

1990

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

February, 1989

Bicycles Banned from State Parks and Recreation Areas

As stated in an article in the Sunday, December 31 issue of the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has ruled that bicycles will be prohibited from all unpaved roads in Michigan state parks as of January 1, 1990. A similar rule takes effect on April 1, 1990 in state recreation areas. The article in the *Gazette* (as well as other Gannett newspapers) quoted DNR sources, giving "overcrowding" and "erosion problems" as the reason for the ban.

Pedal Press has contacted many sources within the cycling community for more information on the ban: why it took place, whether it is a legal move on the part of the DNR management, whether it is permanent, and what KBC members can do to help reverse the decision.

After hours of personal and telephone conversations, the only clear point is that there is no clear point. On any subject related to the closing, *Pedal Press* often received as many different sets of "facts" as the number of sources we talked to. Below is a summary of the information we've thus far received. Please remember that much of this is unconfirmed. After repeated attempts

to contact DNR officials by telephone, the DNR remains unavailable for comment as of press time.

What Happened:

Dwain Abramowski, the publisher of the *Bent Rim Bugle*, and one of the charter members of a recently-organized Michigan Mountain Biking Association, was serving on a volunteer committee to advise the DNR about bicycle use in parks and recreation areas. This committee was charged with studying mountain bike use in state parks and recreation areas. The committee had the full support of the DNR



director, David Hales. Mr. Hales spoke to the group and stated that he was eagerly awaiting their recommendations. He indicated to the committee that he would closely follow their findings.

According to Dwain, the committee was just about to deliver those findings to the DNR when Mr. Hales put through the rules change that banned bicycles. The committee never had the chance to deliver the findings it was charged with developing. The rules change then

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February Meeting

The February Kalamazoo Bicycle Club meeting will be held on Monday, February 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Health Source Fitness Center on Turwill Lane in Kalamazoo. Topics will include:

Updates on land access issues

Organizing committees for a 1991 tour

News on the 1990 Kal-Haven Trail Blazer (Jim Kaye will present)

Changes to the KBC constitution.

If you have any questions about the meeting or these topics, contact Steve Clarke.



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Editorial

As most of you are aware, it was reported in newspapers statewide that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has recently implemented a rules change that bans bicycles from non-paved roads in State Parks on January 1, 1990 and in State Recreation areas as of April 1, 1990. (See the accompanying story on Page 1.) In one fell swoop, the DNR has capriciously acted to outlaw an entire recreational group: bicyclists. The DNR cited crowding and erosion damage as the impetus for the move. The **Sierra Club** applied pressure to the DNR, as they have to public land governing bodies nationwide.

Other measures could have been taken. High-erosion and high-traffic areas could have been posted as off-limits to bicycles. These measures may be used in the future, but for now the DNR has simply banned bicycles.

The DNR not only banned us, DNR memos we've intercepted (printed elsewhere in this issue) show that they moved very quickly to do so before bicyclists could have any input (they call it "pressure"). At first, local park and recreation area managers were to have until April 1, 1990 to make recommendations. Then, on January 8, the manager of Yankee Springs was contacted and told that he had to turn in his recommendations by January 12, as did all other local managers. Could it be that this deadline change was made as cyclists found out about the ban and attempted to have input?

Clearly, the overcrowding and erosion arguments do not demand the excessive action taken by the DNR. How, then, did they conclude that the demon hordes of cyclists must be banished from parks and recreation areas? Why did they move so

quickly? Well, gentle readers, they don't have to tell. According to state law, the DNR has the power to take any action they see fit, without regard for impact on any group. The DNR doesn't have to be fair; they don't even have to appear to be fair. We cyclists have no recourse.

Why should I care? I only ride on the road.

The DNR ban extends to all non-paved park and recreation area roads, too. At first this may not bother you if, like me, you favor 120 psi bald clinchers over fat mountain bike tires. Think, though, about the precedent being set here. Cyclists are being told which roads they may use. Is it such a far leap to imagine road riders banned from busy roads because we "interfere" with auto traffic? Once cyclists are singled out for this sort of treatment we may become easy targets for any outspoken members of the public. If a few complaints from hikers who don't like to share can get us out of state parks, how many complaints from motorists will it take to get us off the road?

The Solution:

Here's the tough part. We've tried the obsequious cringing and begging approach suggested by many major cycling publications. We've tried writing letters to inform our public officials and the DNR. We've tried cooperative interaction with hikers. None of this has had any impact on the DNR. What *will* work? How *will* our voices be heard? This writer is out of ideas. I can only offer you this space for some suggestions of your own. Let's hear it KBC members -- where do we go from here?

