

OFF-ROAD RIDER

The official publication of the Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists

**FEBRUARY
2003**

The MORC MISSION:

The Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC) is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to safeguarding the future of mountain biking in Minnesota through the promotion of responsible mountain biking, the establishment and maintenance of mountain biking trails, and the preservation of Minnesota's natural resources.

Next Board Meeting

Tuesday, Mar 11th at
7:00 p.m. at REI
Bloomington

FORUMS!

Check out the
new Forums
section on the
MORC website!

President's Message

On behalf of the MORC Board of Directors, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all the MORC members who have supported our efforts to gain and maintain trails during 2002. As a 100% volunteer organization, MORC's ongoing success is totally dependent on our dedicated members, who take time away from riding, work and family to build trails and meet with land managers. Due to your fine efforts, and the solid leadership of Dale Gundberg, MORC is entering 2003 financially stable, with a solid membership base and a wealth of projects in the works.

The newly-elected MORC Board, which is an energetic mix of old hands and new faces, held a Planning Retreat in November, to develop a list of Key Initiatives for 2003. This event proved to be an excellent opportunity for Board members to share ideas and prioritize how MORC can most effectively allocate our limited financial and volunteer resources. During the Retreat, and in subsequent discussions, the Board agreed to focus on the following key initiatives for 2003.

Key MORC Initiatives for 2003

1. Continue to Strengthen Core Trail Work Activities at the Minnesota River Trail, Battle Creek, Lebanon Hills, and Terrace Oaks. As MORC continues to grow, we believe it's critical to remain firmly "rooted" to ongoing trail work activities that have been the core of our organization. We must continue to maintain and enhance existing MORC-managed trail systems, as they provide the best possible evidence to land managers, that MORC can be trusted to help manage their precious natural resources. During 2003, we plan to open at least one "Advanced-Level" trail at an existing MORC-managed trail system. We're also putting systems in place to log all trail work hours, to help Trail Coordinators more effectively acknowledge the efforts of volunteers.
2. Win Official Designation for natural surface bike trails in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. It may surprise many of you that although there are a number of mountain bike trails in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, neither city has ANY officially designated natural-surface bike trails. Without designated trails, park users tend to create a disorganized patchwork of "social trails". Without public input and proper trail design, erosion and user conflict almost inevitably result from such trails. With your support, we have an excellent opportunity to gain official designation for natural-surface mountain bike trails in both Twin Cities this year.
3. Successfully host IMBA HotSpots Activities in Minneapolis/Saint Paul. Each year, IMBA designates a handful of urban areas, providing local mountain bike groups and land managers in these cities with Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crew visits, educational materials and other resources. We're very excited that the Twin Cities have been designated as an IMBA HotSpot for 2003. During the 10 days IMBA staff are in the Twin Cities, MORC will be hosting multiple IMBA Trail Schools for trail builders and land managers, meeting with city officials and reviewing plans for various metro-area trail systems.
4. Successfully Host two major bike races (Spring Cup at Buck Hill and 24 Hours of Afton). Two years ago, MORC began assisting Habanero Cycling with The 24 Hours

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IMBA Report

IMBA has been busy this winter. I lobbied for an IMBA HotSpot visit this summer to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The IMBA crew will be here beginning on May 28th and depart on June 8th. We are very fortunate to have the HotSpots program scheduled for Minneapolis/St. Paul. The program usually makes it to about 6 or 7 major metro areas each year.

We hope to focus on Wirth Park in Minneapolis and Harmon Park in Inver Grove Heights. The work in Wirth will focus on correcting some trail alignments, re-routing those trails that have some problems. We will also conduct a trail building and maintenance school that will be open to parks personnel, land managers and individuals that are interested in learning how to build sustainable trails. We will have 50 spots open in the class. The class will have one day in the classroom and one day in the field laying out the trail, evaluating the route and actually moving some dirt to build the trails.

In St. Paul, we plan on focusing our work in Harmon Park in Inver Grove Heights. This is a park that has very little development and has tremendous potential for a fun challenging trail. We will also conduct another trail school in St. Paul with room for an additional 50 individuals.

