

M.O.R.E. RECREATIONAL TRAIL USE PROPOSAL

Reservoir Technical Group Briefing

Mountain Biking Task Force

In November 1995, City of Baltimore Department of Public Works (DPW) staff completed the first comprehensive review of the Department's Reservoir Watershed Regulations since 1981. Department staff recommended several updates and new prohibitions, one of them being a prohibition of the new sport of mountain biking on City Watershed property. The cycling community was strictly opposed to the prohibition. Consequently the Director of Public Works established a Mountain Biking Task Force (MBTF) to review the issue and make recommendations.

In 1998, the MBTF developed a plan that provided for mountain biking activities on watershed property through the designation of approved biking routes. The designated biking routes provided approximately 52 miles of access to existing City Watershed woods roads on the Loch Raven, Prettyboy, and Liberty Reservoir Watersheds. The plan was intended to reduce the impact to the reservoir forest buffers by restricting access to the designated routes and to discourage bikers from creating unapproved trails or "single-tracks" through sensitive areas of the reservoir watershed properties.

Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (M.O.R.E.) Concerns

The current 1998 plan provides 12.69 miles of access for mountain biking on woods roads on the Loch Raven Reservoir Watershed. Mountain biking is currently restricted to designated woods roads on the property. This plan has been in effect for the past 12 years and is now considered to be outdated by the mountain biking community. The 1998 plan did not authorize the use of user generated single-track trails.

Prior to the recent establishment of the Watershed Ranger force, the Department did not have adequate enforcement staff to fully implement the steps outlined in the existing 1998 Mountain Biking Plan. Now that an adequate enforcement staff has been created, DPW is actively educating the public, as well as enforcing the Watershed Regulations to bring users of the property into compliance.

The mountain biking community is opposed to accepting the limits established in compliance with the 1998 Mountain Biking Plan and has proposed expanding access on the Loch Raven Reservoir Watershed to allow for access to additional sections of woods roads and to an existing unapproved user-created system of single-track trails at Loch Raven. The point of contention is access to over 34 miles of single-track trail that have been created by the mountain biking community and other users of the property at Loch Raven since 1998.

A recent detailed analysis by DPW of the user-generated trail system at Loch Raven shows that the majority of these trails are 1) within the 100' stream buffer, 2) on slopes greater than 20%, or 3) intersect one of these sensitive areas of the watershed (See Attachments). Consequently, staff is opposed to the continued use of this unapproved trail system because of its impact on the reservoir forest buffer and potentially on reservoir water quality.

M.O.R.E. Proposal

The mountain biking community, which has had unrestricted access to the property, is now concerned that the 1998 Plan is too restrictive and that access should be granted to a portion of the existing single-track. The M.O.R. E. proposal in Attachment D requests access to 19.84 miles of new single-track and an additional 9.98 miles of woods roads at Loch Raven.

An evaluation of the proposed expansion of the designated mountain biking routes shows that all of the single-track designated in the M.O.R.E. plan, with the exception of 2 miles of trail, falls within the 100' stream buffer, on a steep slope, or intersects one of these sensitive areas of the watershed. Due to the impact to these sensitive areas of the watershed, DPW staff has recommended against expanding authorized access to these areas.

