

MCA (Mission Canyon Association) Trails Committee – Position Paper
DRAFT (5/2/07)
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The over arching goals of the Mission Canyon Association Trails Committee are to:

- (1) Ensure the health and safety of all trail users and our MC community that serves as a trail head for Tunnel Trail.
- (2) Help protect trails above Mission Canyon (use and maintenance) and associated resources and watershed in an environmentally responsible manner.
- (3) Work with others to advocate for trail safety, education, courtesy and opportunity for responsible users within the above context (safety & environmental responsibility).

1.0 Health & Safety. Fire safety is of primary concern for all foothill residents and trail users. Key fire-related issues include: trail head parking and ingress and egress of emergency vehicles; fire wise activity by trail users; limiting usage during high fire periods.

In collaboration with County Fire, the MCA has developed a Fire Plan that includes: fuel reduction along roadways, including trails; creating defensible space on public and private property; high fire building construction standards; and community outreach. The MCA has obtained grants for the purpose of fuel reduction along roadways in MC as well as for the clearance of fuel from the lower portion of Tunnel Trail. We intend to continue these efforts.

Our position, with respect to the FCTMJTF, is that we:

- 1.1 advocate for fuel reduction along Tunnel trail,
- 1.2 recommend that use of all front country trails be restricted during red-flag alerts, (typically a few days/year) and that all parking at the trail head be eliminated during these high fire risk periods, and
- 1.3 include fire-wise education as part of trail usage education.

Parking is a difficult and contentious issue at the Tunnel Trail head. The MCA is working to find a long-term and sustainable solution to parking congestion along Tunnel Road. The parking issue involves access to the trails, respect for private property, and ingress and egress of emergency vehicles. When parked vehicles block the proper flow of traffic the health and safety of all trail users is jeopardized.

Our position:

- 1.4 seek solutions that would reduce parking congestion at the Tunnel trail head.

Many Mission Canyon residents hike, walk their dogs, jog and/or bike Tunnel Trail on an almost daily basis. A critical safety issue with respect to Tunnel Trail is speed of bikers on the trail. The unrestricted speed of some downhill bikers has, in effect, prevented the use

of Tunnel Trail by families with young children, equestrians and other users who have decided that the trail is too dangerous for their use.

Our position is that either:

1.5 a speed limit of 15 mph is enforced, or

1.6 some kind of odd/even separation of slow and fast usage of the trails should be implemented. This has been successfully conducted in the Peninsula bay area trail systems.

Comment: It is disingenuous to suggest that the trails are open to all users when speed is not controlled. Those who are concerned for their safety, or the safety of their children or animals, have already been intimidated and have ceased to be trail users. The concept of "multi-use" is fine, the concept of all speeds are welcome within this multi-use is a clear existing issue of safety on the trail.

2.0 Environmental Resources. Tunnel trail is one of the most heavily used trails in the SB front country. A typical weekend will have more than 30 cars lining Tunnel Rd. Historically, equestrians also frequent the trail although recent usage has been curtailed. During a recent weekend, two tour buses brought over 80 hikers to the Tunnel trail head. All this multi-use has resulted in trail damage and erosion in addition to the safety concerns previously mentioned. Bike use on the single track trails during and after heavy rain is especially damaging.

The MCA is concerned with not only with the trail use but also its influence on the Mission Creek watershed. During the past six months period (Nov06 through Mar07) the MCA put out $32 \times 80 = 2,560$ biodegradable Mutt Mitts in the dispenser at the head of Tunnel Trail. This represents a use rate of roughly 100 Mutt Mitts per week (430 per month). (Assuming approximately 3 oz of dog feces per Mutt Mitt, this represents roughly 640 pounds of dog feces eliminated from Tunnel Trail and the Mission Canyon watershed during this six month period (more than 1/2 ton/year).)

In terms of unofficial usage statistics for Tunnel Trail, you may conclude that more than 100 dogs per week use the trail. This is a conservative figure since some dogs have yet to train their masters in the proper use of Mutt Mitts.

We note that many types of bacteria, parasites, viruses and diseases are found in dog feces with potential harm to humans. Our objective is to keep these sources of pollution out of the Mission Creek watershed.

Our position:

2.1 Close trails (or discourage use) during heavy rains to prevent soil erosion and reduce environmental impact.

2.2 Dog walkers on Tunnel Trail – please use the Mutt Mitts and help to keep the trail and watershed clean.

2.3 Trail users should clean up after themselves. The MCA has arranged for MargBorg to provide the disposal and recycle containers and weekly pick up from the head of Tunnel Trail.

3.0 Education and Outreach. The MCA will work with others to advocate for trail safety, education, courtesy and opportunity for responsible users within the above context (safety & environmental responsibility).

Our position:

3.1 Firewise use of the front country trails is of prime importance and should be emphasized by the Multi-Use Task Force.

3.2 Without rules and some level of enforcement, we cannot ensure the health and safety for all.