In other areas, we have looked at and flagged re-routes for some of the more popular riding areas in the area. Two re-routes are planned for the river bottoms trail, a general review and realignment for Terrace Oaks, proposed 2 new re-routes for Lebanon Hills. When we are finished at Lebanon Hills we should have 100% single track trails in this park. We have been having discussions with Dakota County Parks personnel about how we can enforce closure of the trails when the seasons change. Mainly in the spring when there is still frost in the ground and the top 1 inch thaws and gets slippery and sloppy.

Other meetings are going on with land managers but at this time it is too early to bring out for public discussion. I believe that in the next few years we will have an area to ride in the North metro area and continued improvements on some of the existing area trails.

If anyone has questions, concerns or know of an opportunity please contact me.

Tim Wegner
IMBA Representative
Southern Minnesota
Twegner50@yahoo.com

Lebanon Hills Update

If you haven't been to the mountain bike trails at Lebanon Hills in Eagan lately, things are constantly changing. By June 1st of next summer, a new expert-level section of singletrack will be opened. The new section ventures into areas of the park that have never seen trails before, and covers about 1.5 miles. The entrance is a secret right now, but to reinforce the fact that this is an expert-only loop, riders will be forced to negotiate a 3-foot tall log crossing at the entrance to the loop. The end result is going to be one of the most feature-packed sections of trail in the State.

MORC has been working with the County Parks staff to gain approval for the following obstacles in this loop: a ride down a 45-degree 8-foot rock face, two teeter totters, 60 feet of elevated 2-foot-wide bridge, log rides, small drops, several jumps, a couple nice tough rock gardens, and of course, the expected bunch of big old logs to cross. All this packed into a rolling 1.5 miles of singletrack. Sound like fun? We'd love to have you come out and help finish the construction of this trail section. The more that help, the sooner we can open it. Contact Jan Lee at janlee13@mninter.net or Dale Gundberg at dgundberg@energyalternative.com.

And as a reminder, the trails are going to be closed in the Spring, while the frost comes out of the ground. Riding at this time just tears up the soft surface. Once things dry out, the tread hardens quickly and can stand all the use we can throw at it. Expect a May 1st opening unless we have a really early and dry Spring.

P.S. There's ANOTHER mile of singletrack that's been flagged for possible future construction, and it would bypass some of the eroding ski trail. But that's a story for another issue.

Dale Gundberg
MORC Director & Trail Steward for Dakota County Parks

Backcountry Trail Patrol Season Ends in Blaze of Colors

Our first season of trail patrol in the Superior National Forest's Tofte district ended October 3rd, with beautiful Fall weather; brilliant blue skies, and gorgeous gold, red and orange foliage in the Sawtooth Mountains above Tofte. The day started with an assist to the Lake County Sheriff's Department, as the first responding EMT on an injured hiker report on the Superior Hiking Trail. After helping evacuate the young man with a possible back injury, two new trails were on the agenda; the Sugarbush XC Ski Trails on the east side of Sawbill Trail, and the Carlton Peak Road and Tofte Trail on the west side. Because of the nice weather and peak colors, there were a lot of hikers and a few mountain bikers on the trails. Due to 16 hours of rain the previous day, the trails were very wet, and the Sugarbush loops had high grass, but were passable. We will add pictures and maps of these trails to the "Trailpatrol.org" website in the near future. Due to the threat of 2-4 inches of snow forecast for that night, (No, it didn't happen then, either!) we did not patrol a second day, but ended the season for 2002 on that fantastic Autumn day.

The Backcountry Trail Patrol finished the project of re-marking two trails in the Tofte District of Superior National Forest over the Labor Day weekend. SFS bike trail markers were placed at intersections and 2-2.5 mile intervals on the Timber-Frear Loop, on August 10 and 11th, adding 20-plus miles of re-blazed trail to the 17-miles of the Pan-core Lake Loop completed in July. Timber-Frear loop, while still double-track forest road, is a long, rocky and sometimes difficult, but very scenic ride. Pictures have been added in the "Trails" section of "Trailpatrol.org".

