

Minnesota's Ecosystem for Bicycling and Recreational Trails

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Quality Bicycle Products

QBP



A Word about QBP

- Distribute parts and accessories to 4,000 bicycle retailers
- DCs in MN, CO, NV, PA
- Opened an office in Taiwan
- About 800 employees and lots of dogs
- 40,000 parts in our inventory
- 18 proprietary brands
- Now opening in Canada
- On a busy day, we'll ship 10,000+ boxes
- Sjoquist hired in 1998 as first fulltime advocate in bike industry. I'm here on behalf of bicycle retailers

SURLY®

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ADVENTURE BY BIKE

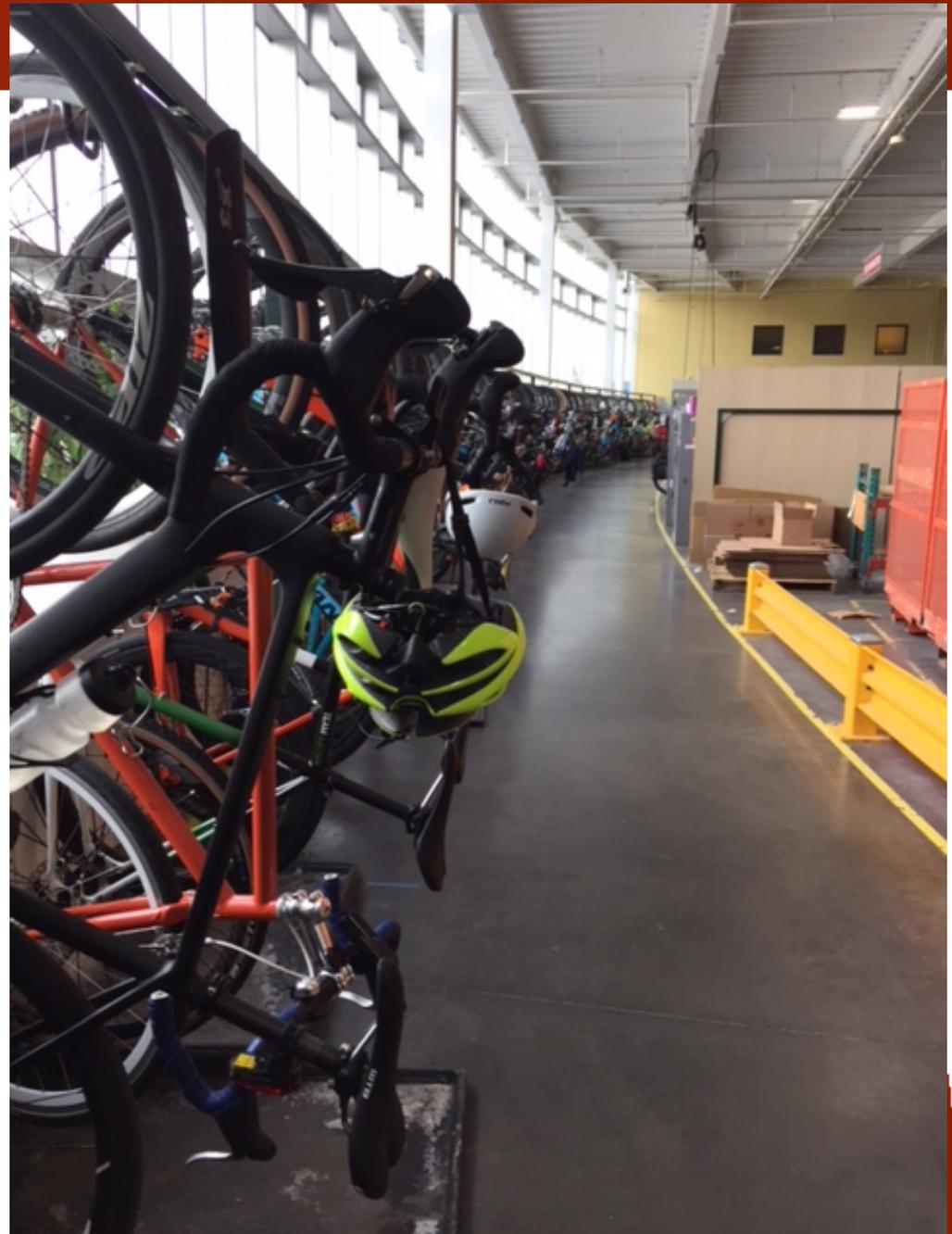
45NORTH

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Q Central in MN

Q's Employees
annually ride more
than 320,000 miles
to and from work

Q's been giving 6%
of after-tax profits to
support cycling
since 1998



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Ecosystem Components

- **Tour operators and promoters of events, races, and routes for cyclists to ride**
- **Bicycle retailers who sell bikes and gear so cyclists can participate safely**
- **Transportation/recreation managers who oversee trails and routes that trail users and cyclists ride**
- **The community that benefits because the quality of life is higher thanks to having events, tours, and trails to use**

Ecosystem, cont.

