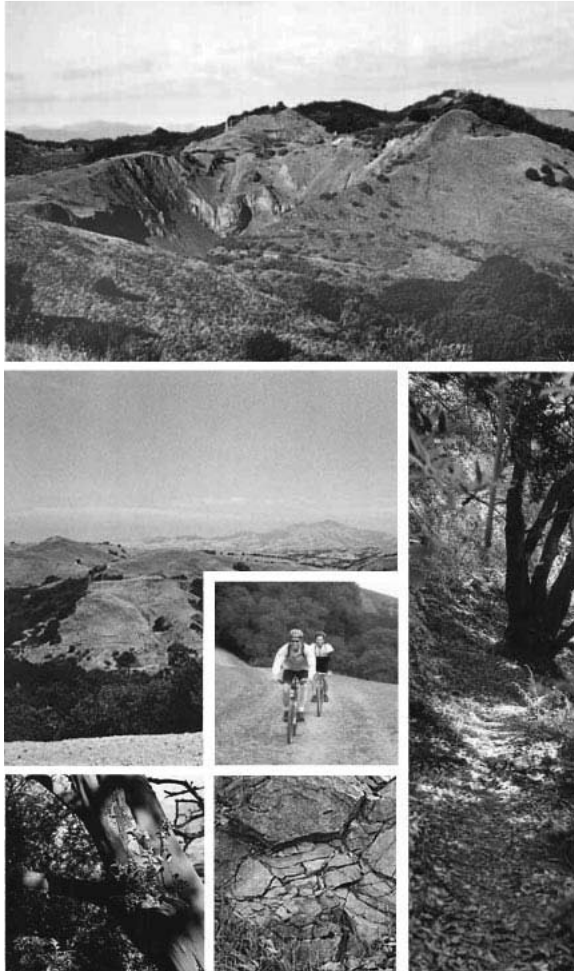


SKYLINE NATIONAL TRAIL



Map of Sibley

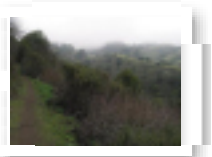
Skyline National Trail

This section of Skyline National Trail is part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail that has always been planned as a multi-use route. If opened to cyclists, this vital link would make it possible to ride on dirt almost all the way from Wildcat Canyon to Mission Peak. This is an exceptionally beautiful trail. Cyclists would appreciate the same aesthetic qualities as other users. Bicyclists are currently denied this opportunity to enjoy one of the most unique areas of the Ridge Trail. BTCEB has divided the trail into four sections for evaluation purposes.

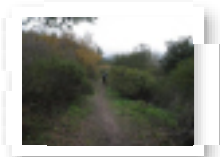
Segment 1 - From Fish Ranch Road to Old Tunnel Road east of the Caldecott Tunnel, the trail is little-used and mainly flat or rolling, with one or two short steep sections. Pictures here run in order from south to north. Regular bike patrols circa 2003 established no problems with horse or hiker interactions with cyclists. The final 200 yards or so (not shown) belong to the East Bay Municipal Utility District and are managed by the East Bay Regional Park District. If EBMUD refuses to let cyclists on its small portion, BTCEB is willing to build a diversion trail down to Fish Ranch Road.

Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay

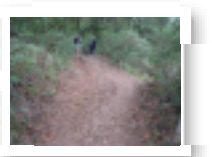
Skyline Trail Segment 1



Northern portion of trail approaching Fish Ranch Road



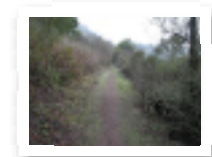
Another view of the northern portion.



This short, overgrade section has open sight lines.



The trail levels out near Old Tunnel Road. Different user groups have plenty of room for passage.



Exceptionally long sight lines.



BTCEB CHECKLIST FOR ANALYZING PROPOSED CHANGES IN A TRAIL'S USES

Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay (BTCEB) has used this checklist to determine the feasibility and suitability of proposed changes in allowed uses for an existing trail.