The Backcountry Trail Patrol has been patrolling the Chippewa and Superior National Forests in northern Minne-

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MN River Trail Update

Due to the roller coaster weather pattern this winter, conditions on the trail seem to change by the day. Lack of snow has been great for riding when the ground is frozen. As always, use good judgment if conditions are precarious. Stay off the trail if the temperature gets above freezing.

Several new re-routes were completed last fall in areas that were in bad shape and ready to fall into the river. These new re-routes added a little more trail (and greater challenge). Someday if trail plans work in our favor maybe we can build more expert sections. Until then we need to control sensitive areas. Please help block off "shortcut" sections when you see spots where riders are cutting turns. Otherwise we'll have a straight trail with no twists/turns.

A joint effort by the City of Bloomington and the MN DNR to eliminate deer in certain spots (one being the area near the railroad Turn Bridge) has resulted in closure from 4:00pm until 7:00am everyday until March 7th. Don't even try going through these well-marked areas. You risk getting a ticket or, worse, shot! We'll see if we can get them to change the hours next year to accommodate recreational trail users.

The Raft has been removed (a big thanks to all who helped). People are crossing on the North portion of the creek where a few logs are placed just in case the ice is not thick enough to walk across. It would be nice to build a more permanent crossing but that will have to wait until the trail's future is known.

That said, we still have no new information on what plans the DNR / U.S. Fish and Wildlife have for the trail. Personally, I believe it should be designated natural surface trail. MORC is keeping the pressure on the land managers involved but additional help is needed. How? Contact your legislators via letter, email or phone call and briefly explain your position.

In the immediate future, MORC is working on a proposal to re-route some poorly designed and highly eroding sections on the hilly portion East of Lyndale Ave. If we can get the re-routes approved it could open the door to improve other sections that may not be eroding as bad but are nevertheless poorly-designed. Unfortunately, that could eliminate some of the real steep sections, but that also means more trails and more singletrack. Sustainable trails are what we're shooting for. You can check on the MORC website message board for any of the latest news about this proposal.

Now, I'm going to jump on the soapbox for a bit.

I recently had a discussion with another trail advocate regarding the River Trail and how some racers think it's a good place to train at race-pace. He wondered if there should be a trail somewhere for people who want to train and race, which would get the hardcore riders off of the River Trail. As a racer myself, I agreed that it would be

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Midwest Singletrack Users Rally - In Kansas City

Pack up the bikes and hiking shoes for the Midwest Singletrack Advocacy Summit and Festival! From March 14-16, 2003 mountain bikers and hikers from 14 states throughout the Midwest will converge on some of the best singletrack Kansas City has to offer in order to promote and celebrate singletrack trails.

This year we will again feature presentations on various subjects that are designed to assist anyone interested in developing or maintaining primitive singletrack trails. The Summit will feature presentations by:

- **International Mountain Bicycling Association**
Designing and Building Sustainable Trails
- **Earth Riders Trails Association**
Running Your Trail System Like a Business
- **North Shore Mountain Bicycling Association**
Designing and Building Proper Stunt or "North Shore" Trails
- **Missouri Division of State Parks**
Mountain Biking in Missouri

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Minneapolis Off-road Cycling Advocates (MOCA)

Our recent meeting with two of the nine Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Commissioners and the Assistant Superintendents of Planning and of Operations went well. Our short-term goal is to formalize unpaved, off-road trails in Theodore Wirth Park (better known as just Wirth Park). Our long-term goal is for a trail loop throughout the Minneapolis Parks System, including trails by the Mississippi River and Minnehaha Falls. We're fine-tuning the proposal. We need the Off-road Cycling Community's support!

Please check out our web site at: www.mocatrails.org, where you'll be able to sign up, express your support and participate in discussing the project.

Miriam Taylor
MOCA - Minneapolis Off-road Cycling Advocates
A Minnesota Off Road Cyclists (MORC) Affiliate mirmtb@hotmail.com

Donate Your Old MTB Parts and Accessories

Two Wheel View / Trips for Kids – Twin Cities needs your old mountain bikes, parts and accessories. Donations are used to fix and repair mountain bikes used for youth programs and to recondition and sell at the Sibley Bike Depot (community bike thrift shop operated by the MN Bike and Pedestrian Alliance in cooperation with Two Wheel View / Trips for Kids). Revenue generated from the sale of bikes, accessories and parts help support youth biking programs in the Twin Cities.

