

Land bill could crimp dirt-biking

By JAMES RUSSELL
Of the Emerald

"Dirt-riding is a gas," says Fred Frezza, University student, "but the Land-Use planning bill is trying to kill the sport."

Frezza and fellow student Jim Taft started a "Basic Dirt-Riding" SEARCH workshop which they have been conducting at least once a week throughout spring term. "It started out as a whim," says Frezza, "we never thought it would go through."

"We wanted to make it a full fledged SEARCH class, with credits, but we couldn't get a sponsor and that almost killed the course. Now it's a workshop with no credits but a hell of a lotta fun."

Participating in the workshop, regularly, are six to eight serious University dirt-riders, twelve students in all, who meet on the weekends to learn to ride. Shotgun Creek, about three miles this side of Marcola, is their favorite place to go.

"It's really fun," says Taft, "it's open, you can get out on your own with no one around and just be yourself. You can ride with friends or you can be alone, either way it's a blast."

Getting back to the serious applications of the course, Frezza says "we won't be here next year, but the class should definitely be carried on. It needs credits and sponsorship before it could come off."

"We couldn't find anyone who would sponsor it and now the Land-Use bill could put a damper on all dirt-riding in this state, forever. Dirt-riding has been around as long as there have been motorcycles. Now they're trying to make motorcycles, or the fun you get out of them, extinct."

Taft comments that participation in Dirt-Riding costs what an individual wants to put into it. Taft points out however that a 250 c.c. machine is almost a prerequisite. It could run anywhere from \$300 to \$400 in

expense. "That's all you need," he says.

The Tillamook burn area, says Taft, is a "really nice place to ride" but so is Eastern Oregon and the flat and hilly lands that exist throughout. "Riding a bike," says Taft, "is cheaper

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than running your car; the most fun you can have with a motorized vehicle."

Frezza, who has been riding for more than six years, says that "the high you get from riding a bike on the dirt is sort of the same hit you get off any sport. It's great and you enjoy it."

Within the class, the students (according to their instructors) "just go out and ride. We've had no accidents, no major disturbances or troubles, just some fun times and some learning that none of us really expected," says Taft.

"We're not that 'basic' either," says Frezza, "because none of us are really beginners."

The dirt-riding sport, says Taft, has ultimate growth potential in

University students Jim Taft and Fred Frezza instituted a Search workshop, "Basic Dirt-riding." Although neither of them will return to revamp the course next year, they both stress importance of the class and emphasize the bad effect that lack of sponsorship had upon it.

the coming years if the Land-Use planning bill does not put an end to it. "Riding is a lot safer on the

open dirt than it is in the street. Cars aren't a factor when you're away from the crowds," says Taft, "no one to my knowledge has ever been killed, locally, riding dirt." "Even cars can't make that claim."

When originating the class, Frezza says, the two students were excited at first about getting into the safety, environmental and physical effects which surrounded the sport of dirt-riding. "We never did get into it," says Frezza, "we couldn't get a class sponsor."

It all gets back to the Land-Use planning bill and the effects it would have on the dirt-riding sport, both say.

"The Parks and Recreation Department was really trying to destroy our class," says Frezza.

"They say our dirt-riding was destroying the environment and hurting the earth so much that we shouldn't do what we like to do."

"Cars," says Taft, "easily make more pollution, erosion and detrimental environmental effects than do our bikes."

"The Land-Use bill makes recreational vehicles outlawed in most recreational areas for motorbikes in the state. It virtually kills the sport," says Frezza. Horses put more weight on the ground than do motorcycles, they say.

"If I were the Legislature I would give the bill serious reconsideration," Frezza says. "This Land-Use bill is crazy, no fun at all."

"The biggest task that remains for those who continue in our

footsteps," conjectures Taft, "will be to get their shit together and make others see dirt-riding's point of view."

The Land-Use bill, recently slid easily through the Oregon House with a 40-20 vote. It now goes to the Governor for his signature or disapproval.

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Photos by Peter Grant

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