Trail Name: Skyline National Trail, Parks: Sibley, Huckleberry, Location: Unincorp. Ala & CoCo Counties Date: 2/2/2005

Describe the proposed trail use change: To improve cyclists' riding experience, to help complete the Bay Area Ridge Trail, and to help form a link between Tilden and Redwood Regional Parks, make legal the current noncompliant bicycle access to Skyline National Trail. At times the trail will be described by segment. Segment 1 is Fish Ranch Road to Old Tunnel Road. Segment 2 is Old Tunnel Road to the Sibley visitors' center. Segment 3 is the visitors' center to the creek approximately dividing Sibley and Huckleberry. Segment 4 is from the creek to the intersection of Skyline Blvd. and Pinehurst Rd.

Who is recommending the use change? Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay

Position: Board of Directors, Unit: Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay

Answer each question with a yes or no, and rate each item with a -2 or -1 for negative impacts, an 0 for no impact, or a +1 or +2 for positive impacts.	Yes	No	Impact Rating	Describe positive and negative impacts of the proposed change related to this question, and any other details related to this question to be considered before a decision is made.
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CIRCULATION

1. Would the proposed change affect trail use circulation?	X		2	Positive: Benefits a major user group (cyclists) that currently cannot legally use the trails. Creates a route that almost links Tilden Regional Park with Redwood Regional Park.
2. Would the proposed change provide a loop connection for an existing group of unauthorized trail users to a multi-use trail, or connection to an adjacent park?	X		1	No, but it would create an important route. See item 1.
3. Would the proposed change provide the only alternative for achieving a desirable trail connection for a specific user group?	X		2	Yes. See item 1.
4. Would the proposed change allow trail access to areas that are not connected or to serve staging areas or other trail heads?	X		2	Yes. See item 1. Linking Tilden to Redwood would be a significant benefit to cyclists.
5. Would the proposed change improve circulation and/or relieve congestion on other high use trails?	X		1	It would improve circulation on the Bay Area Ridge Trail.
6. Would the proposed change require a closure of the trail on either a temporary or permanent basis during wet season conditions?	X		0	Possibly. There is a short stretch of Segment 2 that has been damaged by horses in past winters. If that section has not already been repaired, it should be. The damage already done by horses far exceeds anything that adding bicycle use will cause.
7. Would the proposed closure of trail affect existing circulation?			0	Not applicable.
8. Describe any other circulation impacts of proposed changes not covered above.				
Subtotal			8	

NATURAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

Answer each question with a yes or no, and rate each item with a -2 or -1 for negative impacts, an 0 for no impact, or a +1 or +2 for positive impacts.	Yes	No	Impact Rating	Describe positive and negative impacts of the proposed change related to this question, and any other details related to this question to be considered before a decision is made.
9. Would the proposed change contribute to unacceptable breakdown of trail shoulders, or any form of irreparable trail damage?		X	0	
10. Would the proposed change eliminate a use that is currently causing unacceptable breakdown of trail shoulders, or any form of irreparable trail damage?		X	0	Not applicable.
11. Would the proposed change cause trail tread rutting, impairment of trail drainage, or cause significant erosion?	X		-1	Segment 3 contains a portion that is badly designed and is badly overgrade. That portion needs to be rerouted. If it is not, use by all user groups does cause erosion, and bicycle use will increase it.
12. Would the proposed change eliminate a use that is currently causing trail tread rutting, impairment of trail drainage, or cause significant erosion?		X	0	Not applicable.
13. Would the proposed change result in geological instability, landslides or other similar serious safety impacts?	X		-1	See item 11.
14. Would the proposed change eliminate the requirement for trail maintenance that contributes to geological instability?		X	0	Not applicable.
15. Would the proposed change require construction or maintenance that would impact or disturb sensitive listed native plants, animals, or their habitat?		X	0	
16. Would the proposed change require construction or maintenance that would impact or disturb sensitive archaeological or historic resources?		X	0	
17. Would the proposed change trigger regulatory review or permit requirements with a requirement for mitigation?		X	0	
a1. Would the proposed trail use change adversely impact or improve natural resources near the trail or generally in the park?		X	0	
a2. Would the proposed change introduce a new use that would impact or disturb sensitive listed native plants, animals or their habitat?		X	0	This is disputed, as there are allegations that the area is a "wildlife corridor." Occasional bicycle use should not disturb any wildlife that is present. It does not do so now, as far as is known. If this is a significant problem, the trail should be closed to human use entirely.
a3. Would the proposed change eliminate a use that currently impacts sensitive listed native plants, animals or their habitat?		X	0	Not applicable.
a4. Would the proposed change introduce a new use that would impact or disturb sensitive archaeological or historic resources?		X	0	
a5. Would the proposed change eliminate a use that currently impacts or disturbs sensitive archaeological or historic resources?		X	0	Not applicable.
18. Describe any other resource impacts or benefits of the proposed trail use change not covered above				
Subtotal			-2	

