

MOUNTAIN BIKES AND MAINE STATE PARKS;

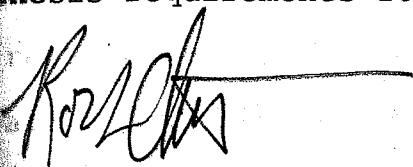
ALLIES OR ADVERSARIES?

by

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ABSTRACT

One of the public land use conflicts that has come to the forefront in recent years is the use of mountain bikes on hiking trails. This paper is an analysis of the problem in its historical context and a case study of two state parks in the state of Maine.

It begins with a history of mountain bikes. Next, the intended uses of parks are considered by examining the history of parks from the inauspicious early days of the national parks to their growth in popularity and the subsequent emergence of a need for state parks. It is decided that mountain bikes do, indeed, have a place in state parks in the United States, then it goes on to study the Maine State Bureau of Parks and Recreation and concludes that the bikes are not anathema to the Bureau's goals.

With this in mind trail-by-trail case studies are conducted on the 18 trails of Camden Hills and Mount Blue State Parks through a process of hiking and biking each trail to suggest which trails bikes be allowed on. Finally, a series of six recommendations are made to the Bureau in order to help in dealing with this issue in the future.

These recommendations include: regulating mountain bikes within the Bureau, similar to its regulation of snowmobiles and ATVs; adopting trail standards for mountain bikes; networking trails to exploit logging roads; encouraging mountain biker participation in the decision-making process; posting signs at trailheads; and considering temporary trail closures.