



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Big Bend National Park
Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River
P.O. Box 129
Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834-0129

January 20, 2006

Dear Interested Party:

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to work with the local mountain biking community and the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) to look into the possibility of expanding mountain bicycling opportunities in Big Bend National Park.

An agreement between the NPS and IMBA was signed in March, 2005 with the goal of providing high quality bicycling opportunities for visitors to enjoy the national park system in appropriate areas consistent with NPS stewardship responsibilities.

Highlights of the agreement encourage the NPS to work in cooperation with IMBA and affiliate organizations to identify mutually beneficial projects or activities. These may include trail construction and maintenance projects, trail patrols, gathering and sharing information regarding mountain biking on NPS lands, safety training, and other educational efforts.

The designation of roads, areas, and routes as appropriate for mountain biking shall comply with the requirements of 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4.30 and all other applicable laws, regulations, and policies of the NPS. While park roads and parking areas within developed zones (36 CFR 1.4) do not require special designation allowing bicycles, proposed bicycle use on all other routes within developed zones, and administrative roads (those closed to public motorized use) outside of developed zones will require an analysis, including public comment, and decision pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Any proposed route other than an administrative road that is not within a developed zone must be promulgated as a special regulation.

Wilderness areas within the park will not be examined as regulations already prohibit the use of any type of bicycles in these areas. This would exclude such popular hiking and camping areas as the Chisos Mountains and Mesa de Anguilla from consideration.

The National Park Service encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process during which the public has two opportunities to formally comment on the project; once during this initial project scoping period and again following release of an Environmental Assessment if a determination is made that a biking route is appropriate. We are currently in the scoping phase of this project, and we invite you to voice your ideas, comments, or concerns in this effort. All comments become part of the public administrative record.

Possibilities for the expansion of mountain biking opportunities include building single-track trails parallel to existing unpaved backcountry roads, where riding is already permitted, to loop trails in wilderness exclusion zones that would link existing backcountry roads with single-track trails.

Please submit your written comments online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>.

Written comments may also be submitted to:

Superintendent
Big Bend National Park
POB 129
Big Bend National Park, TX 79834

We look forward to your participation in this important process.

Sincerely,

John H. King
Superintendent