



**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP**  
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June 1, 2017

To:

Parks and Recreation Commission

City of Santa Cruz

**Subject: City of Santa Cruz Draft Parks Master Plan 2030**

Dear Parks and Recreation Commissioners:

The Sierra Club's April 3, 2017 letter to you requested that city parks with existing park-specific Master Plans be excluded from the Draft Parks Master Plan (PMP) 2030. Given that this recommendation was not adopted and that the City is proceeding to review all parks and open space irrespective of existing Master Plans this letter is to communicate the Sierra Club's concerns with the city's proposal to add further mountain bike trails in Pogonip:

1. We are not opposed to mountain biking as a legitimate form of recreation. We question only the impact of such an active sport on the lands of Pogonip.
2. Pogonip is a relatively small (one square mile) of open space within the city of Santa Cruz. It has a wealth of biodiversity as detailed in the Pogonip Master Plan. Its soils are fragile in many places and all drainage flows into the San Lorenzo River, which is the city's source of drinking water.
3. The introduction of a downhill mountain bike ride in Pogonip will be a regional attraction, which will attract hundreds if not thousands of visitors. Arriving in cars and vans they will further impact the environment. We are concerned whether this small city open space park can sustain such usage.
4. The soil erosion impact of thousands of bicycle tires is of concern.
5. The illegal use of walking trails by mountain bikes is of concern.

6. Walking/ Hiking (34%) was the top activity listed in the city's data gathering for the PMP. Mountain biking was lower on the list (9%). A concern is that increased mountain biking in Pogonip will negatively impact walking and hiking.

7. After this land was acquired by the city it was designated as allowing only passive human activities to intrude into nature. Such activities are detailed in the city's General Plan and copied below. They do not include mountain biking.

**City of Santa Cruz General Plan 2030**

*Chapter 9 - PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE*

*OPEN SPACE*

*The city's natural areas provide valuable wildlife habitats, scenic and recreational enjoyment, and an escape from the built environment. The beauty of these areas compels resident and visitor use for passive recreational activities such as walking, jogging, hiking, picnicking, bird watching, and relaxing.*

*City owned natural areas include Pogonip, Arana Gulch, Moore Creek Preserve, and undeveloped areas of Neary Lagoon Wildlife Refuge, the San Lorenzo River, DeLaveaga Park, Jessie Street Marsh, and Arroyo Seco.*

We request that you consider these concerns as you deliberate the details of the Draft PMP 2030.

Sincerely,

Greg McPheeters

Chair, Santa Cruz Group, Sierra Club