[Sound of feet crunching through the woods]

**Sam Evans-Brown: In a SURPRISE TWIST, we are starting this episode walking through the woods. Something called the Smarts Brook trail system in the White Mountain National Forest, in New Hampshire… so FEDERAL property.**

**And we’re walking on some trails that are… well they’re not exactly legal**

*Jodi Chinchen: So there’s a trail going up this way….*

*Sam Evans-Brown: Pretty defined… I mean, these are not the stealthiest of stealth trails. [Jody Chinchen: No no no laughter] and this one that we’re on is… like how many miles of trails are there here?*

*Jodi Chinchen: There’s about 17 miles of trail on the ground right now.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Our tour guide to these not entirely above board trails is Jodi Chinchen.**

*Jodi Chinchen: Jodi Chinchen, District Trails Manager on the Pemigewasset Ranger District.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Jodi has been a forest ranger, a trail-builder, and a wildlands firefighter. She manages 600 miles of mostly hiking and snowmobiling trails… but these days she’s been spending a lot of time with Mountain Bikers.**

*Jodi Chinchen: Mountain bikers are obviously a biggie… they do a lot of work… they have a lot of energy.*

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: Jodi is, as far as I can tell, a model federal employee: polite, accurate, and … circumspect. She calls these trails incidental trails… user-created trails… non-network trails… bureaucratic euphemisms for what they are: trails that got built on federal land without permission. She estimates there are about 35 or 40 miles of these trails just in her district of the National Forest.**

*Sam Evans-Brown: So strictly speaking it’s not ok to go dig a trail, but people have done it, and that’s a fairly common challenge that you all deal with.*

*Jodi Chinchen: yeah fairly common.*

[Sound of crunching feet]

*Evan Burks: Can we redo that part about whether it’s authorized to build trail?*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Also along for the walk, Evan Burks, a Public Affairs Officer.**

*Sam Evans-Brown: When you say redo it, what about…*

*Evan Burks: Well you asked a question about is it legal to go out and put trails on the forest. The answer is no. [laughter]*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Jody is being very careful to not offend mountain bikers, and Evan is trying to help her.**

**For years, mountain bikers have been kind of like the woodsy version of skateboarders in a city: using the landscape not built for them, carving their own paths into the hills … and that rogue culture - the fact that it was illegal, and secret, was part of the allure.**

**But now - the Forest Service is trying to fold these pirate mountain bike trails into the official trail system. And the best people to help them do this… are also the very people who built the off-the-map trails in the first place.**

*Evan Burks: We’re trying to harness the good energy of all these great people that want to do the right thing and they want to have great mountain biking trails. At the same time we have to do it correctly and we have to follow the process.*

**This is like how, for years, city officials used to put up signs that said, no skateboarding and would hassle kids who scraped up the new granite steps in front of the court-house. But eventually, they gave up and built the kids a skate-park.**

[Sound of walking in the woods again]

**But as Jodi is showing me a trail that has been designated for a redesign, so that it takes a more erosion-friendly route down a hill and avoids an apple orchard that the wildlife likes, we notice the flagging for the new trail has been pulled down off the trees.**

**Someone… is trying to sabotage Jodi’s work.**

*Jodi Chinchen: So there are some adversaries to this project… that … there’s the people that want this trail to remain low-use and they want to maintain the character of the network just as it is*

**Sam Evans-Brown:** *Like and these are people that you know by name?*

*Jodi Chinchen: yes.*

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: I’m sure this wasn’t part of the plan for this walkabout tour, and I’m sure that Jodi and Evan will be annoyed that this is what I’ve chosen to focus on, but what I was glimpsing was a game of cat-and-mouse, of federal forest officials wagging their fingers and prodding the bike clubs to follow the law with vague ultimatums, and mountain bikers doing what they’ve basically done for decades: ignoring them.**

**What we were witnessing is the silent battle for the soul of a sport.**

[Music]

*Gardner Kellogg: it takes a little bit of practice and you know, scars…*

*Dave Harkless: You know these were our woods and we went out and played in them*

*Gardner Kellogg: and collar bones that break. [laughs]*

*Dave Harkless: and everybody looked around, they’re like, ‘holy cow, look at all these trails.”*

*Jody Chinchen: It’s not that cool anymore to build trails on national forest without consent.*

*Abby Long: It keeps me up at night, to be honest, I do know it’s coming to a head.*

*Dave Harkless: And there’s a large contingent of folks that have made those trails, those older trails and they could give a rats ass if anyone ever comes and rides them,*

