



MYTHBUSTERS: Platteville Trails Edition

As interest in mixed-use natural trails has grown in the Platteville community, quite a few residents have started asking very important questions and raising pertinent concerns. Who is PHPT? What are they trying to do? Why are they doing this?

Platteville Human Powered Trails (PHPT) welcomes these questions. Each resident is a partner in these activities; we certainly can't and wouldn't want to do these activities without your support. Please let this document be a starting point for our discussion. We look forward to hearing from you.

Myth #1: PHPT is just a bunch of bikers who want to add bike trails.

Truth: Platteville Human Powered Trails is a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization. We focus on establishing high-quality natural (i.e. dirt, not gravel or paved) trails that can be used for many types of silent sports: hikers, trail runners, snow shoers, and mountain bikers. We believe in community health and enjoying nature and the trails that we provide are a low-cost way of doing just that. We currently partner with local cross country teams, adventure clubs, and many others.



Myth #2: PHPT is going to cut down trees and build trails that are not environmentally friendly.

Truth: We design trails with deliberate consideration to environmental impact. PHPT is planning to send one or two members to the International Mountain Biking Association's (a 35,000 member worldwide organization) Trail Building School this summer to update our knowledge of building sustainable trails. One of our guiding principles is to build trails around nature's features (i.e. trees) rather than through them. We also design to minimize erosion. More information about Trail School is found at: <https://www.imba.com/tcc/imba-trailbuilding-schools>

Myth #3: More people using an area means more litter.

Truth: In some cases this can be true. With trails managed by PHPT it's simply not true. We regularly organize clean up days that gather litter. Often we are joined by other groups such as fraternities, sororities, and cross-country teams, just to name a few. As an example, we recently conducted a litter day at Mound View and Knollwood Parks and removed five large bags of garbage and a truck tire, suggesting that we are the first ones to do this in quite some time.



Myth #4: They will install signage that is not aesthetically pleasing.

Truth: Just as PHPT has high standards for the trails we install, we also have high standards for the visual appeal of the signage we use. Each sign is carefully chosen to be of sufficient size and color to mark the trail without detracting from the natural beauty surrounding it.



Platteville Human Powered Trails

www.PlattevilleTrails.org

Find Us on Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/PHPTrails>

Myth #4: More people using the trail will increase thefts, vandalism and vagabonds.

Truth: The exact opposite is true. Numerous case studies suggest that increased activity actually drives the undesirables away. Undesirable behaviors become more obvious when there are trail users and those conducting unscrupulous behavior generally don't like to be seen. Even in Platteville, the person who was living in the woods of Mound View Park relocated shortly after PHPT installed singletrack trail.

Additionally, trail users for silent sports tend to:

- ◆ Be more highly educated than the average citizen
- ◆ Have a higher household income than the average citizen
- ◆ Be more environmentally conscious than the average citizen

It's safe to say that your woods are currently being used by someone. Who would you rather have in there?

Myth #6: The City will have to pay to maintain these trails.

Truth: As part of our agreement to build these trails, PHPT has agreed to provide perpetual trail maintenance to keep these as an attractive addition to our community. We currently maintain a trail system outside of Platteville that has been in operation for over 20 years.

Myth #7: Trails will scare the wildlife away.

Truth: The singletrack trails that PHPT installs only marginally disturb the natural environment. As such, wildlife not only returns to the area quickly after trail construction and use but also begins to use the trail themselves. It is quite common to see deer, raccoons, birds and other animals using the trail as an easy means to traverse the woods.

