

Good Ideas

- Trail conditions are good. Some sections need work, but overall great trails.
- The Fells are filled with nature, but it's function as a natural preserve needs to be balanced with it's use as a public urban park and recreation area.
- The Fells needs ongoing trail maintenance. There is a large and untapped pool of potential workers that could do a lot more work than is currently done.
- DCR's position on trail impact is dead-on! Hiking, biking and trail running all have a similar trail impact, despite what bike-hating groups continue to say.
- Increased participation of Fells stewardship groups (NEMBA, AMC etc) is a great idea. Many groups want to do more. However most trail users do not belong to any group, and some would still like to get involved. Don't forget about the little guy.
- Reduce the number of inappropriate trails, including redundant trails, spider-web trails, trails through wetlands etc.
- Improve trail signage and blazing, particularly blazing at intersections, to reduce people unknowingly going off trail and becoming lost.
- Improve/add parking areas, including @ Bear Hill (Fallon Rd) and former Hospital
- Self enforcement in tandem with education through the current network of Fells related websites could be effective. But this alone will have very little effect if it's not coupled with a set of rules that treat all appropriate trail users equally and fairly.
- Trail Ambassador/Trail Watch program is a GREAT idea. DCR management could be alerted same-day, of any trail issues, among other benefits.
- Separate overlapping trails. All current colored trails should be separated from each other, and separated from fire roads, as much as possible. Each trail can be it's own unique experience. (MTB loop will likely stay mostly fire road)
- Completing a loop around Spot Pond is a great idea. This loop could be added to other new sections of trail, which could turn the Cross Fells trail into a loop.
- Opening the Dark Hollow trail and Reservoir trail to bikes is a great start. **The Skyline trail should NOT be taken off the table from the evaluation process to be opened as multi-use.** (see 'Bad Ideas' for more)
- Adding some off leash areas to the Fells is a good idea. However loose dogs do tend to chase people, friendly or angry.
- Note: With so many trails potentially switching over to multi-use, the trail maintenance procedure of building stone staircases in the middle of trails should be stopped immediately. Rock armoring is the standard procedure where these staircases are being installed. The staircases primary purpose seems to be to antagonized bikers and keep them off the trails. In reality, all they do is widen the trail by encouraging bikers and hikers to walk on the trail edges, around the uneven stairs.

Bad Ideas

- DCR trail counts unreliable – very limited sampling done late in the season, probably gives a very inaccurate representation of park user share.
- Bikers don't get (or need) bike-only trails, why do hikers get hiker-only trails?
- Words “fun” and “technical challenge” used in draft don't make biking different from hiking. Hikers consider hiking fun. And for most singletrack hikers, the technical challenge of the trail is what gives it much of it's appeal. Hikers and Bikers seek essentially the same thing out of a trail.
- “No net gain” guideline is too general. Each area of the Fells should be judged on it's own, and trails added, removed, or left alone as deemed appropriate. This most likely will lead to fewer miles of trails, so this may be a meaningless semantic point.
- Changing the “Winter Ban” to an adaptive “Mud Season” ban is a great, common sense idea. However it should be applied to ALL users, not just bikes. The DCR states in it's draft plan that all trail users have similar impact on the trail. A biking-only mud season ban is an unfair double-standard.
 - A Mud Season ban could only apply to singletrack, allowing all trail users to still use the many miles of fire-road in the Fells during Mud season
- **A small amount of hiking-only trails in the Fells may be acceptable, however putting the Skyline trail on this list is not appropriate**
 - The Skyline trail is the “Flagship” trail of the Fells. Reserving it for hikers only, continues the on-going policy of treating bikers as second-class trail users
 - Skyline trail is not secluded at all. It loops right through the heart of the Fells, crossing all of the other major trails in the Fells repeatedly.
 - Large portions of the Skyline trail traverse solid rock, which is far more sustainable for higher traffic trails. With some trail maintenance, even more of the trail could be moved to solid rock, which does not erode and requires little maintenance.
 - The Skyline trail is perhaps the most desirable trail in the Fells. What makes it such a great hiking trail, is exactly what makes it a great biking trail.
 - Hiker-only trails should be the exception in the Fells. Trails that restrict user types should be located in remote areas, far off the beaten path. Areas that naturally see significantly fewer users (and therefor fewer bikers)
- Virginia Wood is not appropriate as a pedestrian-only area. Blocking this parcel of land from bikes would prevent bikers from doing a complete loop around the Fells. Logistically it doesn't make sense. It's unrealistic to expect bikers to do a loop around 90% of the Fells, and then turn around and go back the way they came.
- The Rock Circuit trail and the Lawrence Woods are much more reasonable sections to be hiker-only. They are both in “far corners” of the Fells, far away from the most popular routes. These areas combine to offer significant variety of trail, with ample space for additional trails in the Lawrence Woods area. This should be MORE than adequate for hiking-only sections.
- “Separate trail use by day/time” concept does not seem practical. It is already a challenge getting the rules out to Fells users. Introducing a whole new set of additional dynamic rules would only make this job harder. Plus there would be endless bickering over which group had which trails at which times.