[Outside/In Theme music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: This is Outside/In a show about the natural world and who we use it. I’m Sam Evans-Brown.**

**Pirate trails are everywhere: the pioneers of mountain biking built them on private land, public land and everything in between. They were built by riders just looking for a place to take their new bikes, and in the process they simply appropriated land that they wanted for their trails.**

**But today there’s money to be made on mountain bike trails, and so the sport is being pushed to go legit.**

**But what happens when the evolution of a sport threatens the very thing that made it so attractive in the first place?**

[Theme music fades out]

**The first thing I need to cop to here is that I mountain bike. I got a bike about 2 years ago, and I will confess that I think it’s an absolute blast. I can’t remember the last time I was so excited about learning a new sport.**

**Ultimately, I’m glad for trails to take my bike on, and I’m struggling with the knowledge of how many of them were built...**

[Sound of bike pedaling and freewheel clicking]

**Sam Evans-Brown: And because my bent for understanding things is to look to their history, let me introduce you to two Mountain Bikers who have been around since the beginning of the sport.**

**First is Dave Harkless, a bike shop owner in Littleton, New Hampshire.**

*Dave Harkless: I’m one of the guys in this town that make this town fun to live in.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Dave is a connected figure in New England mountain biking. He’s kind of an ambassador for the sport… maybe a little scruffy, but he tucks his t-shirt in.**

*Dave Harkless: As I’ve matured, shall we say, I try to stick to legit trails*

**Sam Evans-Brown: The second is Gardner Kellogg, a surveyor in the same town.**

*Gardner Kellogg: I’m 71 years old and I’ve been doing this mountain biking for probably longer than I should have.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: He bought one of the very first mass-produced mountain bikes, back in the early eighties, and has built a lot of trails in his day. And I think at the time he saw it as a victimless crime…**

*Gardner Kellogg: Earlier on there just weren’t that many people riding and it didn’t really matter that much.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: So why did Mountain Bikers feel like they needed their own trails? Well, back in the beginning, they didn’t have any.**

*Dave Harkless: Back in the mid-80s and early 90s most of the trails were made by somebody else for something else. They were logging roads, they were footpaths, sometimes well-trod animal tracks, we just rode whatever we could.*

*Gardner Kellogg: The roads were extensive enough that you could ride for a few hours and get tired and go home. I mean, it was just fun to ride a bike in the woods.*

*Sam Evans-Brown: I mean, was it challenging?*

*Gardner Kellogg: Oh yeah. Yeah.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Dave and Gardner didn’t quite admit this, but early mountain bikes sucked. They had no shocks, and small tires compared to today's, so you felt every bump and your arms would go numb after a lot of riding. They had lousy brakes and funky geometry so they didn’t stop very well and it was easy to fly over the handlebars.**

**To ride a bike like that… you had to get pretty hardcore**

*Dave Harkless: I mean, even the racing back then, like you would race up an unmowed run on ski hill and then come bombing down some work access road trying not to eat it the whole way.*

*Gardner Kellogg: I mean, i had to walk, a few times. I mean, it’s ok to walk.*

*Sam Evans-Brown: When did things start to change, when did trails for mountain bikes start to get built.*

*Dave Harkless: Real trails? Legit trails?*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Legit trails wouldn’t appear for another decade or more, but my sense is that it didn’t take long for the pirate trails to pop up.**

*Dave Harkless: Mountain Bikers were considered renegades*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Just like the early skateboarders who drained pools in the uninhabited second homes in their California neighborhoods, the early mountain bikers found a place to take their new rigs.**

*Gardner Kellogg: We’d just go into the woods and start clearing a way to get from one point to another. By hook or by crook.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: If you’ve ever been walking and turned onto a trail that suddenly is zig-zagging, maze-like through the woods, winding crazily through the trees and doubling back on itself… that’s a mountain bike trail. They’re super frustrating to walk on, because they take forever to get anywhere. Mountain bikers don’t want views or point-to-point trails, they want corners, and obstacles to get over, and downhills and to ride their bikes until they’re tired and wind up back where they started.**

**And they want it close to home… which means often these trails were built in whatever woods were nearest by… no matter whose they were.**

*Dave Harkless: A lot of landowners up here are absentee landowners, a lot of land is old land in old families, been handed down through generations, they don’t necessarily live on their land and then you also have state forests and national forest too.*

