



STAFF REPORT
City of Dripping Springs
PO Box 384
511 Mercer Street
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Submitted By: Emily Nelson, Dripping Springs Ranch Park Manager

Council Meeting Date: May 7, 2024

Agenda Item Wording: **Discuss and consider action related to the agreement with the Dripping Springs Mountain Bike Club and biking and other activity related to the Ranch Park trails. Sponsor: Council Member Sherrie Parks**

Agenda Item Requestor: Council Member Sherrie Parks

Summary/Background: On April 23, 2024, the Dripping Springs Mountain Biking Team hosted a Trail Maintenance Day. Ranch Park Staff were not aware of the scheduled Trail Maintenance Day.

On the morning of April 24, 2024, Andrew Binz noticed a lot of displaced dirt, boulders, and trees in the ravine located behind the Ranch House. Emily Nelson and Lily Sellers went to investigate the area with Andrew. The Mountain Biking team had created an unsanctioned trail in the ravine. It resulted in a large amount of tree trimming along with entire trees being cut down. There was a dramatic drop off a ledge that would be very dangerous for mountain bikers, equestrians, and hikers.

Emily and Lily decided to hike the entire trail and found extensive trail destruction had occurred. From improperly cut limbs to enhancements of unsanctioned trails. They also found that the trail work had continued down the environmentally sensitive ravine which resulted in a lot of trees being cut down that provided structure for the ravine's rock edge. Some oaks were cut and not sealed along the trail.

Emily contacted Lindsey Thomas immediately to make sure a cease and desist on all trail work occurred. Lindsey admitted that the Mountain Biking Team had been working in that area and that she had asked them 3 times to stop working in that area. She was the dangerous torn limbs that are throughout the trail system and the unsanctioned trails.

The Mountain Biking Team came out to remedy the ravine unsanctioned trail to the best of their abilities, but some of the damage cannot be fixed. Various city staff and the Mountain Biking Board met on April 30th to discuss how this happened to our trail system without adult intervention.

They showed interest in correcting the improper trail maintenance that had taken place.

An arborist will be walking the trail system on Tuesday, May 7th, to assess the damage. After that assessment, City Staff will have a better idea of the best plan for trail remediation.

**Commission
Recommendations:**

**Recommended
Council Actions:** Staff recommends closing the trails for all users until the arborist provides us with a remediation plan that addresses the safety concerns for staff to execute.

Attachments: Images of the trail damage.

Next Steps/Schedule: Execute any direction that City Council sets.