Last season, Two Wheel View/Trips for Kids coordinated 26 biking events for over 160 youth -- thanks to financial and in-kind support from local businesses (Park Tool, REI, and Quality Bicycle Products), individuals and volunteer ride leaders from Minnesota Off Road Cyclist group and other bike enthusiasts. You can make a difference!

Two Wheel View / Trips for Kids – Twin Cities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, youth and environmentally mission driven mountain biking organization in the Twin Cities. Bike donations and financial contributions qualify for a tax deduction and help make it possible to introduce more youth to the sport of mountain biking. Visit www.twowheelview.org or call Rick at 612-874-1895 to learn about ways you can support Two Wheel View / Trips for Kids Twin Cities.

Happy Holidays!

Rick McFerrin - Founder/Director—Two Wheel View / Trips for Kids Twin Cities
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(Continued from page 3) Backcountry Trail Patrol Season Ends in Blaze of Colors

sota since 2000, as a program of the North-Central Mountain Bike Patrol. In 2003, the Backcountry Patrol will become a separate National Mountain Bike Patrol member and MORC affiliate, as one of five new NMBP units being started outside of the Twin Cities area. New patrols are currently planned for, or already being established in Duluth, Lutsen, Giant's Ridge and the Cable-Hayward-Spooner area of Wisconsin, and there is now an NMBP patrol in the Brainerd, MN area.

New Singletrack Trails Proposed in Tofte and Grand Marais Area!

Local outfitters and cyclists Jeff Lynch, of Sawtooth Outfitters in Tofte, and Mark Spindler of Superior-North Outfitters in Grand Marais, have proposed two new systems of singletrack trails in the hills above the North Shore. Lynch has approached the US Forest Service about the idea of adding technical singletrack to the "Picnic Loop" ski trail area, adding as much as 20 miles of trail, and ultimately connecting to the trails at Lutsen Mountain, which is in the same range. Spindler is working with land managers in the Grand Marais-Gunflint Trail area.

Jeff Lynch has also spoken at length to Northern Minnesota IMBA Rep, Kurt Lange and NMBP >Patrol Representative Hans Erdman (who patrols the area as a USFS volunteer) about the proposal, as well as to the Lutsen-Tofte Tourism Association, who are in favor of the idea. Hopefully these proposals will benefit from visits to the area by the IMBA/Subaru Trail Care Crew that are scheduled for this summer. Check back for updates here on "trailpatrol.org"

IMBA Announces NMBP Regional Representatives (News Release from IMBA, Boulder, CO)

IMBA is proud to announce our new patrol training program and 12 NMBP regional representatives. The reps will organize NMBP instructor training conferences in their area. In the past, the NMBP instructor training conference was held once a year and limited our capacity to certify instructors. The new format will allow us to reach more patrollers and help us to train them more effectively. Regional representatives will also be an information resource for local patrols and encourage patrol growth and effectiveness. The idea for the new training program was generated at this year's IMBA Summit in Moab, UT where patrol leaders from around the country gathered to identify ways to more effectively train and certify patrollers. Regional reps were nominated by patrol directors in each region. Hans Erdman of the Backcountry Trail Patrol Association has been named as NMBP Representative for the North Central Region (ND, SD, MN, WI) He can be contacted by e-mail at: erdman@trailpatrol.org

Ride safe,

Hans Erdman, WEMT—www.trailpatrol.org

TCAAP Update

Planning is still slowly moving forward for the Minnesota National Guard to make TCAAP (Twin City Arms and Ammunition Plant) in Arden Hills available for public use. MORC has submitted a proposal for mountain bike trails, and MORC's National Guard contacts are enthusiastic about the prospects of building these trails. The National Guard development plan will go to the U. S. Army for review and final approval soon, and then the plan will be published for public comment under the NEPA process. This can be a lengthy process, particularly if there are any public concerns or objections to anything in the plan. In short, don't hold your breath, and don't plan on any volunteer trail work this season.

