

2026 EBRPD Board Candidate Questionnaire

Your answers will not be saved until you submit the form at the end. If you don't feel you can answer these questions in one sitting, you may want to [download the questions](#) and draft your answers externally, then paste them into this form.

Email *

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Please record your full name below: *

Bruce Henry

When you visit the East Bay Regional Parks, how often do you enjoy the following activities?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Hiking	☒	☐	☐	☐
Cycling on dirt trails or natural surface roads (mountain biking, gravel riding, fire roads, etc.)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Cycling on paved trails and roads within the park	☒	☐	☐	☐
Running/Jogging	☐	☐	☐	☒
Dog walking	☐	☒	☐	☐
Horseback riding	☐	☐	☐	☒
Picnicking or other gatherings	☐	☐	☒	☐
Visiting park amenities (lakes, visitor centers, gardens, etc.)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Narrow Trail Maintenance

Historically, basic ongoing or scheduled maintenance of existing natural surface narrow trails has been a low-priority activity for the EBRPD. As a result many trails are badly eroded and even dangerous.

What are your thoughts on regular institutionalized EBRPD collaboration with volunteer organizations that have expertise and are eager to assist with such maintenance on narrow natural surface trails (singletrack) that are open to bicycles?

I strongly support EBRPD collaborating with volunteer organizations to help with trail maintenance, particularly legal singletrack trails.

Historically EBRPD trails suffer from explosive vegetation growth during spring. As a result some of those trails are nearly impassable for weeks if not months until mechanized crews are able to clear the tall grasses and weeds directly impacting the trails. The volume of work is impractical and has safety concerns making volunteer hand work unreasonable. We understand the union MOU issues would need to be worked through. There are stewardship volunteers that would also like the authorization to operate line trimmers to do more effective work.

Do you support finding ways for volunteer groups such as BTCEB to operate powered tools for the exclusive purpose of trail brushing? Would you make this a priority objective? Why or why not? If not, do you support the park district making it a priority to clear vegetation impacted trails in a much more timely manner?

Absolutely I support this once the union issues are resolved. Volunteers should not replace EBRPD employees but rather collaborate with them to support EBRPD employees to complete work that otherwise won't get done. Beyond the work they do in parks, volunteers are highly engaged supporters of EBRPD in our local communities. This would be a priority of mine. Keeping trails well maintained facilities responsible, sustainable and legal trail use. Well maintained parks promote use, outdoor education and support of EBRPD by voters. If volunteers are not used then clearing of vegetation from trails should be an EBRPD priority. Not only for recreation but also for wildfire mitigation.

Narrow Trails - Demand & Access Issues

Since 1995, EBRPD park acreage has nearly doubled while less than 25 miles of narrow trails have been added. Demand for access to these parks and its trail system is now at an all-time high. In the last few years much of this demand has been driven by the increase in popularity of mountain biking, especially among youth. High school and middle school teams have sprung up all over the Bay Area with many hundreds of young riders joining.

The imbalance of demand and supply of the Park's existing narrow trails (singletrack) has been magnified by historical inequity regarding access for bikes. Equestrians (a small and decreasing user group) have access to roughly 55% of the narrow trail system while cyclists (a much larger and growing group) have access to less than 25%. Pedestrians have nearly 100% access. Ordinance 38 allows broad pedestrian off trail access. All this has resulted in user conflicts - real and perceived. In addition, the Park has seen an increase in the creation of unofficial, unsanctioned trails due to the absence of EBRPD trail additions and actions on access.

There has been minimal addition of singletrack trails over the last several decades in part due to the high resource load for planning, environmental review for new trails, and funding. Change in Use is an option to address some of the access issues in a much shorter time frame.

What strategies do you have in mind to balance increased recreational demand overall for narrow trail experiences, with the preservation of natural habitats?

Increase safe and sustainable access for all users groups. Build more dedicated single-use trails. Increase ordinance 38 exceptions to allow multi-use on selected trails where MTB is currently prohibited. These should include trails with good visibility (limited risk of conflict), in parks where other groups (not MTB) have dedicated trails (option to avoid MTB on what would be newly designated multi-use) and areas with limited hiker and/or equestrian use. Make opening landbank properties with existing trails/roads a priority to reduce trail congestion. Continue to preserve natural habitats. Recreation and conservation are not mutually exclusive.

Do you support consideration of Change In Use for existing trails to alleviate some of the lack of bike access? Why or why not?