*Gardner Kellogg: In this area there are a lot of large tracts, that aren’t really supervised, and so it really isn’t an issue… and people really don’t mind.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Again… the victimless crime narrative. But some of these landowners didn’t exactly see it as victimless*.***

*SEB: Have you ever had the experience of having a private landowner who didn’t know there was a trail on their land finding you to talk to you about it.*

*Gardner Kellogg: There have been conversations and some of them are nicer than other conversations.*

[Music]

*Dave Harkless: The early trails were called rake and ride trails, so you could literally build a trail with a rake and pair of loppers and a hand saw.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: As the sport got more popular in the nineties, there was suddenly a constituency for these trails. But it was very clubby. You learned about trails through word of mouth… through group rides at bike shops. To get onto the trails, you had to know a guy.**

*Gardner Kellogg: and the trick was to get the group rides to ride on those trails so they’d get worn in.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: And because these trails were built by these same hardcore mountain bike dudes who had been willing to ride up unmowed ski slopes and bomb down access roads, the trails were not for beginners.**

*Dave Harkless: And they were tight, they were twisty, they were extremely technical. You could have 24 inches between the trees. There’s still some trails like that around here and we call them skinnies.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Riding these lines is intense. You fall over, you crash on downhills, you hurt yourself.**

*Dave Harkless: and it can be extremely frustrating. If someone is looking to get into riding and this is their first experience, they’re going to have to be a very determined person to be successful. Send ‘em up there, we’d say go ride our trails they’re really awesome they’re really fun, and they’d come back bloody and pissed.*

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: Generally speaking, this was the state of affairs for mountain biking in the early 2000s. Pirate mountain bike trails snaked their way through many, many little patches of undeveloped land that abut towns where riders live.**

**The people who rode them were the ones who were willing to risk riding on unmarked trails, that are extremely difficult and might not be legal to use… which is to say mostly white guys. Good numbers are hard to find, but I’ve seen numbers that suggest 75% of American riders are dudes.**

 **A lot of these trails were built by experts, who were looking for things that were fun and challenging but are kind of horrendously difficult for new riders. And, because these trails were built without permission, the people who built them wanted them to stay under the radar, so that they wouldn’t get kicked off…**

**Just a path, a whisper wider than a deer run -- specifically designed to be winding and treacherous.**

**And no trail signs. Trail signs invite in outsiders. Trail signs bring attention. No trail signs.**

[Sound of wind through trees]

**Sam Evans-Brown: Maybe you’re asking, ‘So what? Who cares if there are pirate trails?’**

**Well, let me tell you a story.**

*Mark Taylor: The story as I have it is that the Rabbi and his wife came to take walk up the hill… she didn’t want to go… she stayed in the car.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: This is Mark Taylor. He sounds like he’s setting up a joke, but he’s not. He worked for 20 years as a police officer in a town called Franconia. Mark told me about a search and rescue that happened in 2001, when a Rabbi from Brooklyn named Abraham Hauer came up to the White Mountains.**

*Sam Evans-Brown: and this is a pretty well-defined trail… this is wide.*

*Mark Taylor: It’s a fairly well-defined trail here, and it basically forms this loop about a mile and half all the way around.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Abraham’s wife Milka waited for him, but then it started to get dark.**

*Mark Taylor: About nine o’clock, his wife calls the police. My chief shows up, talks to her, calls fish and game out. They make a pass, through, they make a quick walk through… they didn’t find him.*

[Music]

*Mark Taylor: So they decided they would start the search the next morning. Rained all day. It wasn’t a hard rain, but it was cold… damp… so it was really a tough day to be outside in the weather if you had to be out in the weather.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: By noon the next day it was clear that Abraham Hauer was really, really lost.**

*Mark Taylor: Fish and Game did come back and they made another pass through and they searched this whole area. They had, I wanna say, there was probably 3 or 4 Fish and Game Officers and a couple volunteers. Didn’t find anything. And that evening, apparently the New York Governor called the New Hampshire governor who in turn called our colonel of State Police and the major from Fish and Game and said, ‘we need to do something about this.’*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Apparently, Abraham Hauer was kind of a big deal.**

*Mark Taylor: At some point in time the hasidic jewish community came up from New York with their urban search and rescue people, they had a mobile command post which was basically out of an old greyhound bus. All of your radio communications all of your telephone communications, and their own ambulance…*

[Music]

*Sam Evans-Brown: So how many folks came up from New York?*

*Mark Taylor: I would say by the end of the third day, there was probably three four hundred people here.*

