

CARLISLE TRAILS COMMITTEE

Memo

To: Dan Wells, Chair, Carlisle Conservation Commission
From: Alan Ankers, Chair, Carlisle Trails Committee
Re: Land Use Regulations
Date: March 1, 2024

At the November 30, 2023 meeting of the Conservation Commission, you had asked the Trails Committee to draw up proposed revisions to the "Rules and Regulations for Use of Carlisle Conservation Land" to address the use of bicycles on trails. After much discussion, the Carlisle Trails Committee voted at our March 1, 2024 meeting to propose the regulations noted below. I have also included some explanatory commentary to help you to understand our thinking.

Proposed Regulations

1. Cycling is allowed on marked trails only, unless specifically prohibited.
2. Cyclists should yield to other trail users.
3. Cyclists should not ride on soft, wet or muddy trails in conditions that leave tire ruts.
4. Motorized bicycles are not allowed.

Commentary

1. For example, in some locations, bikes are specifically prohibited by the easement documents. But this could also cover situations where we want to post trail closures.
2. This seems standard – and all users yield to horses.
3. We were hoping to find better wording for this. It seems almost impossible to come up with a definitive and objective measure that could be enforceable. The intent of this is more to set expectations for trail users.
4. This part has the potential to become very complicated because of the increasing popularity of e-bikes. It may be best to simply omit it from these regulations and continue to rely on the existing general regulation prohibiting motorized vehicles, with separate provisions for OPDMD. The e-bike situation becomes quite complex as there are three classes of electric bicycle: one that can be completely self-propelled, and two that only provide power when the rider is pedaling, with 2 different speed level cut-offs. If we were to mirror DCR's regulations, e-bikes would be prohibited on our trails with one single exception: class 1 e-bikes (provide power assistance only while rider is pedaling, cuts off at 20 mph) on improved trails 8 feet or more in width. The only place that springs to mind that meets that requirement would be the Cranberry Bog, and we probably do not want e-bikes on those trails.