Pedal Press editorials are the opinion of this editor only and not necessarily those of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, it's officers, nor its members.

December Meeting Report

The December meeting was the annual KBC holiday Party. The party was held at the Parkview Hills clubhouse. Attendance was heavy, club business was carefully avoided, and lots of food and drink was consumed.

New Members

The following are the new members to the Club since the December/January Newsletter:

Jane Boersma
Dave & Carol Heinicke
Paul, Kathy, Christa, Miranda & Sarah Horak
Todd Lyons
Jason Provost
Donn & Carol Raseman
James Riehl
Kevin Stevens

Welcome to you all! We hope to meet you at the February meeting.

March Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the March newsletter is Wednesday, February 14th. Please send any submissions for the March issue directly to me:

Marc Luoma
13220 S. 38th St.
Vicksburg, MI 49097

or call me at 778-3565 or 961-5827 (days).

Are You Expiring?

All members - look at your newsletter mailing label to make sure your membership isn't expiring. If it is, be sure to send in your renewal right away so you don't miss any Club activities.

Note from the President

The decade of the 90's will bring many new as well as old challenges to the KBC, particularly with regard to meeting the needs of our growing membership which includes touring, racing, and mountain biking members. Some of us are part of all three groups, while some are interested in only one aspect. Regardless of your riding interest, membership in the KBC provides you with a stronger voice in protection of your rights as a cyclist. It is this unified voice which is the best answer to the question "what advantages are there for me to belong to the KBC?" No event has made this more obvious to me than the recent challenges to mountain bike trail use.

As many of you know, the DNR has closed State Parks (1-1-90) and Recreation Areas (4-1-90) to mountain biking. This closure led to an immediate response by KBC which included a letter-writing campaign, calls to local legislative representatives, and establishment of a good rapport with the Yankee Springs Recreation Area Manager. The rapidity with which the Club responded to this issue has helped in preserving numerous mountain biking trails in Yankee Springs (approximately seven miles with a large area for possible expansion). As an example, the Lansing DNR office originally requested usage plans be submitted by the recreation area managers by January 22 but suddenly called for all plans within five days of the written notice to area managers. Representatives of KBC [*Here, Steve's talking about himself-- ed.*] met immediately with the Yankee Springs manager to establish a usage plan for mountain bikes. This plan is pending approval by an advisory committee, but we are confident no problems will be encountered. If the voice of the KBC had not helped in the planning, the available trails may have been far fewer.

A second good example of the benefits

of a unified voice for local cyclists came when we learned that Al Sabo Land Preserve may have been closed to mountain biking. Through the efforts of KBC members, we were able to establish a meeting with Sierra Club members (caretakers of Al Sabo trails) and identified erosion "hot spots." KBC and Sierra Club members have erected fences around the hot spots. Continued work efforts will be needed to maintain the trails at Al Sabo. Those of us who ride mountain bikes should be aware that it requires our cooperation with the Sierra Club to maintain the Al Sabo trails.

Some may ask "why all this hoopla about mountain bikes?" Bike shops are selling four-to-five times more mountain bikes than road bikes. Thus, KBC has an opportunity to extend a welcome to a number of new cyclists who are part of the mountain bike craze. More importantly, new and old members alike should see that the strength of the KBC is in its active membership that can quickly mobilize a strong unified front to respond to issues facing cyclists of all varieties.

I hope that all of you will join me in kicking off 1990 to a strong cycling start by attending our first meeting on February 5, 1990 at the Health Source Fitness Center. KBC has numerous opportunities to grow in the coming year. Please bring a cycling friend (member or non-member) and attend the February meeting. I look forward to working with KBC riders during 1990.

Steven D. Clarke
KBC President

New Tandem Club Starts in Michigan

If you are interested in Tandems, there is a new organization you ought to know about. The organization is M.U.T.S. (Michigan United Tandem Society). The current leaders of the state organization promoting tandem activities are Larry and Jan Kosten. They will be publishing a newsletter "Barks Bulletin." You can obtain a one-year membership by sending them eight (8) self-addressed stamped envelopes and as the newsletters are published they will send you a copy. The address is:

M.U.T.S.
c/o Larry and Jan Kosten
7836 Ridgewood Drive
Jenison, MI 49428

If you would like further information, call Larry or Jean at (616) 457-2753.

P.S. The other midwest tandem organizations are: CATS (Chicago) Area Tandem Society) and LOONS (Minnesota). (My stoker tells me the state bird of Minnesota is the loon.)