[Music]

*Sam Evans-Brown: That’s bananas.*

*Mark Taylor: Yep. We had enough people, and we had to give them something to do because they needed to do something... so that’s about a mile and half two miles down the hill and at least another mile and a half back up to the interstate. And we could put one person every 300 feet so they could face into the woods and call the guys name.*

*And it was a little eerie, because you could physically stand here, and you’d be in the woods just a few feet and you’d hear ‘Abraham, Abraham, where are you?’*

*Sam Evans-Brown: Prior or since have you ever seen anything like that?*

*Mark Taylor: No… no, not at all.*

[Music]

*Mark Taylor: The second day, they retraced their steps, and on the second day they found an article of his clothing where they had been the previous day.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: It was a vest.**

*Mark Taylor: He was walking in circles at that point.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: By the third day, the governor’s resources had arrived: there were dozens of searchers from Fish and Game, local and state police, and the National Guard.**

*Mark Taylor: They had a black hawk helicopter out searching. And again, for a Black Hawk to search… it’s more or less hovering, and they’re looking straight down in the woods. And we got a message that they saw something in the woods they weren’t sure what they were looking at. And the Fish and Game team went out to where the helicopter was, and that’s when they found him. And he had passed away at some point in time, probably within the last 24 hours… just from the exposure.*

*Where we found him… is only now a few hundred yards from where the nearest backyard is…*

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: How does somebody get lost on a trail like this: a one mile loop… super wide, well defined trail… the most touristy of tourist hikes. Maybe you’ve already guessed the answer.**

[Sound of leaves crunching]

*Mark Taylor: And you can see right ahead of you here, a little bit of a trail. [oh yeah] Not much!*

*Sam Evans-Brown: yeah yeah yeah. Yeah you can definitely see it.*

*Mark Taylor: But the mountain bikes used this.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: How pirate trails in the White Mountains claimed a life… after a break.**

**\*\*\*Break\*\*\*\***

*Sam Evans-Brown: So I’m following something.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Before the break we learned about a man from New York City who got lost while hiking on short, easy, tourist loop in the White Mountains… while his death got a lot of attention back in 2001, what went unreported at the time was that he got lost because he turned onto an unmarked mountain bike trail.**

**Near the top of the loop, at the intersection where Abraham Hauer needed to take a left to get back to his car and to his wife… there was another trail to the right. a mountain bike trail over private land. It’s a trail that a few years earlier had fallen out of use, because the bikers had been kicked off after a rider swore at the landowner who was out walking his dog.**

**They rerouted the trail to the north, so that it came out on a local cross-country ski loop. But that required crossing a brook, and before long there was a big rainstorm and the ramshackle biker’s bridge got washed away and the trail fell out of use.**

*Sam Evans-Brown: That was a very rotten log… I just sank right into it like stepping into deep snow.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: I tried to walk to path the riders must have followed, but after a few hundred yards I lost the trail, and soon, just like Abraham Hauer, I wasn’t at all sure if I was headed the right way.**

**I kept bushwhacking, wanting to see how far Abraham would have had to have walked in one direction to get himself out of trouble… but after about 20 minutes of tromping my way along with no trail… with the sun starting to dip out of sight behind the bowl of mountains that ringed the area...**

*SEB: It’s funny I’ve just started to get those twinges of like… I’m far enough off the trail here… that I’m not 100% confident in my ability to make it back… [SFX: Wind comes up] doesn’t take long.*

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: This particular wrong turn was a really strange one to make. When you’re making a circle of all left turns, why would you go right?**

**But Abraham Hauer wasn’t the only one to make this mistake.**

*Mark Taylor: We had obviously the rabbi has taken this trailhead improperly… we’ve had several different tourists that have taken this… we actually had a school group… and the teacher got off-course and took the whole group… and I actually found them over on 141, I got to a point I could look down in the ravine and I could hear them talking. And it was like, come up to here.*

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: At least in this one spot, it seems pretty clear that a trail sign would have been nice. But it’s not just inexperienced hikers that get lost on pirate trails. When you see maps of these trails, they look like a plate of spaghetti. I routinely get lost on my local BIKE trails.**

**And so do very accomplished adventurers, like Peter Frick-Wright...**

[Music]

*Peter Frick-Wright: I had gotten up early… and I was like still in my pajamas, just writing, and my dog was just like looking at me like, the whole time, just having none of it.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: … friend of the podcast and, host of the Outside Podcast with Outside Magazine. A couple years ago, Peter took a few days to get some writing done at a family cabin, in central Oregon… abutting some federal land.**

