



Mountain Bike Policy

Philosophy

Hiking trails, or foot-only trails, are pathways developed and managed for quiet, slow travel and the enjoyment of nature away from mechanical conveyances, including bicycles. Multi-purpose trails, which address a variety of recreation needs, may accommodate both foot and bicycle travel.

American Hiking Society is devoted to the interests of hikers and the creation and protection of hiking trails, and, when appropriate, supports the development of multi-purpose trails that accommodate hikers. Where there are multi-purpose trail systems, American Hiking supports the development and stewardship of some foot-only trails within those systems.

American Hiking seeks to work cooperatively with mountain bicycle organizations, and encourages cooperative trail planning and stewardship at the local level between hikers and bicyclists. Inherent in this spirit of cooperation is the position that the experience of hiking and the interest of hiking constituents must vigilantly be protected, whether on foot trails or multi-purpose trails open to hikers.

Policy

American Hiking Society supports the principle of managing trails for the primary purposes for which they are designated (Uniform Use Management). Other uses and types of travel should be evaluated for their impact on the primary use and purpose of the trail.

The purpose(s) for which most trails are designated should be made at the local level, and should be reviewed periodically by stakeholders. For trails on federal lands and for other nationally significant trails, the interests of the hiking public must also be considered.

When requested by a hiking constituency, American Hiking may act on behalf of hikers or act to mitigate conflict. American Hiking may speak on behalf of hikers at large on matters pertaining to trails on federal land, particularly where no hiking constituency is present.

American Hiking opposes the use of mountain bicycles in designated wilderness areas and areas under consideration for wilderness designation. American Hiking supports the current National Park Service policy restricting off-road bicycle travel in national parks.

Hiker-Biker Trail Guidelines

For multi-purpose trails accommodating foot and bicycle travel, American Hiking Society supports the following design and management criteria.

Safety. Trails should be designed to allow for safe passage of one traveler by another, and provide for adequate visibility to avoid collisions. Design should account for varying speeds of travel.

Environmental protection. Trail surfaces should be designed to sustain all allowed uses under all conditions, or be managed with provisions that protect against environmental damage and erosion under certain conditions.

The experience of hiking. Trails developed for multiple uses should be designed with consideration given to the needs and concerns of people traveling on foot.

Adopted by the American Hiking Society Board of Directors, May 1998