Trail building and nature conservation

European perspective

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Content presentation

- Introduction
- What is a sustainable trails?
- Does EU legislation make trail building impossible?
Introduction
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Mountain biker since 25 years
- World champion masters 2013, three times Dutch champion masters, Benelux champion
Introduction

- Director Probos Foundation - knowledge and innovation centre on sustainable forest management (1996-now)

- Research and capacity building
  - Study on physical impacts and social conflicts of mountain bikers in the Netherlands
  - Research on sustainable trail building in the Netherlands
  - Intermediate between mountain bikers and forest managers
  - Demonstration projects: building of three mountain bike trails
Introduction

€ Director/owner Tracks & Trails (2009-now)

• Design and construction of mountain bike trails and skill parks (22 trails constructed (>500 km), 7 skill parks designed/constructed, 19 trails in preparation (>500 km)
What is a sustainable trail?
What is a sustainable trail?

A trail that reduces social conflicts and damage to religious/spiritual sites
What is a sustainable trail?

A trail that reduces damage to soils and geological values
What is a sustainable trail?

A trail that reduces damage to vegetation and plants

Wood bedstraw

Lady's slipper orchid
What is a sustainable trail?

A trail that reduces damage to cultural heritage

Archeoduct in the Strubben
Kniphorstbosch across prehistoric road
What is a sustainable trail?

A trail that reduces disturbance of fauna
What is a sustainable trail?

A trail that is fun, safe and challenging to ride for the target group!!
Does EU legislation make trail building impossible?
EU Nature directives

€ EU Birds and Habitats Directives
€ Acceding Countries will have to implement these Directives
€ EU Habitats directive
  • Protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 so called "habitat types" of European importance (Natura 2000)
€ EU Birds directive
  • Protects all wild bird species naturally occurring in the EU.
EU Birds directive implemented in Dutch Flora and Fauna Act and Dutch Code of Conduct for Forest management:

- Deciduous and mixed forest: no activities between March 15 and July 15
- Conifer forest: between March 15 and July 15 only activities if no breeding birds inventory necessary

In practice:

- No trail building from March 15 till September
- No trail building close to sensitive foraging, resting and reproduction sites (raptor nests)
Habitats directive

- EUwide network of nature protection areas established under the Habitats directive
- Each country designates Natura 2000 areas with protected *habitats* and *species*
- Not a system of strict nature reserves where all human activities are excluded!!!
Protected habitats

1. Is the area designated as Natura 2000?
   - No
   - Yes

2. Is the area designated as protected habitat?
   - No
   - Yes

3. Does the area actually consist of the protected habitat?
   - No
   - Yes

4. Will a singletrack effect the habitat negatively?
   - No
   - Yes

Try somewhere else
Protected habitats
Protected habitats

- H2160, Dunes with Hippophae rhamnoides
- H9120: Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex
- H4030, European dry heaths
Is the area designated as Natura 2000?

- Go ahead

- Are protected species present in the area?
  - Go ahead
  - Will the single track effect the species negatively?
    - Go ahead
    - no
    - yes
    - Try somewhere else
    - yes
Protected species

Flag beetle
Protected species

Black woodpecker