

Trail Maintenance. How can you help?

Every riding area around BC has a special person or group of people that keep these amazing areas going. They work out of the love of the sport and they build, fix and maintain trails so well that it keeps us coming back for more. But what can we do to help?

Well of course one of the best ways is to join a club and come out for a trail building day. Most clubs have these special days when everyone gets together to fix one or many parts of a trail that needs work. There is usually a barbeque or some beer drinking afterwards and you will leave with a great satisfaction of creating enjoyable trails for everyone.

One thing I carry with me on all my rides is a folding saw. I picked up this wicked little item at GA Checkpoint www.gacheckpoint.com for \$39.99 and it has lasted me for well over 3 years (I have replaced the blades several times). The saw is made by Survival on Snow www.survivalonsnow.com and fits just behind my number plate perfectly. It is a good idea to carry extra blades back at your shop or truck so when the blade wears out or breaks you can replace it. Replacement blades cost \$16.00-\$18.00.

On rides when I encounter a downed tree I swoop into action while all my friends sit back and watch. Trees, branches and other debris that is crossing a trail can harm any rider out there. It also does not help when riders just rip through the bush around the downed tree as this leads to trails going everywhere and gives other trail users another thing to complain about. Or it is not great when riders create a huge hole by trying to get their back wheel over the tree.

Below are a few tips to follow when cutting out trees or branches. I know it is sometimes faster to push stuff partially off the trail however this can create hazards to less experienced riders. Here it goes:

- Make sure that before you cut things out of the way that you are not altering a trail. Some trails are designed to be tough by keeping them tight and cutting trees out of the way just because you want to go faster or you do not have the skills to ride such a trail is wrong.
- When cutting trees or branches make sure to cut them well back so that if a rider was to fall near that object that it would not be a spike waiting for someone to impale themselves on. This is very important.
- Before cutting get an idea of where the falling log or branch will fall so you do not pinch your blade or have it kick back at you while you are cutting.
- Clean up all debris and clear it off the trail so other riders are not harmed by left over pieces of wood or sharp branches.

By using these practices the trails will stay in better shape longer and the trail builders can spend more of their time developing new trails rather than maintaining older ones. Rip it up! dave