- **But without cooperation or coordination with public land managers (city, county, state or federal) who manage trails and routes, retailers to invest in the community, and cyclists and advocacy groups to advocate for events, better routes, more trails, etc., this ecosystem is incomplete**
- **I need to acknowledge Dave Walsh, from Red Newt Bicycles in Lexington for the ecosystem concept**

The Minnesota Basics

- **Population of Minnesota 5.3 million**
- **Home to 11,000+ lakes, 92,000 miles of rivers**
- **Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul the 16th largest urban area in the U.S.**
- **Ranked 5th in headquarters for Fortune 500 companies**
- **Usually ranked high in voting, quality of schools, number of non-profits**
- **Long winters, short summers**
- **About our inclination to collaborate...**

More Basics...

- **MN has benefitted from Congressional member support in securing federal funds for cycling**
- **Congressman Jim Oberstar (34 years), ranking member of House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**
- **Congressman Martin Sabo (28 years) Chair of Appropriations, strong transit advocate**
- **Strong political will – Minneapolis spent \$9 million to build one mile of trail in 2011**
- **Legacy of advocacy by community groups**

Economic Impact of Bicycling in MN

- **Study released January, 2017**
- **“Assessing the Economic Impact and Health Effects of Bicycling in MN” study was funded by MnDOT, with research conducted by the U of MN Tourism Center, School of Public Health, and Humphrey School of Public Affairs**

Economic Impacts, cont.

- **In 2014, MN's bicycle industry created \$778 million of economic activity**
- **This includes \$209 million of labor income and 5,529 jobs**
- **MN communities host more than 100 bicycle events annually, bringing 90,000+ non-resident visitors to enjoy bicycling**
- **Trail rides, races, mountain biking events, and bicycle tours generated \$14.3 million of economic activity**

Economic Impacts, cont.

- **These trail rides, races, mountain biking events, and bicycle tours generated \$6.3 million in labor income**
- **About 90 million bicycle trips are made annually in MN for commuting, recreational riding, and other purposes**

Minnesota's Ecosystem is Working

- **Since economic benefits of bicycling are known, there's a lot of support for bicycling and trail initiatives statewide**
- **Strong advocacy organizations at city, county, and state levels help support initiatives**
- **Access to parks, lakes, greenways, urban areas are part of MN culture**
- **Access for commuters, even in winter months, is a high priority in our urban areas**

MN Ecosystem, cont.

- **Many communities get it that our best and brightest prioritize bike and trail access; a determining factor for where they live and work**

MN Paved Trails

- **According to the Rails to Trails Conservancy, 108 communities in MN have trails totaling just under 3,000 miles**
- **This doesn't include our DNR State Trails**
- **Mix of abandoned rail lines, but much of it is around our lakes and along rivers**
- **Most of our communities and suburbs have 10-ft wide black asphalt trails running parallel to streets, roads, and highways**

Minnesota DNR Paved Trail Network

- **MN DNR operates 1,300 miles of State Paved Trails (linear state parks)**
- **Built mostly on abandoned rail lines**
- **No user fees to ride these trails**
- **Paul Bunyan Trail (RTC Hall of Fame Trail) runs 100 miles from Baxter to Bemidji**
- **Gitchi Gami State Trail runs along Lake Superior from Silver Creek Cliff to Grand Marais (80 miles)**

Minneapolis and St. Paul Paved Trails

- **About 500 miles of paved trails throughout the Twin Cities**
- **Midtown Greenway runs from west side of Minneapolis to the Mississippi River, and is a RTC Hall of Fame Trail (5,000 per day during the summer)**
- **Cedar Lake Trail America's first "bicycle freeway" opened in 1995**
- **Neighborhood group raised \$500,000 to purchase abandoned rail line**
- **Phase 3 - one mile cost \$9 million to build**



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How About E-Bikes on Trails?

