

SVC's Position on Flathead National Forest Mountain Biking June 2012

1. Bicycling is a great way for people to enjoy the outdoors and get healthy exercise.
2. Flathead National Forest has over 3,500 miles of road open to bicycling, with nearly 2,000 of those miles closed to motor vehicles but open to biking without the hassle of dust and traffic.
3. Bikers, hikers and horseback riders share many miles of "leave no trace" trail on the Flathead. This should not be a problem unless bikers insist on high speeds and/or leave behind unlawful jumps and ramps that are unsightly and increase risks to all trail users.
4. The pursuit of free-ride and other mountain bike speed sports should not occur on multiple use trails due to the potential for conflicts between bikers, other trail users, and wildlife. Big Mountain already has facilities for free-ride and high-speed mountain biking - and plans for more. We urge Flathead National Forest to redirect these activities there.
5. We encourage lower impact hiking instead of mountain biking in Inventoried Roadless Areas because they qualify for future designation as Wilderness (which does not allow biking) and provide some of the Forest's best and most secure wildlife habitat.
6. Bicycling can and should provide a healthy and safe link between our urban areas and public lands if everyone minds their manners, obeys the law, and all agencies pursue meaningful public planning.