Bicycle Gift Items Available from Ann Arbor Company

NEAT and UNUSUAL Gifts for Cyclists: The Club periodically receives a single copy of a catalog containing unusual gifts for cyclists. Its too lengthy to photocopy and its difficult to pass out a single copy. It contains cups with cyclist logos, miniature bicycles, cyclist earrings, , belts, address labels, stationery, bumper stickers, license plate frames, etc. If you'd like to have a copy write to :

Pedal phernalia
P.O. Box 2566
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Thanks to Phil Caruso for the two above items.

Pedal Press Intercepts DNR Bike Ban

Memos *Pedal Press* received the two memos displayed below. These memos shed light on the DNR's attitude concerning cyclists as well as their intent in implementing a bike ban swiftly. *Pedal Press* added the bold type for emphasis.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

October 23, 1989

TO: Jack D. Bails, Deputy Director

FROM: Jack Butterfield, Chief, Parks Division

SUBJECT: Use of Mountain Bikes in State Parks and Recreation Areas

There is a problem building from the use of mountain bikes on trails designated for other uses that needs to be addressed before it gets to be a major issue.

Presently we do not have any designated mountain bike trails in state parks or recreation areas. In a few instances park managers have issued use permits for one-time special events on existing trails designated for other uses. It has been brought to our attention that one of the recreation area managers has allowed mountain bikes on designated foot trails-hiking trails without control and this is starting to cause user conflicts.

It has been the Parks Division's position that all trails are designated for specific use such as foot trails, equestrian trails, cross-country ski trails, etc. We have not designated any mountain bike trails. If there is a need, and we think there is, specifically designated trails should be dedicated and designed and constructed in a few areas with volunteer assistance from user groups.

I bring this matter to your attention for guidelines because I am sure that if we made up any regulations to control this use, someone will appear before the Natural Resources Commission. **Some of the mountain bike user groups are already applying pressure to this office.**

Please provide direction. **The sooner we take a position, the less controversy will be encountered.** This may be a good subject to be addressed by the newly-formed Recreational Trails Advisory Committee subcommittees on bicycling and walking-hiking trails.

JB: pr
cc: O. J. Scherschligt
George Rob, Region I
Dave Dilts, Region II
Russ Cooley, Region III

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

November 27, 1989

TO: Natural Resources Commission
FROM: David F. Hales, Director
SUBJECT: Use of "Mountain Bikes" in State Parks and Recreation Areas

The "mountain bike" is a large-tired bicycle that is capable of operating in rugged terrain through the use of a variety of gears. **These bicycles continue to grow in popularity and present new problems** that need to be addressed both with respect to conflicting uses and environmental stability.

Horseback riding, cross country skiing and snowmobiling all have recognized separate trails in State Parks and Recreation Areas that help prevent environmental damage as well as conflicts between users. Unlike traditional bicycles which also have their own designated trails, mountain bikes can operate, and often the riders prefer to operate, off paved surfaces.

Before use of mountain bikes off of roads and paved bicycle trails expands further, Parks Division has requested that the department specifically prohibit the use of mountain bikes on any trails in State Parks beginning January 1, 1990 except those specifically designated for bicycle use under the master plan process. Further, they have recommended that the use of mountain bikes be similarly restricted in State Recreation Areas on April 1, 1990 following a review of existing bicycle use in these areas to determine which existing or new trails might be designated for this purpose. The newly formed bicycle trails advisory group will be asked to assist in making recommendations for the use of mountain bikes that recognize the importance of protecting the environment and separating conflicting uses.

I intend to implement the Parks Division's recommendations on mountain bike use in State Parks and Recreation Areas through authority previously delegated to me by the Commission. I will keep the commission informed on the progress in addressing this emerging new use of State lands. **Our guiding principle in State Parks and Recreation Areas will be to restrict mountain bikes to traditional hard surfaced roads or bike trails intended for wheeled vehicles unless specific trails can be identified for their use which do not pose a risk of environmental damage or conflict with non-mechanized recreational use.**

cc: Deputy Directors
Parks Division
Recreational Division

Bicycle Ban (Cont'd.)

went into immediate effect. Dwain continues to be instrumental in lobbying the DNR for cyclists' rights, spending many days of his time and hundreds of his own dollars in the effort.

Pedal Press contacted Representative Paul Wartner's office. Rep. Wartner is our representative at the State House. According to his office, the DNR was well within the law in its sudden action. The DNR director may take any action when he or she believes that the park/recreation area or its users are threatened in any way. While Rep. Wartner's office was sympathetic to our plight, they claim to be powerless to stop the closings; the DNR is autonomous in its authority.

