

November 6, 2008

Honorable Anthony J. Russo
Court of Common Pleas
Domestic Relations
Courtroom 1 - A
One W. Lakeside
Cleveland, Ohio 44113
Phone # 216-443-8866

Dear Judge Russo,

I am writing to you today in regards to your future leadership position of the Cleveland Metroparks. It is no exaggeration to say that the over 21,000 acres of pristine parkland encompassing the Metroparks are an incredible asset to the greater Cleveland area and greatly improve the quality of life of those who choose to live in this region.

Of great disappointment to myself and others is the inability of mountain bikers, despite years of negotiation, to obtain greater access to the fantastic trail system within the Metroparks. This seems, as best as we can determine, to be primarily due to a philosophical opposition to this activity by the Metroparks Board. I believe this truly represents a lost opportunity by the greater Cleveland region to better utilize this precious resource and I urge you to explore this issue further. Mountain biking is a non-motorized, minimal-impact activity enjoyed by thousands of riders in Northeastern Ohio. No new trails are required to enjoy this activity, which is popular amongst the very type of individuals (namely, young professional people) that this city and region need to attract and retain. There are models throughout the country and within our own state parks where mountain biking is enjoyed without conflicts between other trail users, such as hikers and equestrians. Sadly, mountain bikers currently have to travel outside of Cuyahoga and Summit counties in order to ride legally on any trails longer than 2 ½ miles.

In a region experiencing so many economic and political difficulties, this might seem like a trivial issue. However, as professionals who have dedicated our career to improving the health and lives of people living in Cleveland, we believe that the leaders of this community cannot afford to be comfortable with the status quo. In addition to the obvious health benefits and improvement in quality of life that mountain biking provides, we believe that bold leadership on this issue would garner significant positive national attention and help reverse a negative image that this region continues to struggle with.

Sincerely,

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