*Peter Frick- Wright: Just like, we came all the way out to like my favorite place, we’re in the woods and you’re just staring at this glowing rectangle.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: So Peter put down his computer and gave in to his dog. it was drizzling, so Peter threw on some rain gear over his pajamas and started walking the logging roads that crisscross the forest. After a little while, he saw a brand new mountain bike trail. No signs though.**

*Peter Frick-Wright: and I was just like well this looks great, like let’s go explore…*

**Sam Evans-Brown: He followed the trail, came out on another logging road. Thought he knew where he was and started walking.**

*Peter Frick-Wright: Just walking and walking, and after probably three miles… I was like, I wonder if I’m turned around here.*

[Music]

*Peter Frick-Wright: But I’ve gone four miles, so I can’t just turn around and walk another four miles backwards. And kind of the long story short of it is I ended up walking 12 miles in the wrong direction. And by this point I’m supposed to meet a friend for dinner and I’m supposed to be there right then and instead of meeting him at the restaurant I have to call and basically ask him to pick me up… in my pajamas and I don’t have my wallet, like all I had was a leash and a dog…*

*Sam Evans-Brown: A very excited dog.*

*Peter Frick-Wright: yeah, he was so stoked, he was like, this is the best, I’m gonna bother you every time you’re working now…*

*Sam Evans-Brown: So I guess here’s my question. What would you have needed in order to have not had this happen to you?*

*Peter Frick-Wright: Oh it could have been any of a lot of different things. A single trail sign… saying like this way back to the way you came, or if there’d been a marking of some kind. I had no bearings at all.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: All of these pirate trail networks might have remained more or less hidden… unmarked… largely unnoticed… basically forever… But things have been changing.**

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: But for one, the bikes have been getting better. Those rattly deathtraps with no-shocks and bad breaks have been replaced by cushy, full-suspension, party-bikes, that squish their way over obstacles without as much punishment on your body. That’s what got me into the sport.**

**And new riders who were drawn in, were suddenly were able to find trails, because of another change, this one quite sudden. Around 2010, people started to upload their rides to GPS smartphone apps, which made that ride data public.**

**In particular there’s one app, called Strava. Strava has even go so far as to create a global heat map, that looks kind of like one of those pictures of the earth at night from space. Except the lights, instead of being cities lights, are all the places that people ride bikes. Including all of the rides in places where there aren’t supposed to be trails.**

**It’s like the underground high school party that gets too big and gets busted by the cops.**

*Dave Harkless: As I understand it what happened is some of the local folks in the White Mountain National Forest offices were retiring, and these young folks were coming up through and some of them were avid mountain bikers. And they also were technologically savvy.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: Again, Dave Harkless… the bike shop owner in New Hampshire.**

*Dave Harkless: And so they brought up the heat map... and everybody looked around, they’re like, ‘holy cow, look at all these trails.”*

**Sam Evans-Brown: While reporting this story, I heard stories of a federal government that couldn’t decide whether it wanted to encourage mountain biking, or ban it. In the nineties they made and distributed a map of the illegal mountain bike trails on federal property, essentially advertising them. But I also heard about a couple years when they were sending out forest rangers to camp out at trailheads waiting for riders to come back to their cars so they could hand out tickets.**

**So the federal response has drifted with whoever is in charge. But now, for the first time you could see all the pirate trails at once. And I think it became clear that this problem wasn’t going away. And also… around the same time commercial side of the sport has started to really explode....**

[Sound of GoPro videos of mountain bikers]

**These are a couple of the many many many GoPro Videos of people riding in a place called Kingdom Trails, in Burke Vermont.**

*Abby Long: Well, Kingdom Trails is 100+ miles of amazing trails up in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: And this is Abby Long, executive director of the Kingdom Trails Association, a non-profit that manages this network**

*Abby Long: Our mission is to provide recreation, education opportunities, by managing maintaining, building trail for the health of community and regional economy.*

*Sam Evans-Brown: that sounds like it was verbatim from something.*

*Abby Long: What? That’s from the heart! [laughter]*

**Sam Evans-Brown: What has happened in the intervening decades from when a bunch of dirtbag mountain bikers first started hacking illegal trails out of the woods that their neighbors owned through to today, is that Mountain Biking has become big business… A study of the tourism to Kingdom Trails has estimated they bring $10 million dollars a year to this very rural area…**

