

## 11.1 Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club - Funding.DOC

**From:** Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels <nthriversdirtywheels@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, 9 May 2016 8:45 PM  
**Subject:** Duck Creek Mountain Bike Park  
**Attachments:** 20160509 NRDW Duck Creek MTB Park Council Deputation.pdf

Dear Councilors,

Thank you for your time today to discuss the way forward for Duck Creek Mountain Bike Park. To enable an informed decision to be made, I have attached a copy of my deputation / presentation for your information.

I strongly encourage you to watch the YouTube video about Blue Derby in Tasmania to get a feel for what the sport is all about and the positive social and economic impacts it can have on a place.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO324FBFdns>

I am happy to take any questions, so please don't hesitate to give me a call at any time.

Regards  
Dave  
(0427 230 122)

[www.dirtywheels.org](http://www.dirtywheels.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/NthRiversDirtyWheels>



**Deputation to Ballina Shire Council**

**09 May 2016**

Mayor Wright, Councillors, General Manager & Council Staff

Thank you for attending the meeting today. The Club appreciates that you have taken time out of your day to consider how to progress Duck Creek Mountain Bike Park from planning to construction phase and ultimately open the facility.

I will start today by giving a brief history of the Club and the process undertaken to date.

Around 2009/2010 there was a huge increase in people riding mountain bikes on a regular basis for varying reasons. Some rode for fitness, some for fun, and some just for the personal friendships that are formed from just riding your bike with mates. At this time, I could see that there was a need for a purpose built facility, much like most other regions now have throughout Australia. There was no legal, public, purpose built facilities between Grafton and Nerang, a scenario that still exists to this day.

In October 2010, an opportunity for riders and the local community was seized; a meeting was scheduled with Council GIS staff, to shortlist potential sites. There were very few in Ballina Shire, but it was important that it be built centrally to our member base – ideally somewhere on the Alstonville Plateau as it was within about 20 minutes from local towns and villages. One site categorically stood out, due to the topography, soil type, proximity to the population and proposed use – a quarry on the side of the Bruxner Highway, a few kilometres east of Alstonville. Following more research was a meeting with Jillian Pratten in early 2011, who was extremely supportive of the proposal.

Further liaison throughout 2011 revealed that Council may support the proposal if we allowed the general public access to the trails also. For this, we would need public liability insurance and to obtain this we would need a Club.

Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club Inc. was formed by 4 local riders in mid-2012 and proved to be an instant success, with around 40-50 riders signing up at the inaugural meeting.

As the Club was not the registered proprietor of the Duck Creek Site, a request was formally put to Council to allow NRDW to develop the facility and this passed Council unanimously around 2013.

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A Development Application and Statement of Environmental Effects were required and after a massive pro bono effort by local consultants and Club members, the DA/SEE was lodged and approved unanimously in December 2014.

This was followed by a negotiation process to establish a license over the site, providing a three year tenure, which was the maximum attainable.

2015 saw another enormous contribution of volunteer time – again from local consultants acting pro bono to develop Construction Certificate drawings. This also involved geotechnical testing beside the Bruxner Highway using funds generously provided by Ballina Councils Community Donations Program. The Club is extremely grateful for this funding.

In addition to this funding, the Club executive were feverishly applying for numerous grants, from small to large, carrying out fundraising and generally bolstering the Club member base. The Club was advised late last year by the office of Kevin Hogan MP that it had been successful in obtaining a grant for \$15000 under the Stronger Communities Program to build the internal car park. To enable the Club to spend this hard to get money, we sought a staged construction certificate.

Advice from Council staff that a Staged CC could be applied for was welcomed. After several more weeks of pro bono design and preparation the partial CC and lodged. It was intended that the partial CC and the grant from the Stronger Communities Program would allow the Club to gain physical commencement at the site, build the car park and commence building trails while we raised the money required to construct the entry works. It also meant that the Club did not have to pay the RMS Works Authorisation Deed (WAD) fees of about \$4600 which apply to the civil works in the road reserve until such time as those works could be funded. This is significant for a community group who rely solely upon grant funding, Club membership and fundraising activities to finance their operations.

