



Photographer: Ben Blanche

SEQ Mountain Bike Forum

Thursday, September 7, 2017

Blackstone Bushland Centre

Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve, Ipswich

Topics for Discussion

1. Recent developments in MTB in SEQ
2. Measuring participation
3. User Code of Behaviour
4. Strategic planning
5. MTB Australian Adventure Activity Standards
6. Trail construction/maintenance updates and construction standards
7. E-bikes

1. Recent developments in MTB in SEQ

- Nerang – Commonwealth Games 2018
- Bunyaville – Qld Parks and Wildlife Service
- Mt Coot-tha – Brisbane City Council
- Redland City Council MTB
- Sugarbag Rd site – Sunshine Coast Council

Trends observed by attendees

- New riders without much trail experience are taking up MTB. There is greater MTB rider diversity, from ages 8 through to 80 years, not just the traditional younger crowd. MTB has become a more family-oriented activity.
- Evolution – from MTB being driven by riders for riders through to MTB being driven by land-owners. There are both positives and negative aspects to that trend.
- Modern bikes – less skill is required to ride them.
- User conflicts, particularly around shared use trails – in the past, MTB riders were seeking access to tracks that had been predominantly walking tracks. Now, it seems that walkers are seeking access to tracks that have been built for MTB.

- SEQ is becoming a MTB tourism activity – we have an appealing climate, and are developing attractive spaces to ride (eg Guanaba, Hidden vale)
- Population growth in SEQ is leading to more competition for spaces.
- Commercialisation and economic use of spaces is being restrained through various rules and legislation (example provided was the commercial use of protected area estate policy of Qld Parks and Wildlife Service, but the comment was made that this also applies to local government areas and other land managers).
- Increase in the standard of trail design and development, and better designed and built mountain bikes
- The motivation for getting into mountain biking is changing
- The appearance of ebikes on trails

Concerns

- The decreasing number of kids who can ride or who are learning to cycle at a young age. Compounded by a drop in the number of places to cycle, smaller backyards, schools that don't allow bicycles, busier street ...
- MTB club membership is low which means it is difficult to a) understand the numbers of riders in SEQ and b) access / influence / inform the riding community

Observed best practice models for MTB developments

- Community champions
- Champions within land managers to drive organisational acceptance of MTB
- Legitimising so-called “illegal” trails
- Create a plan for the whole community around the trails
- Selling the benefits of MTB to community and politicians – educate politicians and other decision-makers on benefits. Be prepared to be flexible on which benefits to emphasise, depending upon the audience – some people want to hear about the environmental stewardship associated with MTB, others want to hear about the economic benefits.
- Develop strong relationships with government
- Skills programs should be provided for all ages and all skill levels
- Providing places to ride close by is a key to success
- Providing entry level “Green” trails is important
- Having organised entities is important to land managers, so that clubs can seek funding and can speak for their members.
- Land managers like to be engaged in evidence-based decision-making, so be prepared to provide hard evidence.
- Funding of new trails to include ongoing maintenance – it is unrealistic to expect maintenance to be covered by volunteers
- Adopt-a-trail processes should be considered for engagement with sponsors and local businesses to accommodate costs of on-going maintenance

2. Measuring participation

- QORF is running a project regarding measuring participation in outdoor activities, and is seeking cooperation from people who currently hold data on participation. Figures on MTB riding will be important to this process.
- Land managers present in the forum have access to information for their trails, but there is not currently any tabulation of that data into a bigger picture for the region or the state.
 - For example, Brisbane City Council officers are aware that at Gap Creek there are approximately 15,000 passes per month at their counter on the bridge near the car park, and approximately 8,000 to 10,000 passes per month on their counter on Rocket Frog trail (most popular trail at that site), of which approximately 90% of the passes are downhill.
- It is proposed that the data be aggregated.
- Suggested that access to Strava data would be helpful. Prof Catherine Pickering at Griffith University at Gold Coast is apparently running a study regarding validating Strava data, and it was suggested that Griffith Uni may be able to provide more information on this topic.
- It was suggested that '[Super Tuesday](#)' (Bicycle Network) style program be set up for mountain biking – a head counting exercise on a specific date and time at a cross section of popular locations.

3. User Code of Behaviour

- Discussed the materials that Gillian Duncan developed several years ago around RESPECT principles, and forum generally agreed that it might be a good time to revive that sort of education programme.
- Noted that there are three main types of education programme delivery:
 - Peer to peer – using peer pressure to achieve improved behaviour, setting examples of good behaviour, calling out bad behaviours.

