Participation with BLM land managers will:

- Influence agency policy.
- Facilitate access.
- Show members you are involved.
- Provide more accurate information on trails.
- Increase miles of trails.
- Legitimize the sport.
- Provide media coverage.

Actions

- Develop a list of local, state, regional, and national bicycle groups.
- Participate in meetings of local, state, regional, and national mountain bike organizations.
- Provide material for use by organizational in-house media on where trails are, ethics, and other education topics.
- Co-host/host activities such as competitions, fun rides, trail clean-up, and maintenance days.
- Enter formal agreements for specific support such as trail work, trail rangers, and publication development.
- Contact all known groups during route identification (inventory) and management plan development.
- Present awards during organizational meetings where peers are present and assure extensive publicity.
- Implement Adopt a Trail type programs.

Tools

- Literature and videos on trail locations, ethics, volunteer opportunities.
- Mailings.
- Awards program (use existing volunteer awards program).

2. INDUSTRY

This audience was determined to be key for assisting BLM in distributing information to the public about land ethics and access and to participate in cost share projects.

Objectives

- Have industry accept responsibility for promotion of safe, responsible, and environmentally sound mountain bike use through its advertising and promotional efforts.
- Use industry-wide communications tools to get the word out on BLM opportunities, funding/volunteer needs, ethics, and public participation opportunities.
- Provide input, materials, and funds for project development, especially pilot projects.
- Help promote support for BLM's efforts in the political arena.
- Establish recognition programs for organizations and agency (local, state, federal) employees.
- Provide assistance or funds to develop printed material on opportunities, education, and ethics.
- Advise BLM personnel to avoid existing "monopolies" or creating new ones. In other words, every company should be given equal opportunity to be partners with BLM.

Messages

Participation with BLM land managers will:

- Influence agency policy.
- Facilitate access.
- Show customers you are involved.
- Provide more accurate information on trails.

- Increase miles of trails.
- Legitimize the sport.
- Provide positive media coverage.
- Provide opportunity for technological development.
- Increase sales and total use.

Actions

- Develop mailing list of companies in the mountain bike business.
- Participate in tradeshow with specific actions companies can take.
- Contact companies to work out specific actions that will benefit both BLM and the company.
- Emphasize challenge cost share projects, joint publications, and pilot projects.
- Reward participation with recognition and publicity.
- Supply materials for industry to use promoting use of public lands, ethics, and other educational topics.
- Present awards during industry meetings so peers are present and ensure extensive publicity.

Tools

- Mailings.
- Display, video, and list of projects for trade shows.
- Literature and videos on trail locations, ethics, partnership opportunities.
- Awards program using existing volunteer awards program.

3. INTERNAL BLM

Most of BLM's efforts were directed at this audience in 1992. The messages, actions, and tools will enable local offices to work with the other identified audiences.

Objectives

- Develop a commitment to mountain bike management.
- Establish as standard procedure an inventory for potential mountain bike trails in Resource Management Plan inventories, Recreation Area Management Plan development or project planning. Be sure to include user groups in the identification process.
- Involve industry and organizations in development of cooperative mountain bike projects.
- Help recreation planners facilitate cooperative identification of projects from targeted publics.
- Track mountain bike use through automated Recreation Management Information System (RMIS).

Messages

- Be proactive rather than reactive.
- We are not asking for new money or positions. This is just a share of Recreation 2000 priority.
- Successful cooperative projects bring good management and recognition with minimal staff time and budget.
- Seek out and encourage mountain bike enthusiasts from all areas of the organization to participate in mountain biking activities.
- Don't identify trails for the sake of activity - work cooperatively with users to ensure productive projects.
- Be willing to work with user groups who want to identify trails.
- Integrate trails with other initiatives such as Watchable Wildlife, Adventures in the Past, the Back Country Byway program, etc.

- There are a number of existing funding sources available for trail projects. We can do much within existing capability.

- There is a significant potential for partnerships that provide people, labor, and money to supplement BLM's land base.

- Partnership on projects by providing input on design, financial contributions, and labor.

- Help establish effective recognition programs.

- Help promote funding of BLM efforts through appropriate partnerships.

Actions

- Share results of successful pilot projects.

- Give recognition to employees as they complete successful projects.

- Direct sale the program to line managers and recreation program leaders by including them in fun rides and other mountain bike activities.

- Gather and distribute educational material on the impacts of mountain bike use - the growing demand and best management tools.

Tools

- Video magazine segments.

- Informal (easy) system of reporting successful pilot, cost share, and volunteer projects.

- Educational material on the impacts of bike use, the growing demand, and best management tools.

- Awards for individuals and or groups that implement successful trail projects.