- **E-bikes are allowed if they meet the definition of MN Statute 169.111, Sub. 26**
- **Class 1, pedal-assist only (no throttle)**
- **Maximum assisted speed limited to 20 mph**
- **Basically, anywhere a bicycle can be ridden, an e-bike can be ridden unless specifically prohibited**

Snowmobiling and Cross-Country Skiing

- **MN has 22,000 miles of designated snowmobile trails**
- **21,000 miles of this are maintained by snowmobile clubs**
- **MNUSA is the dominant recreational user group in MN**
- **Snowmobiling worth \$1 billion to MN annually**
- **MN has 2,000 miles of cross-country ski trails groomed by local clubs and the DNR**

Motorized Trails

- **MN has more than 1,000 miles of trails for ATVs, off-highway motorcycles, and off-highway vehicles**
- **MN also home to Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area in northern MN**
- **Site spans 1,200 acres and features 36 miles of trails through iron-ore pits, stockpiles, and tailings basins**

Water Trails

- **MN has first and largest water trail system in the U.S.**
- **35 MN DNR State Water Trails**
- **Network features 1,500 public accesses, campsites, rest areas, and portages**
- **4,500 miles of paddling available on State Water Trails**
- **Most Minnesotans live within one hour of a State Water Trail**

Mountain Biking in MN

- **MN home to “unexpectedly good” mountain biking for a flyover state with no mountains**
- **Largest advocacy groups are Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC) with 1000 members, and Cyclists of Gitchi Gami Shores (COGGs) with about 500 members**
- **About 500 miles of designated singletrack mountain bike trails (not shared with other user groups)**
- **Almost entirely directional**
- **Common to use “stacked loop” system**

Mountain Biking, cont.

- **“Signature” trails are Cuyuna (DNR) and the Traverse in Duluth (City of Duluth)**
- **Cuyuna currently about 30 miles, with another 40 under construction**
- **Built on 5,000 acre abandoned mine site in northern MN**
- **Traverse in Duluth is 100 miles long (actually 45 miles in length, with pockets of trail networks at 5 different locations total 100 miles)**
- **Cuyuna is a IMBA Silver Ride Center**
- **Duluth is a IMBA Gold Ride Center**

Influence of Cuyuna

- **Opened in 2011, immediately became a national destination (178,000 users in 2018)**
- **Brought significant economic impacts to the two small towns (Crosby and Ironton); 18 new businesses since Cuyuna opened**
- **Crosby Medical Center uses the mtb trail to recruit surgeons**
- **High school uses mtb trail to recruit teachers and administrators**
- **IRRRB, in 2018, committed \$5 million to build mtb trails in northern MN**

Fat Bikes in MN

- **QBP didn't invent fat bikes, but brought mass production to category**
- **MORC in Twin Cities grooms 85 miles of singletrack for winter riding**
- **Duluth grooms all the Traverse for fat biking**
- **Great benefit for construction of mountain bike trails in MN; used in winter, too**
- **Grooming both human powered and mechanized**



The Cuyuna Method of Snowshoe Grooming



Minnesota High School Cycling League

- **Launched in 2012 as National Interscholastic Cycling League (NICA) project**
- **For 2019, will have 2000+ racers**
- **7 race season in Sept/Oct.**
- **Events have 3000+ between racers, parents, coaches, volunteers, spectators**
- **Need parking for 1000 vehicles**
- **League driving mtb trail development in MN**
- **Gateway Trail initiative – build trails on school grounds**

MN League Economic Driver

- **Economic Impact Study hosted by People for Bikes and NICA, 2018**
- **6 NICA leagues provided survey data**
- **2018 season championship weekend event in Mankato, MN (40,000 population)**
- **1065 racers plus 2000+ parents, coaches, volunteers and spectators**
- **Survey data on average; lodging (\$140), food and beverage (\$100), transportation (\$50)**
- **Measured economic impact - \$533,454**

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

- **RTP funds in MN distributed via the Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association (MRTUA)**
- **MRTUA made of 4 motorized groups (snowmobile, off-highway moto, all-terrain vehicles, 4-wheel drive vehicles)**
- **MRTUA's non-motorized representation 6 groups (bicycling, cross-country skiing, hiking, equestrian, in-line skating, mountain biking)**
- **Addition of separate mountain biking representation in 2003 has been very beneficial**

Recreational Issues in Minnesota

- **Subject to “nature deficit disorder” among children**
- **Climate change hitting snowmobilers and skiers**
- **Aquatic invasive species a huge issue; 1.4 million licensed anglers/825,658 boats registered boats**
- **Paved trail maintenance a ticking timebomb**
- **Trail use fees on the horizon?**

Recreational Trends in Minnesota

- **Access to trails of all kinds seen as integral to quality of life**
- **Mountain biking has become a mainstream activity and recognized economic driver**
- **Gravel riding and fat biking huge growth areas**
- **Healthy ecosystem regarding trail use and bicycling in MN**

Thank You!

But before I
go, I have an
assignment...

