

2026 EBRPD Board Candidate Questionnaire

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Email *

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Please record your full name below: *

Colin J Coffey

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 regularly emphasize for park staff, park supervisor, the importance of such collaboration at Briones and Crockett Hills. It is an on going endeavor I work at.

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?

The 2428 4 year MOU is up in 2027. I will make it a priority objective to negotiate with 2428 volunteer group use of powered tools for trail brushing and any other activities that should not be threatening to the jobs of park rangers. I will continue to urge staff to get to the bike trails at Crockett Hills earlier. I did so this year and was unsuccessful because of some equipment problems.

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?

Two approaches. One is to consider where a Briones model of creating legal bike only dirt trails or flow trails can work. The other is to create new bike only single track trails/flow trails where they fit. Hopefully the proposed Wildcat trail lands in that category. Management is open to working on a trails strategy as part of the current master planning process. I would advocate for continued identification of sites for bike only trails in a collaborative manner with all the trails stakeholders. In a breakthrough in their policy the Sierra Club agreed several years ago with the need for bike only trails and a willingness to work with the District and others on the specific sites. Pleasonton Ridge, Del Valle, Contra Loma are all candidates. I think Pt Molate (when the disposition of the wooded hillsides is determined) is also a good candidate. An effort could be made to study currently landbanked land for flow trail candidates to be built before opening. This would avoid Wildcat type push back. The common problem with the new trail approach is the time it will take. So I believe a look at candidates for application of the Briones model should also be pursued as simply faster.

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, it makes sense if you can find little used ranch roads or ranch roads that should be done away with (which happens once in a while) and convert them to bike trails. As a practice and political matter, it will prove difficult to convert single track trails currently used by hikers to bike only.

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 response. I've been all for studying where else incorporation of non system trails might work. I think the Pilot has been a success and I've publicly urged adoption of the model else where.

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?

I support continuing to study the proposal. Preliminary and staff evaluations indicate that the trail should be consistent with the best interests of both hikers and bikers and the protection of habitat. Fundamentally, the opposition seems centered on the belief that the proposed trail is an "intense" BMX style trail. I believe this is a wrong view of the proposed trail and I refer people to view the Sugar City bike trails at Crockett Hills to get a better sense of what Wildcat will be. Gentle and beneficial to the hiker experience. I am interested in what the EIR will reveal and what alterations to the proposal might be a good idea.

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?

Again, the problem with this is the characterization of these trails "of this nature" as somehow inconsistent with incorporation into parkland. I think Sugar City fits in well with the natural open space setting around it. Is the existence of bikes already in these parks somehow inconsistent with the "ethos" of the park district ? The Park District has only around 10 miles of bike only trails in Crockett and Briones. (I view the Crockett trails as bike trails) Wildcat would add 1.4 more. Where does it end ? I don't know...would 20 miles of these trails bring the park apocalypse ? This person is simply greatly exaggerating the overall nature of a bike only flow trail that is designed to fit in with its surroundings.

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 do not know what the new development implications are of 75% of the district having 10 miles of bike legal single track available in the next 20 years. What would be involved ? New single track trails or allowing bikes on single track trails not designed for bikes ? Converting trails ? Its also unclear why access can't be enhanced by wider multiuse trails ? Again, exploring opportunities for Briones model application, creating new bike only flow trails where appropriate, and conversion of existing ranch roads, are all possible. Yes, the EBRPD limitations identified in at the beginning of this questionnaire are all reasons for the long time it takes. I hope the new master plan can set goals for new bike trails that will focus management on them and give priority to same. There is universal recognition in the organization that there have not been enough new natural surface trails created over the decades past and that there is now a need for separate bike only trails.

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?

In the limited territory covered by the Briones Pilot, the additional sanctioned access and the in depth education there, undertaken by both park staff and the mountain bike community, leads to less need for enforcement. So those are two important roles that can guide master planning and new projects that can be developed. If there are any group of users that consistently are damaging landscape and habitat, then enforcement is important to curtail any such activity.

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 your time and consideration.

Over the last decade there has been a distinct shift in the bike approach of EBRPD board and management. There was a strong resistance to mountain bike usage at all. And the development of new trails "for all" was the basic rule. The shift has come to now an acknowledgement (even with Sierra Club support) that bike only trails can be a good way of accommodating demand and enhancing hiker experience. I think the arrival of the mountain bike teams and the desire to enhance their experiences, and the sheer equity deserved by these kids and mountain bikers generally, has driven this significant shift in approach to bikes and mountain biking. While I think this opens up a Park District desire to create more access, there remains significant barriers. New trails, for reasons acknowledged in this questionnaire, are very slow to develop. (Even if approved, how long will lawsuits take with Wildcat? On the other hand, importantly the Park District recently defeated the Srawldef challenge on CEQA grounds to implementation of the Briones Pilot.)

The other significant barrier to honestly acknowledge is the EBRPD rule, reflecting the strong interest of hikers, that single tract dirt trails, where not designed for bikes, remain not shared with bikes. My hope is that access can be speeded up by means of a focus on the issue in the new master/strategic plan.

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

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