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Comments: I have several comments, suggestions and concerns.

1. I'm excited about the trail plans so far. I love the trails at Carvins Cove for mountain biking and would like a similar set of trails in Blacksburg. One feature of the Carvins trails is that the design of the trails is such that they have a downhill camber which allows water to flow off the trail immediately in most cases. Where the trails are steeper, they have water bars (grade reversals) which drive water off the trails as well. The trail gradient is seldom too high and this helps minimize erosion. The problem with many of the trails in Pandapas is they have lacked these features or haven't had regular maintenance from the beginning so water can flow down the trail, creating huge erosion of the trails. Many of them are now deep ruts and are essentially ruined and need to be re-routed. Please take into account the design features mentioned so our investment in new trails is not lost very quickly.

2. Sharing the trails with equestrians irks me. Horse manure is left everywhere for biker and walkers to deal with. I usually have to pull far off the trail at Pandapas to let equestrians by and often horses get spooked by the mere presence of bikers and this can create a real hazard to all in the area. A horse plus rider is mighty heavy and the steel horse shoes put tremendous pressure on trail surfaces, punching into soft soil. Equestrians that decide to ride when the trails are wet ruin the best made trails really fast. A case in point are the horse trails in and around Grayson Highlands state park, Mount Rogers national recreation area, Iron mountain. These trails are in terrible shape with loose boulders, deep mud pits, manure, deep erosion ruts, etc. that are the results of horse traffic in these places. The horses can deal with trails in that condition but it makes walking or biking on them difficult and unpleasant. I understand wanting to make the trails useable by all but horses are so destructive, dirty and dangerous to other users, I would vote for excluding them from the Brush Mountain trails. Equestrians could find other more remote trail networks to ride that don't impact the large number of users a trail system so close to a big town like Blacksburg will inevitably attract. Alternatively, impose a hefty fee on them for the damage they cause and use the proceeds to mitigate the damage they cause. Including equestrians makes steep trails much LESS sustainable unless they are paved or covered in gravel or constantly maintained.

3. We've seen lots of damage to the Brush Mountain (ridge-top) fire road from unauthorized 4 wheeling there. Folks have cut trees and driven around obstacles to access it. They get stuck and spin wheels which create giant mud pits which then encourages them to cut more trees to drive around those pits. This has to be prevented in the new property with substantial obstacles that are hard to get around and possibly rewards for information leading to arrest of violators.

4. I'm hoping the new Brush Mountain property will be managed to protect and maintain the flora and fauna there. Some ideas along these lines are to minimize the loss of native plants by transplanting those from the path of the new trails to be planted elsewhere. Minimize cutting of trees, especially old ones. Take measures to prevent erosion from construction and in the design of the trails. Erosion will negatively impact stream health as well as wash away the trails over time. I'd like to see some funding and planning to include interpretive signs identifying native trees, plants and animals as an educational component to some of the trails (perhaps by the town). This will take some study to determine where some of the nicest natural parts of the property are and where a nature trail could be included that is reasonably easy to access from the parking area.