Yes. Please see above. Increase ordinance 38 expectations on trails where it is safe and responsible to do so. Evaluate a limited number of existing illegally constructed trails for designation as legal MTB and/or multi-use trails. Establish specific criteria (longstanding trails, well constructed, known use, etc.). "Christmas" in Pleasanton Ridge is an example of a trail that should be considered. Would reduce trail conflicts on a very crowded (on weekends) section of Pleasanton Ridge.

With the *Briones Pilot Program*, EBRPD took a significant step toward recognizing and addressing issues of trail conflict, non-system trail impact on habitat, and equitable access for bikes. The Pilot was a pragmatic approach to today's reality, the resulting impacts, and not a reward to rogue trail building.

What are your thoughts on the results from the pilot and how learnings & outcomes could be applied at other parks? What are your thoughts regarding further evaluation of non-system trails in other parks, adoption of those that can be sustainable and make sense in the trail system, along with closure and habitat rehabilitation of unsustainable non-system trails?

See above. As noted by my advocating for "Christmas" to be considered as a legal trail I support this approach. I don't condone illegal trail building but I understand that community members get frustrated when they believe that they have no say in how public lands are being managed. I also support closure and habitat reconstruction of unsustainable non-system trails in conjunction with the opening of new designated trails. Collaboration among user groups and park staff is the best approach for long term success.

The Wildcat Bike Trail Project

The Wildcat Bike Trail Project is proposed to add 1.4 miles of downhill directional bike only trail. The public process for this trail has been extraordinary given the very limited project scope. There has been some vocal opposition to the project while several thousand members of the public support the project. The project is currently working on an EIR. Staff brought the project back to the board for a second time requesting approval to proceed with an EIR. A majority of board members supported moving forward with the EIR and issuing the contract for the EIR.

If a vote to continue the EIR were to come before you today would you vote to support continuing or would you vote to stop the project and why?

Yes. As a mountain biker, hiker, and dog walker I support expanding safe trails for user groups. Dedicated use trails make our parks safer and more enjoyable for all users.

One candidate has publicly opposed the Wildcat Project and and stated 'I don't see how recreational trails of this nature fit in the ethos of a park district', ' Briones was just expanded ... before that it was Crockett. What park is next after we do this one? ... Where does it end?'

Do you agree that recreational trails of this nature don't fit the park district ethos? Why or why not?

No! Park use evolves over time and will continue to do so. Mountain bikers are severely underrepresented in terms of trail access versus percentages of park users. Yes other parks should expand. That statement is a fallacy and suggests a candidate who is not a park user and/or is out of touch with the current realities of how people use the parks.

The Next Century District Plan and Future Bike Access

The park district is in the process of developing it's next century plan or district plan. The 2013 District Plan included Trails for All and envisioned both multi-use and single use trails. It did not provide a clear vision for a magnitude of trail expansion or additional bike access. BTCEB has proposed that the district set a vision of all residents in the park district having access to a park with 10 miles of bike legal singletrack within a 20-25 minute drive from their home. The lack of bike access is leading to increased unauthorized trail creation by park users which often may result in increased natural resource impacts. We ask that the district target reaching 75% of the district having this available to them in the next 20 years.

What is your vision for Singletrack bike access from a volume and timing perspective and why?

Do you support the above proposed level of bike access and trails? Why or why not?

I fully support BTCEB's proposal. Specific targets are essential in order for accountability - ensure that goals are achieved.

The Roles of Access, Education, and Enforcement

Singletrack bike access is limited in the East Bay Regional Park District. The addition of sanctioned access at Crockett Hills and the adoption of unsanctioned trails at Briones have shown a positive impact on unsanctioned trail activity. Those increases in access are significant yet much of the district has very limited opportunity to biking singletrack trails. Some members of the community call for increased enforcement and also self policing by the mountain bike community. Self policing is challenging in light of decades of access advocacy with EBRPD while other land managers demonstrate significantly more expansion in access. Meanwhile the net impact to habitat is much worse than additional well planned trails.

Where do you see the roles of increased access, education, and enforcement in the overall situation related to mountain bikes in EBRPD?

As noted, increased access in and of itself has proven to reduce unsanctioned trail activity. I support increasing safe access for all users to include dedicated MTB trails. Enforcement should be used as a last option in specific known problem areas (high number of documented complaints from the community as a whole - not a small but vocal group of the same people). Enforcement is punitive. Education is more likely to result in permanent behavior changes (collaboration between staff and MTB groups on social media messaging, tabling at EBRPD community events, volunteer safety patrol).

Other Comments

If you have any other comments on the topics discussed here or any related topics, please leave them below. Press Submit when you are done. Thank you for you time and consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. Please view my webpage (brucehenry4parks.com) for specific policy commitments.

This form was created inside of The Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay.

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