**And Burke, Vermont is just one of dozens of towns that have parlayed their mountain bike trails into million dollar tourism industries. Moab, Utah. Sedona, Arizona. Pisgah, North Carolina. Bend, Oregon. Public trail networks, have to be legit.**

*Abby Long: They first went door-to-door. Knocking and talking to people face-to-face. And it’s now we’re at 92 landowners, which is incredible.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: If in the 80s, mountain bikers were skateboarders riding in the neighbor's pool that they pumped out while no-one was home, in 2018 towns like Burke Vermont are the places like it, are the towns that that built the skate park… and not just any skate park. The best damn skate park in the northeast.**

*Abby Long: It offers everything! So someone who’s really hard core can go get that technical riding. Someone who just wants to learn can go on some really fun greens, and kiddos can learn to mountain bike with their striders on our little baby pump tracks.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: But even inside a success story like Kingdom Trails, there are tensions…**

*Abby Long: There’s a lot of folks who don’t want things to change. They want things to be exactly how they were… how they grew up and what they love.*

**Sam Evans-Brown: The popularity of the trails means they are crowded on weekends, which annoys local riders, and has brought traffic to the village which annoys local drivers.**

*Abby Long: It keeps me up at night, to be honest. I do know it’s coming to a head.*

[Music]

*Dave Harkless: Kingdom Trails, saved the Burke area. I mean, Burke was a very depressed area, but I also have a bunch of friends who live up there… they don’t ride on the weekends,*

[Music]

*Dave Harkless: You do get a pushback that, we don’t want to be another Kingdom Trails… we don’t want it so busy here that we can go enjoy our trails ourselves… and i don’t want that either… You know I personally take joy in seeing a guy and a family and his wife and kids out on our local trails having fun and smiling. I’ll stop and shoot the breeze with them. And there's large contingent of folks that have made those trails — those older trails — and they could give a rats ass if anybody else ever comes and rides them… they do not care, they just want their trails.*

[Music]

**Sam Evans-Brown: When a sport is brand new and there’s nowhere to do it, the few people who do it tend to be the ones willing to bear the risk of using spaces that they’re not allowed. This can make for skeletons in the closet, since the culture that forms as a result is one that is, in part defined by being outsiders.**

**Then once the market sees an opportunity, and starts to bring it to the masses — when they build the proverbial skate park — for the old guard, the original riders… sometimes they don’t like what they see.**

**But time, and technology marches on. And that’s what’s happening back at Smarts Brook, where we started this episode and where Jody Chinchen is overseeing the proposed redesign of those pirate trails.**

*Jody Chinchen: It’s just kind of matured over the years… maybe. People are happier now with, something that they can go home from with a little bit less blood, at the end of the day…*

**Sam Evans-Brown: If you remember, on our walk, tried to follow their proposed trail redesign. This was where someone had torn down their flagging for where the trail would go. After a brief bushwhack, we popped back out onto a trail.**

**Sam Evans-Brown:**  *oh we’re back on the trail.*

*Jodi Chinchen: So I’m guessing… we’re still above where we would ideally come in. So this… is interesting.*

**Sam Evans-Brown:**  *it’s a trail that you didn’t know about*

*Jodi Chinchen: mm mm… and I don’t remember this from two years ago [that’s fast]*

**Sam Evans-Brown:** *Happens fast… yeah [we could walk it out if you want] I am psyched to explore a brand new pirate trail with you if you want to do that…*

*Jodi Chinchen: Let’s just take it back to the orchard. [k]*

**Sam Evans-Brown: You can build them a skate park, but at least for a little while… until the culture changes… some of those kids are still going to to prefer to scrape up the courthouse steps.**

[Sound of mountain bikers crashing in GOPRO videos]

**CREDITS**

**Outside/In was produced this week by me Sam Evans-Brown and Taylor Quimby with help from Justine Paradis, Jimmy Gutierrez, Nick Capodice, Ben Henry, Hannah McCarthy, Jason Moon and Lauren Chooljian.**

 **Erika Janik is our executive producer.**

**Maureen McMurray is director of piracy of all sorts.**

**If you haven’t already, you should be following us on the social medias. We’re @outsideinradio on Twitter where we regularly tweet out threads full of extras from our reporting that didn’t make it into our stories. And we have a closed, moderated, very friendly Facebook group. Just go in and search for Outside/In and ask for permission to join.**

**Music in the episode by Blue Dot Sessions and our theme music is by Breakmaster Cylinder**

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