

December 6, 2022

Dear Jessica:

I'm writing to urge you and the Board to create bike access between Milton Rd. and Lakewood Forest Preserve. I love to ride, but I live in Hawthorn Woods on Brierwoods Lane, where there is little access to bike paths. I'm able to ride to Milton Rd. on residential streets, where I feel safe, and there are ample paths in and around Lakewood FP that would allow me to bike from my home onward to the north. But unfortunately, right now the only trail that connects the two is a horse trail.


I'm sorry to say that my sense of urgency comes from a recent injury: Knowing that there had been plans to either turn the existing horse trail into a multi-use trail or create a bike path northward from Milton Rd., on August 9 of this year I rode my bike up there. Seeing no sign immediately at the entrance to the horse trail, I felt confident that it must surely by now have been made accessible to bikes, and I rode onto it. Of course, within a few yards I saw a sign forbidding bikes and had to turn around. Given the narrowness and unevenness of the path, I was unable to make the tight turn. I fell over with my bike, hit my (helmeted) head on the hard-packed dirt, and have been nursing a concussion and post-concussion syndrome ever since. I've been seeing a neurologist and getting twice-weekly concussion therapy, and have now been referred to a specialist at Northwestern Medicine. I'm still unable to read and write comfortably, which is a real problem because I'm a professor of linguistics at NIU, and not only do I have classes to teach, but I also have a couple of book contracts with deadlines that I really need to meet.

I believe you could not only prevent accidents like mine in the future but also add significantly to the quality of life in Lake County by creating a bike path connecting Milton Rd. and Lakewood FP. The prospect of being able to access the beautiful network of bike paths in, around, and north of Lakewood is extremely appealing, but riding on Fairfield Rd. just doesn't feel like a safe option for many of us, and there's no other feasible way for those of us who live south of Milton Rd. to access Lakewood.


I've been unable to ride since August due to the concussion, but I'm hoping that come spring, I'll be well enough to ride again and will have a new path available to me.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Betty Birner



Hawthorn Woods, IL 60047