



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historical Sites
4097 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, New York 12538
Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt N.H.S.
Vanderbilt Mansion N.H.S.
Eleanor Roosevelt N.H.S.

L- 34 (ROVA)

February 27, 2009

An Open Letter to *Fats in the Cats* Members

Re: Roosevelt Farm Lane

Dear FITC Members,

March 1st fast approaches and soon Roosevelt Farm Lane will reopen to bicycling.

However, we have been informed by our legal division that in order to open any other trails to bicycle use, special regulations must be written and enacted. This procedure is per Federal regulation (36 CFR 4.30) and is the policy of Department of Interior; it is not a local decision.

Therefore I regret to inform you that bicycles will no longer be permitted on any other National Park Service trails except the main Roosevelt Farm Lane (marked with Hyde Park Trail tulip- tree leaf markers). All other trails, including the marked white, yellow, and blue trails, will remain closed to bicycle use until further notice.

The main Roosevelt Farm Lane is a park road in a developed area, which enables us to open it to bicycle use. None of the other trails fit this description.

We will attempt to have the special regulations promulgated. We have been advised that it could take as long as two years after environmental compliance is completed before a new regulation is adopted. For background on this issue, I would suggest you visit the IMBA website that has a concise summary of the NPS regulatory process:

http://www.imba.com/resources/agencies/nps_trail_steps.html

The primary way we are going to address this issue is to prepare a “Multimodal Trail Master Plan”, which will address all trail uses at the Home of FDR, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Sites. We are hopeful that this effort will begin in 2009 pending confirmation of funding status.

You may be aware that in 2008 the Department of Interior proposed changing this rule to give more authority to local park Superintendents who wish to pursue opening trails to bicycle use. The public comment period on this proposed rule change recently closed. However, we cannot presume any change will be approved, and we will proceed accordingly with the special regulation route. Even if this rule is eventually changed it would likely be at a year or more before it would be implemented nationwide, and environmental compliance will still be required.

I realize that this will be a disappointment, and apologize for the fact that we did not understand all the regulatory issues earlier. However, we are committed to moving forward and appreciate your patience and understanding. Should you have any questions contact David Hayes at (845) 229- 1521. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sarah Olson".

Sarah Olson
Superintendent