Answer each question with a yes or no, and rate each item with a -2 or -1 for negative impacts, an 0 for no impact, or a +1 or +2 for positive impacts.	Yes	No	Impact Rating	Describe positive and negative impacts of the proposed change related to this question, and any other details related to this question to be considered before a decision is made.
TRAIL USER SAFETY				
19. Will a change in existing trail use require staff to make substantial changes in design and maintenance procedures for the trail regarding:				BTCEB recognizes that our conclusion of no impact in this section will be disputed. The current bicycle use of the trail, however, has resulted in no accidents, no need for police response, and no known complaints from the public. The fact is that elsewhere in the Bay Area and throughout the country, trails similar to Skyline National Trail are shared without incident.
a. Steepness		X	0	
b. Out slopes		X	0	
c. Visibility or line of sight		X	0	
d. Turnouts or pullouts		X	0	
e. Emergency response		X	0	
f. Police enforcement	X		1	To the extent that bicycle use becomes legal, the need for police response to current riding will cease.
g. Exposing trail users to additional major road crossings	X		1	To get from Tilden to Redwood currently, cyclists must ride nearby roads that are narrow and heavily used. Implementing this route would improve cyclists' safety.
b1. Would the proposed change cause undesired, off-trail use adjacent to the trail?		X	0	BTCEB does not believe so. There are sensitive trails in the upper portion of Huckleberry, however.
Subtotal			1	
COMPATIBILITY OF USES				
20. Would the proposed change provide adequate trail width to allow trail users to safely pass each other?	X		0	The trails are no different from others in the Bay Area and elsewhere in which all three main user groups pass each other with no difficulty. Those who believe a cyclist and another user cannot safely pass each other should be asked to explain how two horses are able to safely pass each other now.
21. Would the proposed changed use conflict with facilities such as a stable, interpretive facility, nature study area, other? If yes please describe potential conflicts		X	0	
22. Would the proposed changed use be located in a high use area that can't handle more use? (i.e., limited staging, few trails, etc.)		X		Bike patrol experience and the experience with noncompliant riding on the Skyline National Trail shows that any concerns about overuse are unwarranted. Segment 1 is lightly used. Segment 2 receives light to moderate use. Segments 3 and 4 receive moderate use. So far, bicycling has proven to be compatible with the level of use on each segment.
23. Would the proposed changed use be in an area that already experiences documented trail user conflict?		X	0	No. Otherwise there would be complaints of user conflict arising from current noncompliant use.
24. Describe any other compatibility issues related to the proposed change in trail use				
Subtotal			0	

Answer each question with a yes or no, and rate each item with a -2 or -1 for negative impacts, an 0 for no impact, or a +1 or +2 for positive impacts.	Yes	No	Impact Rating	Describe positive and negative impacts of the proposed change related to this question, and any other details related to this question to be considered before a decision is made.
TRAIL MAINTENANCE				
25. Would the proposed change require annual or ongoing additional brush clearing or vegetation management?	X		1	Mountain biking volunteers usually help maintain narrow trails that are made accessible to them.
26. Would the proposed trail use change improve natural resources near the trail or generally in the park?	X		1	Mountain biking volunteers usually help maintain narrow trails that are made accessible to them.
27. Would the proposed change require additional drainage improvements or annual or ongoing drainage maintenance?		X	0	
28. Would the proposed change require additional and/or ongoing trail stabilization or trail surface maintenance?		X	0	No more than the trail currently needs in Segment 3.
29. Would the proposed change require additional retaining walls or structures be constructed and require ongoing maintenance?		X	0	No more than the trail currently needs in Segment 3.
c1. Would the proposed change require additional brush clearing or vegetation management?	X		1	Bicycle use could help maintain trail width and keep back vegetation growth on Segment 1, which is seldom used and becomes overgrown in the spring. Also, mountain biking volunteers usually help maintain narrow trails that are made accessible to them.
30. Describe any changes in maintenance related to the proposed change not covered above				
Subtotal			2	
CONSTRUCTION				
31. Describe any construction that would be required on the trail to accommodate the proposed trail use change				None, except that Segment 3 needs rerouting anyway.
32. Would the proposed trail use change benefit natural resources near the trail or generally in the park?		X	0	
33. Would the proposed change require an increase or reduction in funding for construction? If yes describe how much?		X	0	See item 31.
34. Would the proposed trail use change require that the District complete a construction project in the next year or two that is not on its current work list or plan?		X	0	See item 31.
35. Would the construction to accommodate the new proposed trail use be handled by someone other than the District? If yes please describe		X	0	Not applicable.
d1. Would the proposed change require new construction costs? If yes describe how much?		X	0	
Subtotal			0	
PLANNING				
36. Would the proposed trail use change require additional land tenure, a new maintenance/operating agreement? If yes please describe.		X	0	