Our League of American Wheelmen representative, Dean Brailey, was contacted. It was his initial judgement that the DNR acted in violation of rules that call for public hearing and input into such matters. He promised to investigate the new ruling and involve the L.A.W. to the fullest extent possible. As of press time, we have no further information on Dean's efforts.

Lakeview Schwinn in Battle Creek contacted Specialized bicycle company. Specialized sent to Dwain Abramowski, mentioned above, a "land access kit" consisting of national facts and statistics as well as suggested strategies for lobbying public officials.

Lakeview also contacted NORBA (National Off-Road Bicycle Association) and IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association). The extent of the involvement by these two groups or any effect they may have had remains un-

clear at this time.

Where We Stand Now:

By January 12, local parks and recreation directors decided which, if any, trails may be used by mountain bikes. The letter sent to the local directors by David Hales, the DNR director, appears to indicate that in the future, trails will be open unless marked for other purposes or marked closed to bicycles. In other words, if the trail were marked "hiking trail," we would not be allowed to ride on it.

What's Next?

...to avert further erosion of cyclists' rights, off-road riders need to speak with a unified voice

In the opinion of most interested parties, cyclists need to urge David Hales' office to set deadlines for posting trails. Hales' office needs to be aware that we care about this issue. Write to Mr. Hales in care of the DNR at P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, MI 48909.

In order to contact local managers and in order to avert further erosion of cyclists' land access rights, off-road riders in

Michigan need to speak with a unified voice. Options include starting an off-road special interest group in the League of Michigan Bicyclists or starting a completely new and independent group.

If you have any ideas to share, please contact Steve Clarke. He has agreed to serve as the Kalamazoo focal point for the proposed startup organization.

Finally, let us repeat that much remains unclear as of press time. Further negotiations may be possible. Look for an update in the March *Pedal Press* and at the February meeting.

Bicycle Land Access: Local Issues

Yankee Springs Recreation Area (Gun Lake)

Locally, Steve Clarke, KBC President, has visited Kyle Converse, the manager of the Yankee Springs Recreation area. Steve has been assured that *some* trails will remain open. Mr. Converse has set aside an approximately seven-square mile area for mountain bikes. The area contains some existing trails and more may be added as demand dictates. High-use hiking trails such as Hall Lake Trail and the boardwalk will be closed. One of Mr. Converse's main concerns was erosion during the springtime. To solve this problem, he may open Yankee Springs to mountain bikes from April through November only. When asked about the accessibility of snowmobile trails during the winter, Mr. Converse was not clear at this time whether they would be open to bicycles.

Fort Custer Recreation Area (Augusta)

Pedal Press spoke with Dave Stevens, the deputy director of the Ft. Custer Recreation area in Augusta, between Battle Creek and Galesburg. He said that he and the Manager of Ft. Custer, Bill Kosmider, will send in their recommendations for bicycle access during the week of January 15. At press time, Mr. Stevens stated that bicycles will be allowed on the roadways, both paved and unpaved, on horseback trails, and in the areas that are open to hunting in the fall and winter. He reported "no complaints about damage from bicycles" and no complaints about hiker-bicycle interactions.

Race Team News

Thanks to Sandy Kimbrough for the following news items from the Kalamazoo Bike Club race team:

1990 USCF District Championships:

Time Trial	May 20	Kalamazoo
Road	June 2	Traverse City
Track	June 9-10	Detroit

Upgrading:

For a race to be considered a qualifying race for a category upgrade, the following are the minimum field sizes:

Category 4 to 3: field size of 30
Category 3 to 2: field size of 45
Category 2 to 1: field size of 60

Bylaw J, Section 7 of the 1989 USCF

rule book lists points awarded for placing.

USCF Officials Needed:

The USCF District Representative, Donna Oberle, is looking for people willing to serve as USCF officials. For those interested, there will be a seminar and test held in conjunction with the Spring Valley Road Race. The Spring Valley Race will be used for apprentice training. If you are interested in becoming a USCF official, please call Sandy at 381-1724.

Florida Spring Training Camps

Sandy Kimbrough has information on the Wolverine Schwinn and Mazda training camps being held in Florida this spring. For more information, call Sandy at 381-1724.

Membership Services

The following area businesses have offered to provide the following services and discounts to **KBC members only**. We encourage you to patronize these businesses. Take your newsletter, with mailing label attached, to receive the listed services.

Billy's Bike Shop, Galesburg, 665-5202. 10% off any regularly-priced accessory in stock or \$10 off any regularly-priced helmet in stock.

