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Stafford Lake Bike Park Opens

Get out your bikes and helmets – Stafford Lake Bike Park is officially open for business!

The grand opening on Saturday was a celebratory event with an enthusiastic crowd of over 1500 supporters! Attendees had a chance to ride the trails, mingle with park sponsors, listen to live music from San Marin High School students and enjoy refreshments from food trucks. There were riders of all ages there. It was especially endearing to see parents with their young children helping them navigate the beginners pump track. One very young little girl was on a wooden bike with no wheels or pedals. She walked the bike to the top of a small hill and her dad held on when she and her bike rolled down. She loved it.

Stafford Lake Bike Park is the North Bay's first public bike park. It is designed to provide opportunities for riders of all ages and skill levels in a safe, fun and exciting bike-riding experience - all in a setting which is expected to reduce inappropriate use in sensitive natural areas.

Over the years, I have heard consistent feedback from parents and community organizations that there is a need to offer more recreational options for our local youth and that in particular, we need more positive and healthy activities available that will appeal to our teens.

The excitement on opening day was palpable as teens, toddlers and adults of all ages enjoyed a dual slalom, appropriate for intermediate to advanced riders; a progression jump course, which includes three levels from beginner to expert; a perimeter trail course, appropriate for a variety of ages and skill levels; and a kid's learn to ride area. These features incorporate: 18 jumps, 16 berm turns, a bunch of rollers and nearly two miles of trail. The project also incorporates drainage improvements, soil amendments, and other means to minimize erosion and protect the beautiful environment of Stafford Lake. Various elements such as the entry plaza, gateway, and other aesthetic details will be added soon.

The Stafford Lake Bike Park was made possible through a successful collaboration of public-private partnerships which deserve recognition. A big thank you to: Marin County Parks staff, who not only did an excellent job managing the project, but our on-staff expert trail builders also constructed most of the project; the tireless volunteer and fundraising efforts of Friends of Stafford Lake Bike Park, a non-profit formed to support both the construction and long-term maintenance of the bike park; and all of our donors and sponsors, both big and small, whose contributions total \$732,000. I would be remiss if I did not specifically acknowledge our major donors, who donated \$50,000 or more: Fox Factory Holding Corp, Santa Cruz Bicycles, the Hellman Family Foundation, Mike's Bikes, the Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund, and the Violich Family Foundation. If it was not for the collective effort of everyone who has supported this project, the community would not have a Stafford Lake Bike Park to enjoy.

While I think the community will enjoy all that Phase I has to offer, we are not done yet. There is a second phase yet to come. Plans for Phase II, to be built pending further fundraising, will add advanced and intermediate pump tracks, a terrain park, downhill and flow trails, bridge crossings, progression trail with balance features, and a main event plaza. To find out how you can donate or help with Phase II efforts, visit:

<http://staffordlakebikepark.com>.

The bike park has the same hours of operation as Stafford Lake Park. This year's summer hours (May 24-Sept 12) are 7am-8pm. Use of Stafford Lake and Stafford Lake Bike Park are free of charge for walk-in, bike-in and drop-offs. Parking is \$5 per vehicle Monday through Friday and \$10 per vehicle on weekends and holiday. Hours of operation, park fees and additional information about Stafford Lake Park can be found at:

<http://www.marincountyparks.org/depts/pk>.

As always, my door is open to you. I welcome your suggestions and ideas. You can reach me at: (415) 473-7331 or jarnold@marincounty.org.