Council staff advised that they would no longer accept a partial CC, due to concerns regarding the staged construction of the access and our documents were handed back and money refunded. This leaves us no option other than to apply for a full CC.

Our next hurdle relates to the availability of contractors for the work in the road reserve.

For the last few years, RMS have required contractors working in their road reserves to be “pre-qualified”, so the Club has been limited to only one contractor in the local area, Morgans. Morgan’s quotation for the works in the road reserve (only) was about \$75,000. However, they have since advised they are no longer able to complete the work due to excessive work commitments and the insignificance of the works involved.

Recent negotiation with the Regional Manager of RMS, Mr. John Alexander, secured the Club a dispensation. RMS provided the name of an alternate Contractor in Casino (Santin Earthmoving) that is able to do the work, although not pre-qualified.

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However preliminary estimates from Santin Earthmoving were more than double Morgan's original estimate for the same scope of work.

Due to the challenging circumstances, last Friday RMS indicated that they would also accept Ballina Shire Council as a valid contractor for the work.

Our consent requires that the Club (or construction applicant) enter into a WAD with RMS and pay a bond equal to the value of the work in the road reserve. The Club has liaised extensively with RMS to have the requirement for a bond waived. RMS will not waive this bond, and there are few – if any - grant opportunities available that will contribute towards such a bond. Therefore we have no way of funding a bond. However, RMS did advise that should Council be the applicant for the WAD, the bond would not apply. This is due to their position as a road authority in regards to WAD fees and bonds.

NRDW would like to propose that Council consider the following as a way forward:

- Council consider exercising their position as a roads authority by being the WAD applicant. This means that no bond applies and enables the Club to fund raise for the remaining works. **This is essential to progress this project.**
- Council considers constructing the works in the road reserve either via a community donation or via a paid commission for which the Club would apply for grant funding to support (as much as possible). This would require a detailed quotation from Council for the work to be supplied to the Club.

The Club feels that it is important to reiterate the following about itself:

- Whilst the Club has grown from around 45 to 109 members in three years, conservative estimates put the number of regular riders in the local area at 4-500 (those riders searching for 'the single track experience').
- Our member base extends from north of Brisbane to Yamba in the south.
- The Club conducts regular social rides, where nonmembers are welcome to attend and give the sport a try in a risk managed, supportive environment.
- We are followed on social media by over 700 people. One recent Club ride video from Tewantin on the Sunshine Coast received around 800 hits in one day alone.
- We are actively fundraising via grants, Bunnings BBQ's, coffee stalls, merchandise sales etc.
- We have members attending race events across north east NSW and south east Queensland, many finishing in podium positions while representing the Club and our local region.
- We are focused on the next generation of riders and spend a significant amount of time fostering the development of junior riders.

Currently, most of the good work the Club does is outside the Shire, as we have no local facility.



Other factors that are particularly important to consider are:

- The health benefits to Club members and the wider Community - There is nothing the Club members enjoy seeing more is the smiles on kids' faces when they discover the sport and get their backsides off the lounge or away from a computer screen.
- Local bike shops have indicated there has been a steady trend toward mountain biking and that mountain bikes contribute to as much as 60-70% of new bike sales, worth many millions of dollars to the local economy, supporting at least eight local stores within 50km.
- Mountain bikers love travel! It is a source of new potential visitors to our region. Please take the three minutes to watch this promotional video of Blue Derby in Tasmania which is receiving worldwide coverage. Don't be afraid to be inspired by it!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO324FBFdps>

NRDW would like to thank Council for their continued support; however six years (and well over a thousand hours of volunteer time) is a long time to be lobbying, designing and developing a facility such as this without seeing any tangible results. We believe our commitment to this project is testament to the Clubs determination to have the project succeed for not only the Club but the Community benefits the project will bring.

The Club is willing to put thousands more man hours into developing and maintaining the facility internally. Seeing that the facility would be administered, maintained and further developed by the Club at no cost to Council, it asks that Council seriously consider what has been presented today with a view to resolving the WAD, bond and access issues.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss the way forward using the contact information below.

On behalf of the members and the wider community, thank you for your time.

**Dave Hegerty**

*President*

*Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club Inc.*

*Phone 0427 230 122*

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