October 31, 2009

Wow, we can’t believe it’s Halloween already! Time flies when the stars align and mother nature deals out one of most epic riding summers ever, at the same time as provincial and federal governments generously invest $400,000 in our mountain bike trails, and over 160 riders throw their support behind a new bike club. Yes, it’s been an amazing year folks, and it ‘aint over yet! But it’s definitely time for a newsletter to let you know what we’ve been up to.

TRAIL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

With the snow making its way down the mountain, we’re on the home stretch of our 2009 summer trailbuilding season. We’ve now spent close to $200,000 and the evolution of our trail networks continues...

Much has been done since our previous trail update. We are happy and relieved to report that all of our proposed work on upper Hudson Bay Mountain was completed before the snow flew in earnest in the high country. Re-routes on the upper Piper trails were completed, buffed, polished and ridden. The machine built trail was completed, raked, re-raked, raked again, and ridden. This trail is now home to somewhere in the neighbourhood of 80 jumps and just as many berms, so riders from intermediate and up will be able to find something that makes them smile.

Other work in the last couple weeks of September included: filling in the gap jumps along the bottom of Piper Cross, construction of a bridge connecting the machine-built trail to the bottom section of Piper Cross, transformation of the better part of a lift of 2X6s into an XL-sized wallride, and the entire network of trails being linked to a new parking area via a 70 foot bridge and over 700 meters of new beginner-level trail.

October has seen two crews working on the Bluff. For those who haven’t been out to see what we have been up to there is a brand new boardwalk trail from the Duthie trailhead, a new up-track that we plan to share with hikers, and major improvements to the Shining, Apocalypse and upper Aunty Flow.

Regular users of the Bluff will notice that some of the old stunts have been dismantled and removed. Do not fear! What was once rotten and hazardous will be replaced with fun and new. Some of these replacements will take a while, but rest assured, they will be replaced and the trails of the Bluff will retain much of their original character.
Crews will be working until well after the snow flies, so be on the lookout for new features and always ride new sections of trail with added caution, as they may not be in a completed state.

**RIDE GUIDE TV VISIT**

Ride Guide, an OLN TV show dedicated to mountain biking and skiing came to Smithers Sept 12th and 13th as part of a trip through Northern BC. Pro riders Eric Lawrenuk and Graham Agassiz teamed up with local air specialist Josh Anderson and a handful of other Smithers riders for two great days of shredding. “That is the best machine built trail in BC” exclaimed an ecstatic Lawrenuk after riding the new trail by the ski hill. Cameraman Josh Pearson called the stop in Smithers “the best two days of mountain bike filming I’ve ever done.” Everyone was stoked to come back next year, and they’re eager to spread the word about what the SMBA has built. The episode is set to air this winter, we will keep you posted as to the date and time.

**SMBA WEBSITE**

If you haven’t checked out our new website yet, now’s the time to take a look. With help from local web design company Great Blue Design, we’ve created a masterpiece! Visit [www.smithersmountainbike.ca](http://www.smithersmountainbike.ca) for information about our club, our trails, and what’s going on in the biking community. A photo gallery and discussion forum are still in the works, and if you have other ideas of what you’d like to see online, send your thoughts to [information@smithersmountainbike.ca](mailto:information@smithersmountainbike.ca).

**EVENTS**

McBike and Sport is hosting a New World Disorder 10 “Dust and Bones” showing at the Roi Theatre on Monday, November 9th. Doors open at 6:00 and the movie starts at 6:15pm. All proceeds will go to the SMBA, so come on out and support the club.

**EXCLUSIVE SMBA CLOTHING**

If your wardrobe is getting old and you’re looking for some stylish new duds, we can help! We’ve just placed an order for some SMBA clothing, and we’ll be selling it at the upcoming New World Disorder Premiere. Hoodies will be flying off the rack for $40, hats and toques for $20. Bring your cash to the show on November 9, because they won’t last long!

**TRAIL PLANNING**

Even though the mountain biking season is quickly drawing to a close, things aren’t really slowing down. In fact, we’re ramping things up already, in anticipation of another great trailbuilding season next year...

Back in September, the SMBA advertised a contracting opportunity on our website for trail design and layout services. There was interest from several firms, and the SMBA is pleased to announce that Treeline Resources Ltd. was the successful bidder. They have already been out in the bush identifying and starting to lay out new trails. This work will help us to develop a long-term plan for trails in the valley with everything from beginner cross-country trails to advanced all-mountain and downhill trails.
This is critical in our efforts to develop relationships with our stakeholders and apply for more grant funding.

Our call for participants for the Cross-Country Trail Committee brought in a whole whack of applicants of interested people. It was so great to see so many people keen to be involved! In the end, we drew names at random to fill the ten positions on the committee. A big thank you to the following people for their work on this trail committee: Tammy Anderson, Jayson Chaplin, James Fisher, Brian Fuhr, Peter Krause, Tamsin Mills, Liz Murphy, Bill Price, Greg Tamblyn, and Steve Wickham.

The committee has now met 3 times to discuss their vision of cross-country mountain biking in Smithers. The group is now preparing a set of recommendations for the SMBA Executive that will guide the development of a cross-country trail network. We expect work to begin on these trails early next season.

**FINAL REMARKS**

Now that fall is here and things are getting wetter, we’d like to ask everyone to ride with care and respect the trails. We’ve put a lot of work into all our trail networks this year, and some of those fresh new lines and flowy berms are still a little soft in places. Use your judgement when you’re out there, and if things are looking muddy, we recommend staying off some of the new stuff - especially the yet-to-be-named machine-built trail up at the ski hill, and the new uptrack on the bluff. A bit of extra care in the fall will be sure to pay dividends in the spring. And please also keep in mind that the Wood Creek Forest Service Road (which goes to the top of Hucken ‘eh from Ptarmigan Road) is privately owned and maintained, so drive with care or stay off the road if it’s muddy.

Until next time, get out and enjoy the last gasps of what has proven to be a banner season for mountain biking in the Bulkley Valley!

SMBA Executive