“The standard you walk past, is the standard you accept”
 - Peer to users – it was suggested that MTBA should take the lead role in this.
 - Land managers to users – acknowledging that users are not always receptive to messages from land managers, and may not read signs at entry points beyond their initial visit to a particular site.
- Other methods that could be used to help educate users include:
 - Point of sale opportunities (shops) to users – shops need to be provided with the resources to ensure that consistent messages are being delivered.
 - Training organisations to users – consistent messaging is required.
 - Digital communication through social media
- It is important that benefits and positives are emphasised in delivering these messages, and consider using quirky/humorous examples to get messages across to users.
- Better a 'this is how to do it' rather than a 'don't do this' approach – focus on the benefits rather than the penalties
- Code of Behaviour / Conduct examples
 - [Mountain Biking](#) (QORF)



4. Strategic Planning

- Louise Fox (Common Ground Trails) and Denise Cox (MTBA) spoke about the development of the Queensland MTB Strategy – a review of existing, planned and potential mountain bike trails and infrastructure across the state.
- Download [Queensland MTB Strategy Fact Sheet](#)
- Other Mountain Biking Strategies examples:
 - [West Australian Mountain Bike Strategy](#)
 - [Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan](#)
 - [The Sustainable Development of Mountain Biking in Scotland](#)

5. MTB Australian Adventure Activity Standard

- Dom Courtney advised that the MTB Australian Adventure Activity Standard is scheduled for release during September 2017, seeking public comments.
 - **NOTE:** To comment please go to: <http://australianaas.org.au/draft-standards-for-mt-biking-cycle-touring-released-for-public-consultation>
- Explained the background to project, and emphasised the need for informed comments, including positive comments.
- Forum attendees expressed interest in the project, and reiterated that MTB riding needs guidance from standards like Australian Adventure Activity Standards.
- Download the current [Queensland Mountain Biking Adventure Activity Standard](#) from the QORF website.

6. Trail construction/maintenance updates and construction standards

- Craig Meinicke discussed the MTBA process for development of trail construction standards:
- A group formed in 2014 at MTB conference at Mt Buller, and then met again at the 2015 MTB conference.
- Three options papers were developed to consider different topics relevant to trail construction
 - National Guidelines
 - Discussion on whether should be standards or guidelines? Agreed on guidelines
 - Standard technical drawings for construction, which might be incorporated into tender specifications or contracts for the delivery of trails
 - Curriculum options – used the Pacific Crest Trail (UA) curriculum as a basis, and ok to use that with reference provided.
 - Recognised that different requirements should be provided for volunteers and professional trail builders
- A peak body will eventually be responsible for standards/guidelines? Agreed that would be MTBA (at least initially)
- Future plan is to develop an accreditation framework for trail builders, which should further clarify the situation for land managers and clubs when seeking value for money in relation to trail construction projects.

7. E-bikes

- Discussion about the implications of e-bikes.
- Questions about whether e-bikes cause more trail damage than traditional MTBs – where is the evidence?
- Issues around enforcement of rules regarding non-motorised bikes, e-bikes and motorbikes – the lines are becoming more blurred for land managers.
- Need different instruction for e-bikes, compared to traditional MTBs – heavier bikes which handle differently.

Appendices

1. Key Stakeholders: SEQ Mountain Biking

- [Mountain Bike Australia](#)
- [QORF](#)
- City Councils
- [Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service](#)
- Water & power authorities

2. [Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy Fact Sheet](#) (see attached)

3. Adventure Activity Standards

- [Queensland](#)
- [Australian](#)

4. Books/Resources on Mountain Biking

- [QORF Book Shop](#)
- [MTBA](#)
- Gillian Duncan
 - Where to MTB in SEQ (www.organisedgrime.com.au)
 - Family Rides in SEQ (www.familyrides.com.au)
 - Family Bushwalks in SEQ (www.familybushwalks.com.au)

5. Mountain Biking Apps

- [Apps for Outdoors](#)

6. **Respect:** Yourself, Others, The Environment. (see attached)