Answer each question with a yes or no, and rate each item with a -2 or -1 for negative impacts, an 0 for no impact, or a +1 or +2 for positive impacts.	Yes	No	Impact Rating	Describe positive and negative impacts of the proposed change related to this question, and any other details related to this question to be considered before a decision is made.
37. Would the proposed trail use change occur in an area that has a history of litigation or create any unusual legal exposure for the District? If yes please describe.		X	0	
38. Would CEQA review be required (as determined by CEQA Planner in Planning/Stewardship Dept.)?		X	0	
39. Would the proposed change require an amendment to an existing LUP (realignment of an existing trail or a new trail)?		X	0	
Subtotal			0	
PUBLIC SAFETY				
40. Describe Public Safety issues that may be created by this trail change (coverage, enforcement, access) If yes describe.	X		0	Any increased conflict, and any bicycle accidents, on the trails could require more public safety responses. But cyclists use Skyline National Trail noncompliantly now, and few (if any) episodes of conflict or accidents have been documented.
Subtotal			0	
BICYCLE TRAILS COUNCIL EVALUATION SUMMARY				
(Some questions are more important than others, thus the numerical score is less important than the summary evaluation.)				
Category:	Score		Note any unresolved major issues	
Circulation	8	The change would promote completion of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, would enable cyclists to ride from Tilden to Redwood largely off the busy nearby roads, and would create access to a beautiful area for a user group almost as large in size as hikers.		
Resources	-2			
Trail User Safety	1	BTCEB perceives little impact on the safety of any user group.		
Compatibility	0	Current noncompliant use of the trail has not created known significant compatibility problems.		
Maintenance	2	Bicycle use could help maintain trail width and keep back vegetation growth on Segment 1, which experiences overgrowth problems in the spring. Also, mountain biking volunteers usually help maintain narrow trails that are made accessible to them.		
Construction	0			
Planning/CEQA	0			

Answer each question with a yes or no, and rate each item with a -2 or -1 for negative impacts, an 0 for no impact, or a +1 or +2 for positive impacts.	Yes	No	Impact Rating	Describe positive and negative impacts of the proposed change related to this question, and any other details related to this question to be considered before a decision is made.
Public Safety	0			Evaluating Skyline National Trail does not present the difficult question of allowing a new use on a pristine trail. Rather, the choice is between (1) quietly tolerating a certain amount of noncompliant use, as the district does now, and (2) legalizing that use, which would create a degree of increased visitation by cyclists. The trail is used now by cyclists, who find it appealing for the same reason others do, and they use it without regulation, control, or supervision of any kind. This noncompliant use occurs without significant public complaint, and that is not surprising, given that the activity is, in principle, neither dangerous nor discourteous. If the trail is officially opened to cyclists, use likely will increase, but it can be regulated and governed. Public safety concerns can be ameliorated by design changes, trail management techniques, or both.
Overall Total	9			
Construction Cost <u>0</u> , Annual Park Operation Costs <u>0</u> , Annual Maint. Costs <u>0</u> , Annual Public Safety Costs <u>unknown</u>				
Recommendation of the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay (line in bold face):				
A. We recommend that the proposed change in trail use not be approved.				
B. We recommend that Planning complete a CEQA Initial Study before a final decision is made.				
C. We recommend that the Park's Land Use Plan be updated to accommodate this change in use.				
D. We recommend that the trail use change be approved as an amendment to Ordinance #38.				
E. We recommend further study of the proposed change in use to address specific issues or constraints.				
F. We recommend that the proposed change in use be put on hold for the following reasons:				
Team Members: <u>Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay</u>				