

About Paydirt

History:

The Paydirt program was created in 1996 to encourage the mountain bike race community to build working relationships with trail advocates and land managers. Wally Tunison borrowed the concept from motorcycle enduro racing, and with the help of Sarah Frost, implemented the system into a mountain bike racing incentive program. Paydirt has logged over 65,000 hours since its inception. Park systems value that volunteer work at \$1.5 million.

The backbone of Paydirt is: Collaboration, Motivation and Education.

Collaboration:

The first step to starting a Paydirt program is to develop a collaborative relationship between race promoters, trail stewards and land management. Both user groups must work towards a sustainable plan for both responsible racing and trail access. This may vary from park to park or region to region. Patience, understanding each groups needs and sometimes compromise is needed. Events can be a great way to raise funds for projects and tools, and more trail access serves all mountain bikers, including the racing community. So there is opportunity for both parties to gain. Land managers can gain, when user groups work together, and fund themselves. Sponsors and bike shops can gain from trail access and active racing. Get everyone on board to support Paydirt.

Motivation:

The big question: “how do you involve the race community in trail work?” Often too focused on training to want to take time with trail work, racers can be hard to convince of the importance of trail care and trail access. This is where Paydirt comes in. Racers get hooked on racing and then come out for Paydirt, in order to get more points. Once they come out to work, more often than not, they come to realize the importance of their involvement, and even have fun. I have witnessed racers adopting trails and parks, new race venues created, as well as trail stewards run races to fund trail projects. After a while the line between racers and maintainers becomes blurred, as many become advocates of both.

Education:

Having the ear of the race community can be a huge opportunity to offer education. New racers emulate experienced racers. If the fast guys are working on trails, the new guys

want to do it too. The first few years could be a tough sell, but if each year, you teach the concept to the new beginners, in a few years, the majority of racers accept the concept of giving back to make more places to ride and race. Getting a few local pros or elite masters on board could be very helpful with persuasion by example. Have them help advertise the benefits of Paydirt.

In 2013 racers from the H2H series donated 1500 hours of the 5000 performed locally, so I would say that racers “dig” Paydirt.

For questions on Paydirt, contact Ellen White at paydirt@jorba.org