- Mountain bike presentation at 1993 BLM national recreation workshop and ride.

- List of organizations for information to unaffiliated riders.

- Utilize other BLM specialists who happen to be mountain bike enthusiasts.

4. UNAFFILIATED CYCLISTS AND OTHER RECREATION USERS

This is perhaps the most nebulous audience. Approximately 5% - 10% of mountain bikers belong to an organized group or subscribe to a bicycle magazine. This leaves a tremendous number of people that need to be reached using different outlets.

Objectives

- Involve them in project implementation and volunteer work.
- Obtain their input during project development and development of management plans.
- Obtain their help to promote BLM's efforts in the political arena.
- Demonstrate ethics through riding behavior to help develop a peer pressure expectation.
- Possible development of unexpected partnerships with individuals.
- Bring in touch with organized groups.

Messages

Participation will:

- Increase miles of trails.
- Facilitate access.
- Improve safety of riding.
- Increase enjoyment of riders.
- Reduce adverse impact on environment.
- Reduce risk of getting lost or being injured.

Actions

- Inform local/regional media of activities, volunteer opportunities, and public involvement.
- Distribute/display informational and educational material at popular riding locations. Emphasize volunteer work and ethics. This includes interpretation.

Tools

- Literature on trail locations, ethics, volunteer opportunities.
- Interpretive signs on trail regulations, ethics, etc. Most of these can be in generic form for use in any location.
- List of organizations for information to unaffiliated riders.

5. OTHER AGENCIES

Although BLM is the nation's largest land manager, much of the lands are not blocked creating patchwork land patterns intermixed with private lands and those managed by other agencies. In order to have a truly successful program, we need to work closely with state and other federal land managers to achieve common goals.

Objectives

- Develop cooperative mountain bike projects and partnerships that emphasize diverse mountain bike opportunities.
- Extend trails through other federal and state lands and tie them to local, county, state, and federal recreation areas.
- Encourage other agencies to develop mountain biking policies and outreach.
- Join or participate strongly with state trails and bicycle committees. Most states have statewide trail committees. Arizona, California, Colorado, Utah, and Oregon currently have state bicycle coordinators. Arizona and Colorado have governor appointed committees with BLM representation.
- Promote statewide mountain biking advisory groups and participate in interagency mountain bike activities.

Messages

- Successful cooperative projects bring good management and recognition with minimal time and money.
- Working cooperatively with other agencies helps ensure productive projects and continuity.

- Cooperation can result in identifying more trail miles for all users.
- Cost savings, one stop shopping, and better public service result.
- Other agencies may have scarce resource staff capability (i.e., landscape architects) that can be shared.
- More extensive publicity for trails projects and BLM.

Actions

- Share/cooperatively develop educational and informational materials.
- Cooperate on cost share/matching fund projects.
- Enter formal and informal agreements with USFS, NPS, State, and others to simplify exchange of money, materials, and information.
- Promote joint projects that use shared volunteers or shared donated funds.
- Coordinate planning efforts with travel councils, local communities, and county governments.
- Coordinate an interagency informational meeting.

Tools

- Samples of various types of agreements to facilitate use by field offices.
- Catalog of literature, videos, signs, etc., once those called for in other actions have been developed.

6. LOCAL INTERESTS IMPACTED BY CYCLING

Cycling events and recognized trail systems have a tremendous economic benefit to local communities. The Slick Rock Trail in Moab and the annual "Ride the Rockies" are great examples of how local towns can benefit. However, BLM also has to recognize its more traditional users such as the ranchers, miners, and local businessmen. As evidenced by the National Back Country Byways initiative, locals tend to support a project if they are consulted before final decisions are made.

Objectives

- Provide opportunity for local businesses to be involved in the benefits generated by mountain bike use and reduce any potential negative impacts to their businesses.
- Minimize opposition to mountain bike use.
- Minimize impacts that mountain bike use causes to other uses.

Messages

- Mountain biking is a legitimate use of public lands and is going to occur. We should work together to direct that use instead of just watching it happen.
- Mountain biking can provide positive economic impacts to local communities without significant disruption if that use is properly planned for and directed.

Actions

- Involve other land users and local communities in all mountain bike use planning so conflicts can be identified and mitigated.
- Work with local businesses to cosponsor events and facilities so they can get their message to cyclists.
- Track mountain bike use so that visitation figures can be provided to local communities.

Tools

- Mailings, public meetings, individual contact during planning.
- Speak to local governments, visitors bureaus, and chambers of commerce about mountain biking activities.
- Track mountain bike use and opportunities through BLM's automated Recreation Management Information System (RMIS).