You may see items in the media regarding the Rice Creek corridor and development of portions of TCAAP land, but these issues do not affect our plans. In a nutshell, plans are for the National Guard to get the largest parcel, Ramsey County to get about 113 acres for open spaces in the Rice Creek corridor, Arden Hills to get some land for development, with some land remaining under U.S. Army control for armaments manufacture. No mountain bike trails are envisioned for anywhere but the National Guard parcel, and the size of the National Guard parcel is pretty well set.

If you're interested in being on the MORC development team when it is time to move forward on this project, please contact me at dmy@visi.com Although the National Guard is very friendly to mountain biking, it is likely that we will have to rally public support for the project later on in the planning stage. Please watch the MORC web site and newsletters for further word on this exciting project.

Don Youngdahl

TCAAP Trails Coordinator

(Continued from page 3) Battle Creek Regional Park Update

cool to have a trail where you can open it up and ride hard. But then I got to thinking: I ride this trail pretty hard most of the time without incident, so what's the issue?

The issue is awareness about what kind of trails we use and the people that use them. The River Trail is a multiple-user trail, meaning bikers, joggers, walkers, and birders. Other trail users could care less if you're the State Champion bike racer, but they will care if you scare the crap out of them or don't respect them. Trail users who are offended by reckless mountain bikers call the land managers. This happens all too often on this trail, and these conflicts make it very difficult to keep the trails open. The River Trail is a MULTIPLE-USE trail, so please slow down and show respect.

Happy Trails, Dennis.

MORC Online Update

In case you have not yet noticed, there have been some exciting changes happening at the MORC web site: www.morcmtb.org. I took over the webmaster duties last fall and immediately set to work on a complete website facelift. We are now sporting a completely new look, with more information on MORC than ever before. The new site focuses in on various trail building activities we have going on in the area, complete with maps, pictures, volunteer contacts, trail plans and more.

We have also launched an exciting new message forum currently located at www.mtbmn.com. This will be the premiere meeting place for mountain bikers all over the area with discussions covering every topic you can imagine as it relates to mountain biking. Want the latest trail conditions? Looking for group rides? How about some tips on what to wear to keep warm when riding during the winter season? It is all there, complete with opinions from some of the areas most knowledgeable riders. We hope that the message board will really pick up activity as spring arrives. Come check it out, and contribute your insights to the discussions!

2003 will hold even more exciting initiatives on the Internet. Soon you will see a completely new look to minnesotamt.com, with complete trail information and a review database with maps, pictures, and even a few videos. Stay tuned for more great information as we work to help keep everyone informed and educated on the regional biking scene.

John Lundell
MORC Webmaster and IT Committee Chair
john.lundell@usa.net

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- **Oklahoma Earthbike Fellowship**
Mountain Biking in Oklahoma
- **Minnesota Offroad Cyclists**
Building Singletrack Trails with Mechanized Equipment

The goal of the Summit this year is to provide all attendees with important and impactful advocacy tools in a festival like environment. In order to accomplish this goal the Summit will be held at Landahl Forest Preserve in Blue Springs, MO. Landahl serves Summit attendees some of the best singletrack in the Midwest.

In addition, representatives from the bicycling industry will be on hand to provide product demos, offer great deals to Summit attendees on 2003 products and demonstrate their commitment to advocacy in a festival atmosphere.

"This year, we will provide everyone attending the Summit with the chance to sample the newest products on the market while riding great singletrack," says Brad Davis, one of the Summit organizers. "The National Mountain Bike Patrol will also provide guided singletrack trail rides throughout the course of the day".

The Summit will occur over three days with social bike riding events scheduled for Friday night, the Summit during the day on Saturday, an amateur film festival fund raiser for Trips for Kids on Saturday night and the BikeSource Cross Country Race #1 (out of 5) scheduled for Sunday morning.

More information and registration information can be located at: <http://www.earthriders.org/summit/> or by emailing or calling Ken Miner: kminer@minertech.com or 913-894-4276.