RESPECT

RESPECT Yourself

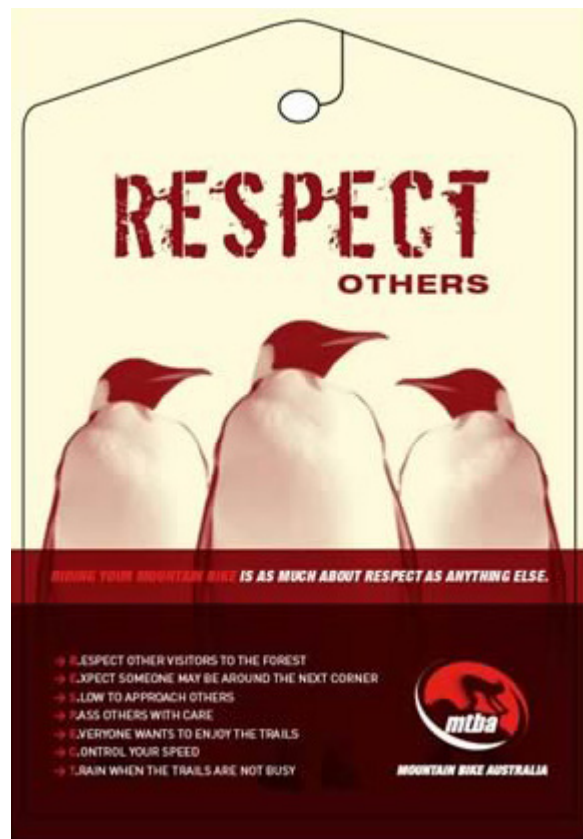
- Ride within your ability
- Expect foreseeable risks
- Stay hydrated
- Plan your ride
- Enjoy your ride with mates
- Carry tools and spares
- Take a mobile phone

RESPECT Others

- Respect other visitors to the forest
- Expect someone may be around the next corner
- Slow to approach others
- Pass with care
- Everyone wants to enjoy the trails
- Control your speed
- Train when the trails are not busy

RESPECT the Environment

- Ride only on trails open to MTB
- Experienced riders stay on the trail
- Stay off muddy trails after rain
- Pack out what you carry in
- Environmental protection of all living things
- Contribute to trail care
- Trails are damaged when you skid



Or more simply put ...

Ride Safe	Be Prepared	Prevent Trail Damage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control your speed • Pass with care • Be courteous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry water, food, repair kit • Take a map, mobile phone • and first aid kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid muddy trails • Stay on the track • Avoid skidding

Source

Gillian Duncan
Gap Creek Trail Alliance

Fact Sheet

Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy



COMMON
GROUND



MOUNTAIN BIKE AUSTRALIA



QUEENSLAND MOUNTAIN BIKE STRATEGY

Mountain biking is a rapidly growing recreational, sport and tourism activity across Australia and the world. The growth of participation and popularity in Queensland presents exciting opportunities, particularly for regional towns set amongst unique and stunning landscapes.

Common Ground Trails have been engaged by Mountain Bike Australia to undertake a review of existing, planned and potential mountain bike trails and infrastructure across the state to cater for growing market demand.

Queensland has been developing mountain bike trails, events and tourism product for many years; this project provides a unique opportunity to enable a strategic approach to the long term development and sustainability of mountain biking in Queensland. The Strategy will provide a planning hierarchy, as well as identify and prioritise key projects in regional mountain biking hot spots.

Market research and analysis will be undertaken to identify supply and demand for trails, facilities and infrastructure and their impact in Queensland. A broad assessment of existing and proposed trails will be undertaken, both at a desktop level and on the ground. Potential trail locations will also be assessed for the opportunities presented, as well as constraints regarding land tenure, environment, fire, heritage, access, safety and other challenges.

Trail planning hierarchy, development models (such as trail towns), user types, supporting infrastructure requirements and potential revenue generation models will be explored through identification and comparison of benchmark mountain biking destinations.

The draft strategy is due to be released for public consultation by the end of 2017. It will be finalised in the first quarter of 2018, in anticipation of major funding applications to support its implementation.

PROJECT AREA

The project area encompasses the state of Queensland, with a focus on key regional areas with existing and planned mountain bike developments. Land to be considered incorporates urban and rural land owned and/or managed by state government, local governments and private organisations/individuals, including diverse parks, reserves and tenures.

PROJECT GOVERNANCE & CONSULTATION

Major stakeholders including Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF), land managers, private land owners, commercial operators, tourism bodies, state and local government agencies, mountain bike clubs and trail care alliances will be consulted throughout the project to determine key opportunities and issues for mountain biking development and governance.

A request for information will be issued to key stakeholders to introduce the project and capture data regarding demand for mountain biking and potential land available for mountain biking development within relevant stakeholder tenure.

Stakeholders will be consulted through a series of face to face meetings, site investigations and structure workshops.

The broader mountain biking community will have the opportunity to provide input into an online survey.

To register your interest in being involved, and to indicate your availability and willingness to be involved in engagement activities for the Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy, please contact:

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