

# Mountains are Awesome

By Brian Zongker, NSP

In case you haven't noticed – MOUNTAIN BIKING is going crazy. Bike stores and big box stores alike are having trouble keeping their stores stocked. They may be catching up now but, for a while, it was like toilet paper, couldn't find them anywhere. I have experienced more riders on the trail than ever before. Last weekend -- in a short ride -- I saw eight other mountain bikers. Last summer, I would hardly see that many in a month. It's good to see them out there but can't help but wonder what they are doing on my trails. Just kidding, TRACKS, it's ok that they are on my trails.

One thing I find amazing is the multitude of mountain bike varieties that are out there. There are cross country, enduro, downhill, gravel and E-bikes -- just to name a few. When I say a few, it's just that these are the ones I can think of off the top of my head. Which one is right for you? Go see the experts at your local bike shop and they will guide you in the right direction. I am personally on a cross country bike and I believe most riders are. But once you start getting into it, you will realize what's right for you. If you are just out for trail fun, get yourself a regular ole mountain bike and then trade up from there. Just don't buy it at some big box store. Trust me, you will be happier buying from your local bike store. Shop Local!

Cross country riding is on trails that go up and down and around. They vary in length and you can go as far or as not so far as you like. Downhill is on trails that are typically at a mountain resort and can range from quite gnarly to relatively tame. You can ride the lift to the top of the mountain and -- just like skiing -- you can pick a trail that will take you to the bottom. Speaking of downhill riding -- did you know that Sunrise Park Resort has a variety of downhill trails? Did you know that they are planning on opening back up for mountain biking here very shortly? They are and it is going to be awesome. We have been working on existing trails and planning out new ones. Our goal is to have trails to suit riders of all types and abilities. There will be, of course, the gnarly downhill double blacks for you hard core riders but we will also have areas that beginners to intermediate riders will enjoy as well. We will focus on creating a family-friendly riding experience that will encompass downhill and cross country. The long-range plan even involves E Bike rentals and tours. Oh yeah, E Bikes are electric assist so, when you pedal, you get a boost of power. How fun is that?

Go find yourself on the mountain. Come up to Sunrise and experience cool fresh air, bright blue skies and amazing wildlife. Spend time with family and friends. If you don't mountain bike (yet), that's okay. Come up and go for a hike or a scenic lift ride. Either way, plan to spend the whole day. A good friend of mine knew that I rode my bike a lot and was curious. I took him on a short ride during a visit last summer. He liked it but wasn't sure. Being that I don't talk about much else (during the summer), I was wearing on him. I finally told him to experience it for himself. Buy a bike, go out and ride. It will change your life. Well it has and now he owns two bikes, one with Fat Tires. Oh, fat tire bikes -- forgot about them. In any event, he is now like the rest of us -- bike poor but rich in soul.