(Continued from page 1) Year 2002 Recap

of Afton. Last year, we also provided assistance to Erik's for the Spring Cup at Buck Hill. Both events proved to be quite successful both in raising funds for MORC and in increasing MORC's visibility among the mountain biking community. For 2003, MORC will be taking a more active Sponsorship role for both events. To ensure MORC is able to make our commitments to support these fine events, the Board has designated the following Event Coordinators:

Dennis Porter (dporter@qbp.com) – Spring Cup at Buck Hill
 Scott Thayer (sthayer@qbp.com) – 24 Hours of Afton

Please contact Dennis or Scott if you'd like to help with the planning for either event!

5. **Continue to grow the Affiliate program, by adding new Affiliate Members and establishing stronger bonds with existing Affiliates.** Last year, MORC introduced an Affiliate Member program, designed help build stronger bonds with other Minnesota cycling organizations who share our passion for mountain biking. During 2002, the following organizations signed on as MORC Affiliates:

Boreal Bike Club/Team NOVARA
 Cyclists of Gitchee Gumees Shores (COGGS)
 North-Central Mountain Bike Patrol (NCMBP)
 Twin Cities Bicycling Club (TCBC)
 Two Wheel View / Trips for Kids - Twin Cities
 Winona Area Mountain Bikers (WAMB)

Each Affiliate designates a representative, who sits on the MORC Board as a full voting member. MORC has already benefited greatly from the influx of new ideas and broader perspectives provided by our Affiliate representatives. For 2003, we will continue to expand the number of MORC Affiliates, and work with Affiliate representatives to begin building an effective statewide coalition for mountain biking advocacy.

6. **Establish regular (weekly/monthly) MORC social rides.** For the first few years of MORC's existence, the organization has largely been focused on trail work and advocacy. Why do we spend countless hours on trails? So we can RIDE! MORC members have increasingly asked for organized opportunities to meet and ride with other MORC members. Therefore, MORC will be sponsoring a number of regularly scheduled group rides during 2003. Affiliate representatives Bob Bryan (TCBC), Rick McFerrin (Two Wheel View/Trips for Kids) and local bike shops will help the MORC Board develop group ride opportunities throughout the Twin Cities for cyclists of varied skill levels. Please contact Bob or Rick, if you're interested in helping organize or lead rides this year.
7. **Attain 501c3 tax-exempt status.** Although MORC's original Bylaws described the organization as a 501c3 tax-exempt entity, the organization has yet to take the legal steps necessary to attain this status. As MORC grows, 501c3 status is becoming increasingly important – both from the standpoint of establishing credibility and in ensuring that corporate donations to MORC are tax-deductible. We will complete the 501c3 filing process in 2003. In conjunction with the filing process, MORC will be instituting systems to better track our educational and volunteer activities (a necessary component for maintaining 501c3 status).
8. **Enhance the breadth and utility of online resources for Minnesota mountain bikers.** In the past two years, MORC has significantly expanded the use of the Internet for communicating with members and the larger cycling community. For 2003, we will be dramatically enhancing our efforts in this area. The MORC Board has created an Information Technology (IT) Committee, chaired by John Lundell (john.lundell@usa.net), to plan and implement MORC's online activities. Please contact John if you have an interest in helping out with web development, site maintenance or forum moderation.

As you can see, we have an exciting and busy year ahead of us. I encourage all members to find an area of interest and volunteer your time and energy to help keep MORC moving forward in 2003. As always, please contact myself or another MORC Board Member with your comments and questions.

Steve Garnjobst
 Phone: 651-771-4971
 Email: mnbiker@attbi.com

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www.MinnesotaMTB.com**

Twin Cities Bicycling Club (TCBC) News

With the beautiful snow-less weather, our weekend off-road group rides continued through mid-December. Rides have been mostly at the YMCA camp near Monticello, but also Milaca and Battle Creek.

I will resume rides in the Spring when weather permits so that we can be in good shape in May for the 11th annual Jerry Loomis Mountain Bike Adventure Weekend. A full 3 days of great riding near Cable Wisconsin.

Everyone is welcome on any TCBC ride. You do not have to be a member. You do however have to pay \$2 per ride.

For future rides, see our ride schedule at biketcbc.org or contact Bob Bryan at bobbkr@aol.com. For unscheduled impromptu rides, members can join the tcbc-mtb@yahoo.com for up-to-the-minute communication.