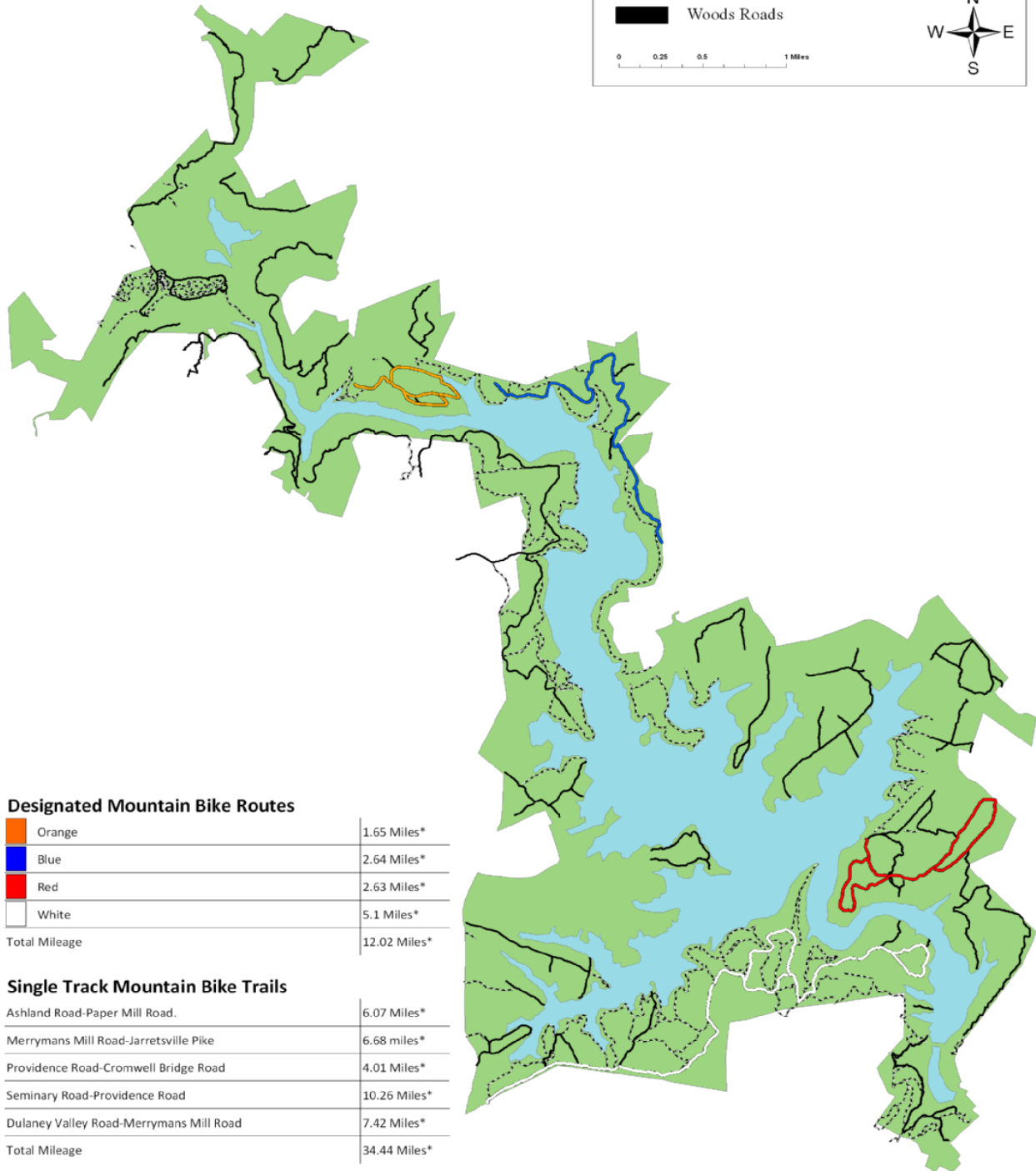
Overall, DPW has designated over 51.61 miles of woods roads for mountain biking over the three reservoir watersheds. Therefore the issue is not access, but instead access to single-track. The initial recommendation from DPW staff in 1995 was that mountain biking is an activity which is inconsistent with the protection of the municipal water supply and that it should be prohibited on watershed property. The existing 1998 Mountain Biking Plan was a compromise between DPW and the mountain biking community to allow this activity.

Since 1998, the mountain biking community has not restricted themselves to the approved mountain biking routes. Instead, they have expanded their footprint by the creation of a honeycomb of single-tracks throughout the Loch Raven Watershed. Their current goal is to legitimize this illegal and potentially destructive trail system.

Mountain Bike Trails

- Designated Mountain Bike Routes
- Single Track
- Woods Roads

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Designated Mountain Bike Routes

	Orange	1.65 Miles*
	Blue	2.64 Miles*
	Red	2.63 Miles*
	White	5.1 Miles*
Total Mileage		12.02 Miles*

Single Track Mountain Bike Trails

Ashland Road-Paper Mill Road.	6.07 Miles*
Merrymans Mill Road-Jarrettsville Pike	6.68 miles*
Providence Road-Cromwell Bridge Road	4.01 Miles*
Seminary Road-Providence Road	10.26 Miles*
Dulaney Valley Road-Merrymans Mill Road	7.42 Miles*
Total Mileage	34.44 Miles*

All Mountain Biking Trails

Designated Mountain Bike Routes+Single Track Trails	46.46 Miles*
---	--------------

Fire Roads

Total Mileage All Sections	52 Miles*
----------------------------	-----------

*all distances approximate

