

July 8, 2021

On the topic of bicycle use in the near term, you have the unenviable task of deciding between bicyclists advocating for off gravel access and walkers desiring solitude and nature from a couple of miles of public right of way and adjacent land owners anticipating intrusion and possible environmental degradation.

I have been looking at the long term impacts upon my children as owners if all you decide is the question of bicycle use, pro or con. As a land owner with a legal trail into part of his land and a tax payer in Tunbridge for over forty years but lacking a vote, I rely upon you, literally, to help protect my interests.

As a non resident, I accept this as appropriate, I am not directly impacted by day to day happenings. However, long range planning or lack thereof is critical to me. Therefore, I am asking the questions that I would ask if I were in your shoes!

I am operating under a number of assumptions. I next put together some questions relating to the interested parties that should be known that I hope ill be asked and understood by you and subsequently the Selectboard and Tunbridge voters before decisions are asked of the voters.

Whatever you decide regarding bicycle use for the short term, I'm certain, shall be based upon a thoughtful plan which considers the long term implications.

Environment, Assumptions & Conclusions

1. I and my kids are walkers. Other peoples' bikes have no place in the woods.
2. The Selectboard's initiative by bicycle riders wishing to gain access on the Town's legal trails.
3. The "legal trail" statutory definition is poorly defined, generally not well understood, and is open to interpretation by advocates both pro and con.
4. There is increasing pressure both locally and from outside Tunbridge for an enhanced range of community outdoor recreational activities.
5. Tunbridge may become a destination for bicycling in central Vermont with or without Town endorsement.
6. Pressure will generally increase upon land owners to make their lands available for proper public use and enjoyment.
7. Both the fiscal and quality of life impacts of expanded public recreational use should be assessed, reviewed with the community, and become part of the Town Plan.
8. Human travel of any variety affects the environment in proportion to its level and intensity.
9. Most humans operate under the assumption that roads or trails are open and available to them regardless of the wishes of the owner.
10. Not all Legal Trails in town need operate under the same criteria (Orange Book) a town's highway network?

11. Control over future possible impact of outside users
 1. The Ranger plans regular gatherings annually
 2. Another company plans events that compete with The Ranger
12. What are the rights and obligations of all the parties?
 1. Town government
 1. Set the rules and enforces them
 1. Who manages?
 2. Maintenance of public bicycle routes
 1. Standards
 2. Who maintains?
 3. Volunteers rights and obligations.
 3. Define use within the type 4 and legal trail right of way
 1. By the town
 2. By the public
 3. By the landowner
13. User rights and obligations
 1. Tunbridge citizens (users, owners & citizens at large)
 2. Local and out of town event organizers
 1. Event dates
 2. Routes
 3. Support facilities-parking, sanitation, trash, security, water/food
 4. After event follow up
 5. Damage wherever
 3. Adjacent land owner
 1. Permits defined use of ROW 24/7
 2. Restricted to same permitted use for farming/logging/ other activities?
 3. What about pent trails?

Cal Heminway
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