



# Managing Mountain Bike Trails – A local perspective

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Comhairle Ceantair  
**an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin**  
**Newry, Mourne  
and Down**  
District Council

# Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

BARBARA FLEMING – OVENS

NM&DDC

MATTHEW BUSHBY

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST

## Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

- ▶ Newry Mourne & Down District Council have mountain bike trails in Castlewellan Forest Park & Rostrevor Forest/Kilbroney Park.
- ▶ Opened in 2013 with considerable investment from NM&DDC, NITB & Sport NI
- ▶ 2015 Merge of Councils DDC & NMC
- ▶ Council have a 20 year Licence Agreement with Forest Service for - the development, operation, management and maintenance of trails and associated recreation
- ▶ Council are not landowner & not self insured
- ▶ Mourne Heritage Trust maintain the trails on behalf of council

## Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

### Castlewellan Forest Park

- ▶ Pump Track
- ▶ Green Trail – 4km
- ▶ Blue Trail – 4.5km
- ▶ Red Trail – 19km
- ▶ Black Trails – Dolly's Chute & The Great Escarpe
- ▶ Formal Walking & Horse riding trails



## Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

### Kilbroney Park/Rostrevor Forest

- ▶ Red Trail – 27km
- ▶ Black Trail – 19km
- ▶ Orange Trails/Downhills
- ▶ Mega Mission – 1.8km
- ▶ On The Pulse – 1.3km
- ▶ Formal walking trails



# Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

▶ **Castlewellan - Blue/Red trail**

▶ 2014 - 30345

▶ 2017 - 29569

▶ 2018 - 33667

▶ **Castlewellan - Pump Track**

▶ 2014 - 40060

▶ 2017 - 70754

▶ 2018 - 65386

▶ **Kilbroney - Red Trail**

▶ 2014 - 13144

▶ 2017 - 12049

▶ 2018 - 9361

▶ **Mega Mission - Downhill**

▶ 2014 - 4262

▶ 2017 - 10650

▶ 2018 - 12161 (counter moved)

▶ **On the Pulse - Downhill**

▶ 2014 - 1266 (10 months)

▶ 2017 - 5784 (counter was not picking up majority of users)

▶ 2018 - 12152 (counter moved)

# Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

## ▶ 2019 Events

- ▶ June Irish National XC Castlewellan – **194**
- ▶ July Irish Downhill Mountain Bike Series Kilbroney – **108**
- ▶ August Pscyle 8 & 24 hour Castlewellan – **69**
- ▶ September Euduro Cup Castlewellan – **222**
  
- ▶ Total – **593**
- ▶ 3 – Informal trails
- ▶ 1 – Formal trails

## Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

- ▶ Informal/ Unauthorised trails
- ▶ Castlewellan
- ▶ Kilbroney
- ▶ **Main Issues are -**
- ▶ Conflict with other users/duty to all visitors proceeding onto the land
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Obligation under LA with FS
- ▶ Environmental & Bio Diversity Issues



# Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

- ▶ End 2018 received an application from Rostrevor MTB club for Irish National Champs/A lot of new trail
- ▶ Council had an application in for new Fallows walking trail
- ▶ Planning confirmed it would require planning permission as it was a new development in an environmentally sensitive location

# Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

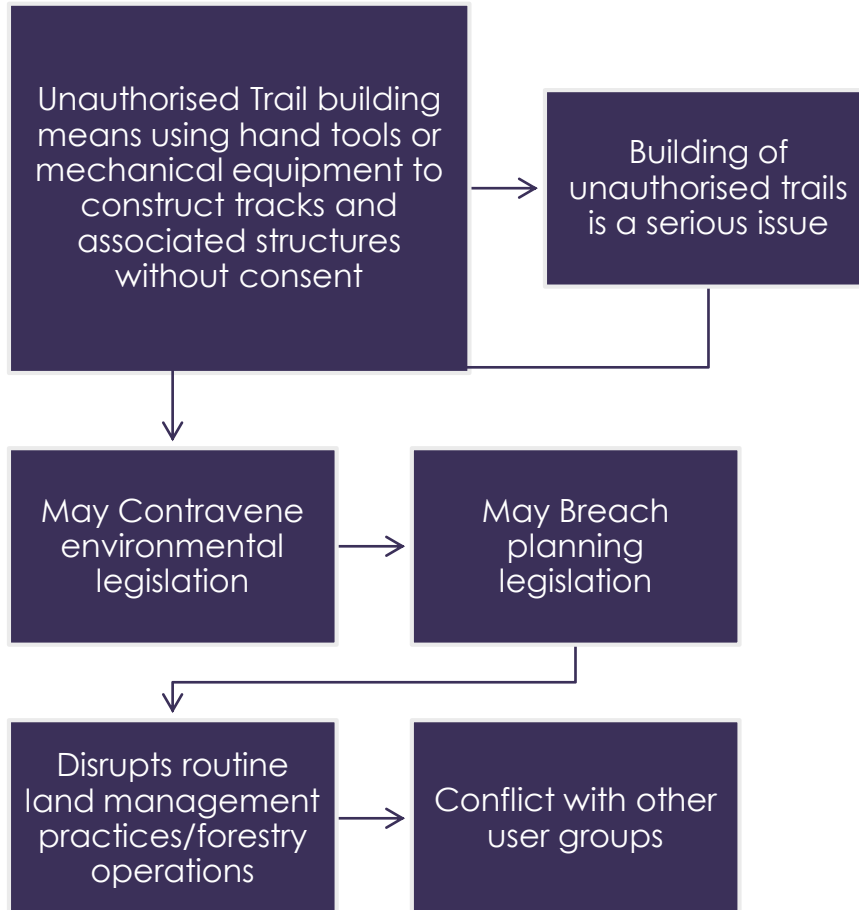
November 2018

Unauthorised Mountain Bike Trails – A Guide for land managers & riders, National Access Forum Scotland

Developed because of increase in the number of mountain bike trails constructed without permission

Unauthorised MTB trails were creating problems including the creation of potentially dangerous hazards & environmental damage

Help land managers & mountain bikers understand different perspectives on the issue



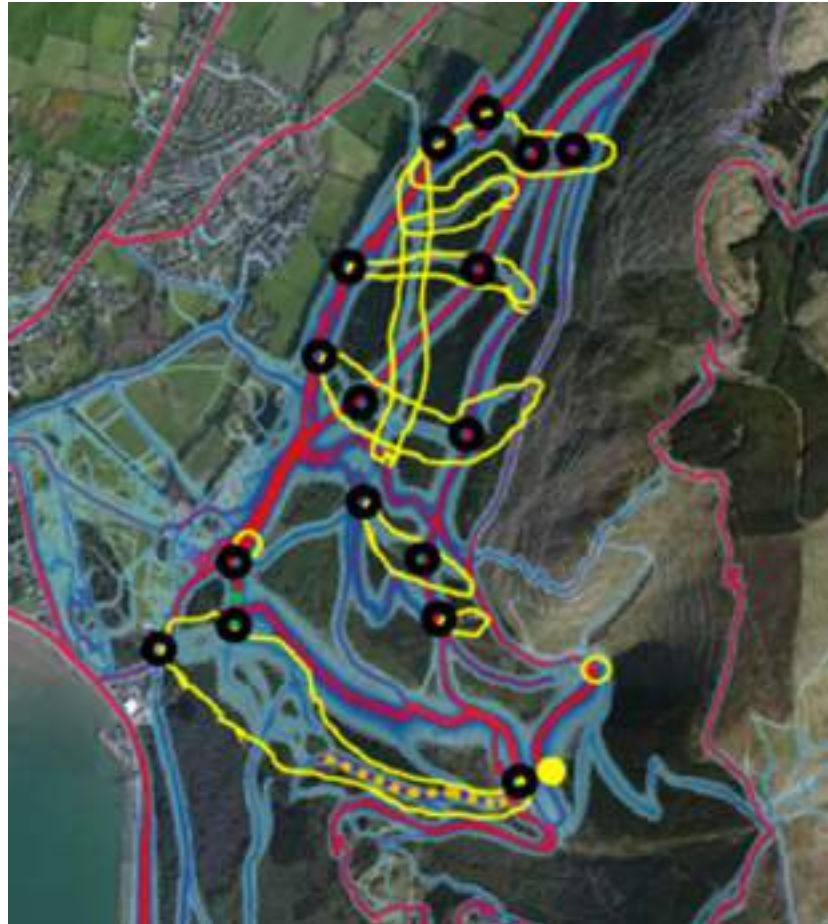
# Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

## Managing Informal Mountain Bike Trails

- ▶ Race Events
- ▶ Growth in opening of unauthorised trails
- ▶ Conflict with other users
- ▶ Management practices
- ▶ Best practice
- ▶ Working Group
- ▶ Site visits – Scotland, Wicklow
- ▶ Review of MTB Trails

# Kilbroney Strava Heat Map

Informal trails  
and conflict  
points with  
formal  
waymarked  
trails



# Site lines and erosion



# Construction





# Damage





# Flora and Fauna



# Best Practice Site Visits



# Closures





# Closures



# Conflict



# Castlewellan Strava Map



# Moorish Tower





# Moorish Tower / Dolly's Chute





# Erosion of Forest Roads



# Slievenaslát



# MTBikers on Walking Trail



# Erosion washing onto Forest Road



# Damage to Signage





# Strategic Approach

