Ground Broken on Marin's First Bike Park

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San Rafael, CA (RPRN) 05/28/14 — Phase 1 construction slated for completion by this fall

After years of dreaming and planning, the people behind an all-ages bike park gathered May 24 near Novato to break ground on the Stafford Lake Bike Park, the first of its kind in the North Bay.

Marin County Parks planners received construction approval from the Marin County Supervisors on April 29, after a sixth major donation to the project was secured by the nonprofit Friends of Stafford Lake Bike Park. Backed by nearly $600,000 in funding, construction bidding for Phase 1,
9 1/2 acres, is open through May 29. The entire bike park will take up 17 acres in the northwest portion of the existing Stafford Lake Park.

Marin County Supervisor Judy Arnold representing District 5 in Novato called the groundbreaking "a poignant moment in time," indicating that "Stafford Lake Bike Park fits all of the County's goals of sustainability: it is environmentally healthy; it will boost the economy; it crosses all social equity strata, and it is educational. In short, this project is good for Marin, and welcomed in Novato."

District 4 Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey, within whose district also includes a portion of Novato, said the groundbreaking celebrated the ongoing commitment of dedicated volunteers and Parks staff. "The dirt being turned by shovels today will lead the way to ongoing health and excitement for generations of our kids and the adults who still act like them," Kinsey said.

Professional off-road cyclist Mark Weir of Novato, a co-founder of the Friends of Stafford Lake Bike Park, said, "I'm stoked to see this much passion actually result in something like this. I'm really excited to see the future and what this holds. I think it's going to change our community in a big way."

Marin County Parks Principal Landscape Architect Stephen Petterle, who orchestrated the planning efforts for County government, said the bike park could be open sometime this fall thanks to teamwork between the County and a core group of volunteers.

"This has been a great project, and it's fun to see everybody come together like this," Petterle said. "I've been on both sides of the fence, and it doesn't always work this way."

Sponsorships and donations totaled $592,850, more than $100,000 over the $480,000 Phase 1 construction estimate. The bike park received more than 200 donations, including from local families and kids. The largest sponsors to date include the Fox Factory Holding Corp., the Violich Family Foundation, Mike's Bikes, Wilderness Trail Bikes, Santa Cruz Bicycles and Bike Monkey.

The total cost of the park, following a second phase later on, is estimated at $850,000. Marin County Parks Director Linda Dahl, who opened the groundbreaking ceremony, said she knows the individual $50 and $100 local donations will evolve into "hands of help" in maintaining the park once built.

The full-spectrum bike park will enable riders of all ages to learn and improve bicycling skills in a positive, healthy and family-friendly environment. It is slated to include a single-track loop trail, gravity-fed flow trails with jumps and berms, several pump tracks, north shore-style elevated trails, a dual slalom course and much more.

It is anticipated the park will be built not only by certified contractors and trail builder subcontractors but also by volunteers. Learn more about how to help the project and follow the park's progress at www.staffordlakebikepark.com.

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