



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

N1632 (2462)

OCT 4 2005

Mr. Jeff Ruch
PEER Executive Director
2001 S Street, NW, Suite 570
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Mr. Ruch:

On May 19th of this year, you sent a letter stating your understanding of National Park Service (NPS) regulations and policies regarding the use of bicycles on national park lands, and the fact that you were pleased and concerned about a General Agreement (GA) that the NPS signed with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). While your letter did not pose specific questions or request a formal reply, I would like to address the very important issues that you raise.

You question why wilderness was not mentioned in the transmittal memo of April 21, 2005, containing instructions to the field regarding implementation of the IMBA GA. The reason that the word "wilderness" did not appear in the instructions to the field is because we believe the issue is adequately addressed by NPS Management Policies. However, the concerns you raise suggest that there may still be additional clarification needed.

Bicycles are prohibited in wilderness areas unless congressionally authorized. This prohibition is enforced by the NPS through 36 CFR 4.30(d)(1). NPS policies direct that lands that have been formally proposed by the NPS Director or Secretary of the Interior, or recommended by the President to Congress for designation as wilderness, will be managed with the expectation of eventual designation as wilderness. Therefore, NPS lands that are proposed or recommended for wilderness designation are inappropriate for bicycle use designations until such time as Congress renders their decision.

The second important issue you raise in your letter concerns the possibility that several parks may currently have authorized bicycle use on administrative roads and trails outside of developed areas that is inconsistent with policy and regulations. I have asked Rick Potts, NPS Wilderness and Recreation Programs Manager, to further explore this issue. He will be contacting you soon for any additional details you might have, or you may contact him at (202) 513-7090, or e-mail at rick_potts@nps.gov.

Thank you for your thorough and thoughtful letter. I appreciate your deep interest in the management of National Park Service lands. An identical letter is being sent to Ms. Jones.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fran P. Mainella". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "F".

Fran P. Mainella
Director

cc: WASO Wilderness and Recreation Programs Manager
Deputy Director, Operations
Deputy Director, Support Services
Associate Directors
Regional Directors
Associate Regional Directors, Operations
Park Superintendents