

“The Hiawatha Bike Trail” by Emily Meshke

### **First Place**

In the mountains of Montana there exists a bike trail. As you ride the trail you go through tunnels stretching as long as one point eight miles and across countless trestle bridges. The flowing green of pine trees stretching out before you.

It was a warm morning when my family arrived to ride the Hiawatha trail. The woman behind the counter informed us that the tunnels were cold; the temperature could drop below thirty-two degrees. So, as we set off and entered the tunnel, saying good-bye to the warm sun, the cold hit us like a wall. Inside the tunnel it was pitch black, the light at the other end like the end of a pen! The only sounds were the tires rolling across the damp earth and the consistent dripping of water from the rocks above. The air was crisp and freezing cold on my skin as I pedaled along.

As we rode out of the tunnel, and into the gloriously warm sun once again, we saw the pine trees stretch out before us, an endless sea of green. On the breeze came a faint scent, the thought of cinnamon on its tongue. As the lazy breeze whispered past, the limbs of the pines swayed gently.

We rode on for a while, finally coming to one of the many trestles. In the middle of this giant trestle stood a small lone chipmunk. As we approached he let out a series of chatters. When we rode past him he ran for cover. The sky was a sea of blue to match that of the green pines, and high above soared a hawk.

Past all the beauties of the forest my family rode, taking in the smells and sights of nature. Around every bend we heard the sound of chipmunks fighting and chattering

with each other. There were countless hawks soaring the skies looking for prey. There were woodpeckers in the pines, beating out a pattern to the song of the mountain. We

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came to a section of trail where there were hoof prints from where several deer had crossed the trail.

As we neared the end of the trail, warm sun beating down on us, we looked back remembering the ride. All the sights, from chattering chipmunk to soaring hawk, were now valued memories. The breeze brushing at our back, the very one that whispered through the pines, was like a hand pressing on our back, begging us to return.

But the day was already getting late, our fun coming to an end. So we all got on the shuttle, to go back to the top of the mountain. As we returned to camp I looked back remembering all the sights and smells. I remember the freedom the mountain gave, free from all strings of human life, and how much I loved to see that hawk soar above. I remember wishing I could have that trail back, to be free and soar just once more.