

# Mountain Bikers Protest Re-Pack Race Turndown

BY JOANNA LYNCH

Marin mountain bikers may not get to have their annual Repack Race down a stretch of fire road above Fairfax.

According to bike enthusiasts, an application for a permit to hold the event on county open space land was turned down recently by the county parks commission with no reason given except that "... this use is not consistent with Open Space policy."

At the Board of Supervisors meeting last Tuesday Charles Kelly and Don Myrtle questioned the commission's refusal. They quoted the Open Space Management Policies, section (c): "... Compatible uses within appropriate open space areas may include...races..."

But Don Dimitratos, director of the Marin County Parks and Cultural Commission, complained to the Supervisors that the race was dangerous; not on flat land, but straight downhill. He said the injuries last year were numerous and he was concerned with the lack of a liability policy. Dimitratos also said the race caused erosion.

Supervisor Aramburu expressed concern with the liability and mentioned his fear of "deep pocket" law-suits regarding the bike race.

But Kelly, in a letter to the parks commission, wrote that the erosion theory didn't hold water.

"The road whose use was applied for is designed for and used by four-wheel-drive trucks, and it is ludi-

crous to state that a bicycle could cause the amount of damage rendered by one trip up or down that road by such a vehicle.

"If any damage was rendered by the last bicycle race, held under permit on May 19, 1984, the County should have instituted a claim under the \$1,000,000 liability policy that was in force."

Kelly said, "In the absence of such a claim, the statement that damage is caused is highly suspect. We invite the Open Space staff to demonstrate the damage, and to state why a claim was not filed in the event any exists."

Denise Caramagno from the "Fat Tire Flyer" magazine was present at the race last year said she didn't remember "numerous" injuries.

Race participants said: "We are prepared to admit that there are safer ways to spend a Sunday afternoon than bicycle racing, but we note that the risk of injury is one of the challenges of many sports. Participants in such events recognize the risks and sign waivers accordingly."

Don Myrtle raced last year and said he wanted another chance. He termed the race a cultural event unique to Marin County.

Supervisor Roumiguere said the issue should be heard by the Open Space District and added that he hoped they would look at the problems and see what could be done to hold the race.