

Club hopes to establish bicycle park in Enterprise

Site, funding both being sought

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Public parks to accommodate fun on wheels seem to be a growing concern these days. First, there was refurbishing the Enterprise Skate Park. Then plans for a bicycle playground in Wallowa.

Now, a Wallowa County club is hoping to get approval — and funding — for an Enterprise Bike Park that would include a pump track and possibly more sometime next year.

According to www.bicycling.com, a pump track is a looped sequence of rollers and berms (swoopy, banked turns) for bike riders. It's designed to maximize momentum so the rider can ride with minimal pedaling.

"It's one of the fastest-growing sports in America for cities to add to their park collection for things to do for all ages. It can be ridden by someone who's old enough to stand on a Stryder bike to anyone," said Zeb Burke, vice president of the Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club.

All kinds of bikes

The track could be for "any kind of bicycles," he said. "There are some that are better suited, such as BMX bikes, mountain bikes, kids' bikes, things like that."

"You can use skateboards, roller blades, scooters, even possibly wheelchairs," club President Angela Mart said.



Facebook/Contributed Photo

The Leavenworth Pump Track in Leavenworth, Washington, is similar to what the Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club hopes to have in Enterprise.

"These accommodate a wide variety of activities."

Burke said a road bike or 10-speed is not as conducive to such a track.

"A downhill bike with a lot of travel would be a little harder because of all the suspension," he said. "It's a pumping action that actually gets you around the track, not pedaling."

The pair, who had made a presentation before the Enterprise City Council on Oct. 11 and made plans to meet with the city's Public Works Committee to identify potential locations for the park, discussed their hopes and plans during an interview Thursday, Oct. 28.

"The Enterprise City Council was excited about having a pump track, potentially a bike park in Enterprise," Mart said. "We have since then met with the Pub-

lic Works Committee and started to identify locations that would be a good fit for it."

Possible sites

Mart and Burke indicated one site would be next to the current skate park, but there also are couple of areas by the baseball fields on the north side of town.

"Three, possibly four, if the place behind the city park works out," Mart said. "But, like Zeb said, there are a lot of potential complications with that location."

"(It's a) riparian area," Burke said. "That's the biggest one."

Mart said that if they're able to locate the bike park next to the skate park, competition between the two shouldn't be an issue.

"If it ends up being there, it'd be great for the kids to

have all of that in one location," she said. "That'd be rad; if I was a kid, I'd like to be able to do tricks at the skate park and then work on my skills on the pump track. I think that'd be ideal."

They are planning a park of about 10,000 square feet. Burke called that the "smallest footprint" they're planning.

"The bigger it gets, the more money it takes," he said. "In Enterprise, within the city limits, we're sort of constrained in our allowed spacing."

The pair are well aware of Ron Pickens' plans to establish a bicycle playground in Wallowa. Pickens was the moving force behind the work completed this year to refurbish the Enterprise Skate Park. Mart said the Wallowa and Enterprise plans have similar goals

— providing an accessible place for youth activities.

"I say good for them. It's not going to hurt for the county to have two pump tracks," she said. "It'd be great for the kids. I think Ron expressed that kids down there don't have the opportunity to get up here to engage in activities provided in the upper valley. We look at it the same way. We have families and kids who don't have transportation or a way to haul a bike other than to be able to ride. That's our goal to put the pump track in a location where it's accessible to everybody."

Cost

They have a bid from a builder in Bend called Black Sage Dirt Works for about \$100,000, Mart said. She said so far, the club

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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has raised about \$2,000 from members. They also have been approached by local businesses who are on board to do fundraisers. The big money will likely come from grants and "other potential donors about the possibility of giving funds to support it," she said.

They did a bit of shopping around before settling on Black Sage.

"One builder was over \$350,000," Burke said. "We found another that was a lot lower."

But they need to get a site identified before anything else can be done. The grants they hope to see require that, and City Council approval will have to come first.

"We want to get the word out to the community and look for potential donors and make the public aware of it," Mart said.

They agree that the park will be more than just for fun — bicycling is a healthy activity, too.

"It's the best workout you can do for your upper body and your core," Burke said. "Twenty minutes of that is better than doing 10,000 steps. It's an extremely good, healthy activity."

Council meets as employee conflicts resurface in Joseph

Emergency session held to address issues; next session is Nov. 4

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — Employee disputes that were believed to have been laid to rest resurfaced recently and were the subject of an emergency executive session held by the Joseph City Council on Tuesday, Oct. 26.

The session was to address "primarily a procedural issue," pro-tem city Administrator Brock Eckstein said the following day.

"As pro-tem, I can't issue certain levels of discipline that might be necessary ... to address certain issues we're having," Eckstein said. He confirmed that the

issues were ongoing conflicts between Public Works Lead Levi Tickner and Parks Lead Dennis Welch.

Earlier this year, the Chieftain reported that on May 27, Welch made complaints during an executive session against Tickner.

Tickner later exercised his option to respond in open session.



Eckstein



Welch



Tickner

former city Administrator/Recorder Larry Braden, who resigned in April citing "harassment" by members of the council. The resolution turned the matter over to Eckstein.

But now it's all come to a boil again and Eckstein believed he needed to get the council's approval to take any disciplinary actions.

"We didn't discuss any of

the issues," Eckstein said. "I asked if they wanted talk to (Welch and Tickner) or have me handle it. ... They felt comfortable enough to let me handle it at my level."

He said he expects whatever action he takes will be considered for approval by the council at its next meeting, Nov. 4. Last week's meeting was held virtually, since two of the councilors were down with COVID-19, Eckstein said.

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