



Orange Field Naturalist & Conservation Society
PO Box 369, Orange 2800

Response to World Trail's Mt Canobolas Mountain Bike Trail Concept Plan
commissioned by Orange City Council

To Orange City Council
Attention Scott Maunder

The Society is totally opposed to Mountain Bike Trails in the Mt Canobolas SCA and fully supports the submissions made by ECCO, CWEC and National Parks.

The Mt Canobolas SCA is not the place for a series of mountain bike trails across and over the Mount.

Mt Canobolas is not in virgin, pristine condition. It doesn't have to be, it is still an extremely valuable and unique environmental asset. It is an island of sub-alpine habitat, surrounded by a totally changed landscape of exotic pine plantations, orchards, former orchards and lifestyle blocks.

Mt Canobolas is used by the Orange and district community and visitors and tourists to the Central West. It is not locked up or alienated from the public.

It is already disrupted by roads, fire trails and buildings (at the mount itself). To further carve up the Mount with 70 kilometres of bike trails will increase the fragmentation of its vegetation and disrupt its fauna. This would in turn diminish the environmental value of Mt Canobolas.

The environmental damage will be caused by the formed track itself, the earthworks and clearing of vegetation for the track and access points, and the potential for future damage due to (for example) changes in water movement across the Mount, foot traffic damage by tourists and spectators and the likely, albeit unauthorized, damaging use by trailbikes.

The economic case for the MBT case hasn't been fully explored and proven. Who will use these proposed facilities? The Economic Value report dated 25 July 2014 presumably was prepared on the basis of conducting competitive bike events. Now the emphasis appears to be with cycling tourists, bringing their families to Orange for a few days. Who carries the maintenance responsibility and liability, is \$5,000 pa realistic and can you rely on volunteers for minor upkeep?

Event competitors don't need a scenic route to be there. The trees and views are wasted on them. The more sedate tourist riders don't need 70 kilometres of hairpin turns and "black diamond" vertical drops.

Orange might be the place for a Mountain Bike Trail but not the Mt Canobolas SCA. The report has included trails in the adjoining State Forests pine plantations. This is where the trails should be. Given the surplus of pine plantation softwood will these plantations ever be harvested?

Right idea but wrong place for many environmental (mostly) and economic reasons. What is the opportunity cost to Orange of using \$2million of grant funds to carve up its most prominent landmark.

John Austin
President OFNCS
29 August 2016