

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Alfred H. Foxx, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 09-0173R		

TO

DATE: July 20, 2011

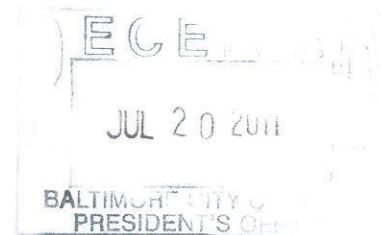
The Honorable President and Members
 of the Baltimore City Council
 c/o Karen Randle
 Room 400 – City Hall

I am herein reporting on City Council Resolution 09-0173R introduced by Council Members Clarke, Holton, D’Adamo, Spector, Middleton, Henry, Conaway, Curran, Welch, and Kraft.

The purpose of the Resolution is to invite representatives of the City agencies concerned with mountain biking on City reservoir watershed property and the mountain biking community to discuss how to allow mountain biking on City reservoir watershed property without harming water quality.

The City of Baltimore developed a metropolitan water supply system that relies on three reservoirs for water supply: the Loch Raven, Prettyboy, and Liberty reservoirs. These reservoirs and the Susquehanna River provide potable water to approximately 1.8 million people in a 215 square mile area of the Baltimore region. A total of 17,580 acres of City-owned watershed land surround the three impoundments to protect the raw water quality. Due to the sylvan nature of these areas, people are attracted to the reservoir watershed lands for recreation and relaxation. To protect the raw water quality of the reservoirs, the City developed watershed regulations that govern how allowable recreational activities may be practiced.

In the 1990’s, the City was approached by mountain biking enthusiasts to utilize the reservoir lands. The resulting 1998 Mountain Biking Agreement permits mountain biking on 52 miles of designated (existing) watershed woods roads. While these permitted trails cover all three reservoirs, the Loch Raven reservoir continues to be the most heavily used by recreating mountain bikers.

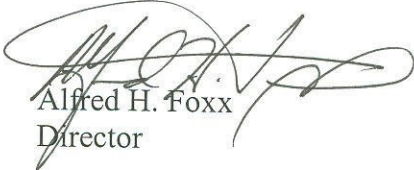


The Honorable President and Members
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July 20, 2011
Page 2

Since the 1998 Agreement, mountain biking has greatly increased in popularity and riders are looking for challenging courses to test their skills. As a result, the Loch Raven reservoir watershed lands saw the development of approximately 32 miles of unapproved "single track" trails. Many of these single track trails follow the water's edge, passing through a 100-foot buffer and along steep slopes, areas where most activities are prohibited for reasons of water quality protection (Baltimore County law). When the City instituted a Watershed Ranger program, watershed regulations were being enforced on a regular basis, including restricting mountain biking to approved trails. The Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE), an organization that promotes mountain biking, approached the Department of Public Works asking that the single track trails be allowed. A task force was assembled, which included MORE representatives, and MORE subsequently submitted a proposal for keeping access to many of the single track trails as well as an interconnected trail system allowing cyclists to circumnavigate the perimeter of Loch Raven watershed. For the Department of Public Works, protection of the drinking water supply was paramount, and any consideration of new trails would preclude their presence in the 100 foot buffer and on steep slopes.

Following the task force meetings, a series of work sessions were held between Public Works and several members of the mountain biking community to see if a compromise on mountain bike trails could be accommodated. After considering several proposals and walking miles of potential trail sites, Public Works recommended to the Mayor and will be adding 5.7 miles of woods roads and 2.8 miles of single track trails. Every attempt was made to configure the additional approved trails so that they interconnect while staying outside sensitive areas, and to offer the possibility of a circumnavigating trail. Creating a circumnavigating trail system will require an agreement with BGE to cross their right-of-way as well as permissions from several private property owners. The City worked with BGE representatives to draft a right-of-way access agreement that BGE and the mountain biking community could sign.

The Department of Public Works will provide a more detailed presentation of the expansion plans at the July 27, 2011 City Council hearing before the Housing and Community Development Subcommittee.



Alfred H. Foxx
Director

AF/MMC

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