Breakaway Bikes-the Experts! Kalamazoo, 349-5555. A few 1989 mountain bikes and road bikes at closeout prices. 10% discount on all non-sale parts and accessories for KBC members only. South Westnedge, next to Fretter Appliance.

Lakeview Schwinn, Battle Creek, 962-7688. 5% off any regularly-priced item in stock, not including bicycles or la-

bor. Test ride a Kestrel road bike or ATB.

Milwood Schwinn, Kalamazoo, 349-6384. 10% off any non-sale accessory in stock.

Portage Schwinn, Portage, 327-3393. 10% off any non-sale accessory in stock.

Safety Cycle Ski and Sport, Kalamazoo, 381-SAFE. 15% off any clothing in stock. Personalized instruction in bike maintenance with a tune-up.

Village Cyclery, Schoolcraft, 679-4242. 15% discount off all remaining winter clothing for KBC members only.

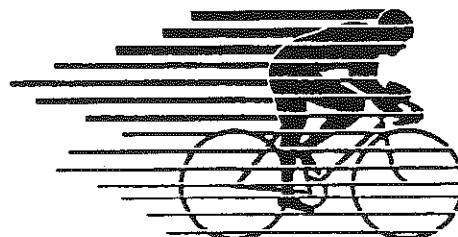
Al Sabo Update

In the last *Pedal Press*, we told you that quick action by the KBC narrowly averted the Al Sabo Land Preserve (behind Kalamazoo Valley Community College) being closed to bicycles. Since that time, KBC members have participated in two Al Sabo maintenance days.

The maintenance days take place on the first Saturday of each month. Sierra Club and KBC members work at Al Sabo putting up snow fencing around fragile areas and repairing existing erosion damage.

The first two months of KBC interaction on maintenance days have been a resounding success; the Sierra Club and the City Representative responsible for Al Sabo have expressed their appreciation for the help provided by the KBC.

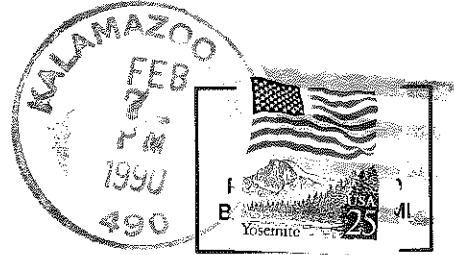
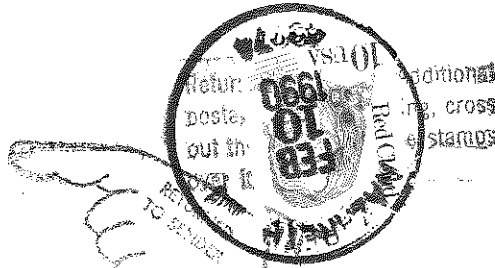
What we need now are **more volunteers** to help on maintenance days. If you can help, call Russ Hollister of the Sierra Club at 349-7617. It's best to call during the week just before a monthly maintenance day.





Kalamazoo Bicycle Club
 P.O. Box 527
 Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Address Correction Requested



NO SUCH STREET
 Frank Snell
 713 Forest St. #1
 Kalamazoo, MI 49008

No Such Number
 90-0132
 2/12/90

Ride Classifications

- A+ 20+ mph
- A 17-20 mph
- B 15-17 mph
- C 13-14 mph
- D under 13 mph, frequent stops

- E over 50 miles, at your own pace
- MTB Off-road

note: All mph given indicate pace while on the bike that the ride leader would like to maintain. Rest stops, their number and duration are a separate issue.

Club Phone Numbers

President	Steve Clarke	327-9956	Race Captain	Mike Teel	
Vice President	Mike Gacki	383-2605	Race Captain	Joe Torre	381-4329
Secretary/Treasurer	Karen Torre	381-4329	Membership List	Phil Caruso	381-0135
Ride Captain	Open		Newsletter Editor	Marc Luoma	778-3565

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club - Membership Form

Your name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Birthdate _____

For family membership, please list other family members:

Other memberships you hold: LAW USCF

Other _____

Parent's Signature (if under 18) _____

I can help with: Ride leading _____ Newsletter _____

Meeting programs _____ Other _____

Dues: Adult - \$10 Family - \$12 Youth (<18) - \$8 Senior (>60) - \$8

New Membership _____ Renewal _____ (mark one)

Mail to:
 KBC
 Box 527
 Kalamazoo, MI 49005

MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

- Mailed newsletter and ride schedule
- KBC Kalamazoo County map
- Access to collection of touring maps
- Access to Club library
- Availability of membership services