

https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/public-access-still-in-doubt-for-rocky-top-trails/article_2c27dd6c-df25-11ed-828b-0309b5a0eb1d.html

Public access still in doubt for Rocky Top trails

LUKE THOMPSON Yakima Herald-Republic

Apr 23, 2023



FILE — Jacinto Nunez rides his bike on one of the Rocky Top trails Saturday, Aug. 13, 2022, in Yakima, Wash.

Evan Abell / Yakima Herald-Republic, file

The future of access to Rocky Top's trails remains uncertain three months after DTG Recycle unexpectedly closed 160 acres of its privately owned land that bikers, hikers and horseback riders had enjoyed for more than a decade.

All the stakeholders, including DTG in previous statements and its news release announcing the closure, expressed a desire to maintain trail access. But so far, no solutions have been reached to restore the lost connections cutting off the vast majority of the popular trail system created by Single Track Alliance of Yakima.

DTG continued to allow public access when it acquired the property in late 2019, but a news release from the company in February said "neighbor complaints" prompted it to expand operations to the south instead of the west. The southward expansion toward the trails led to the closures, it said.

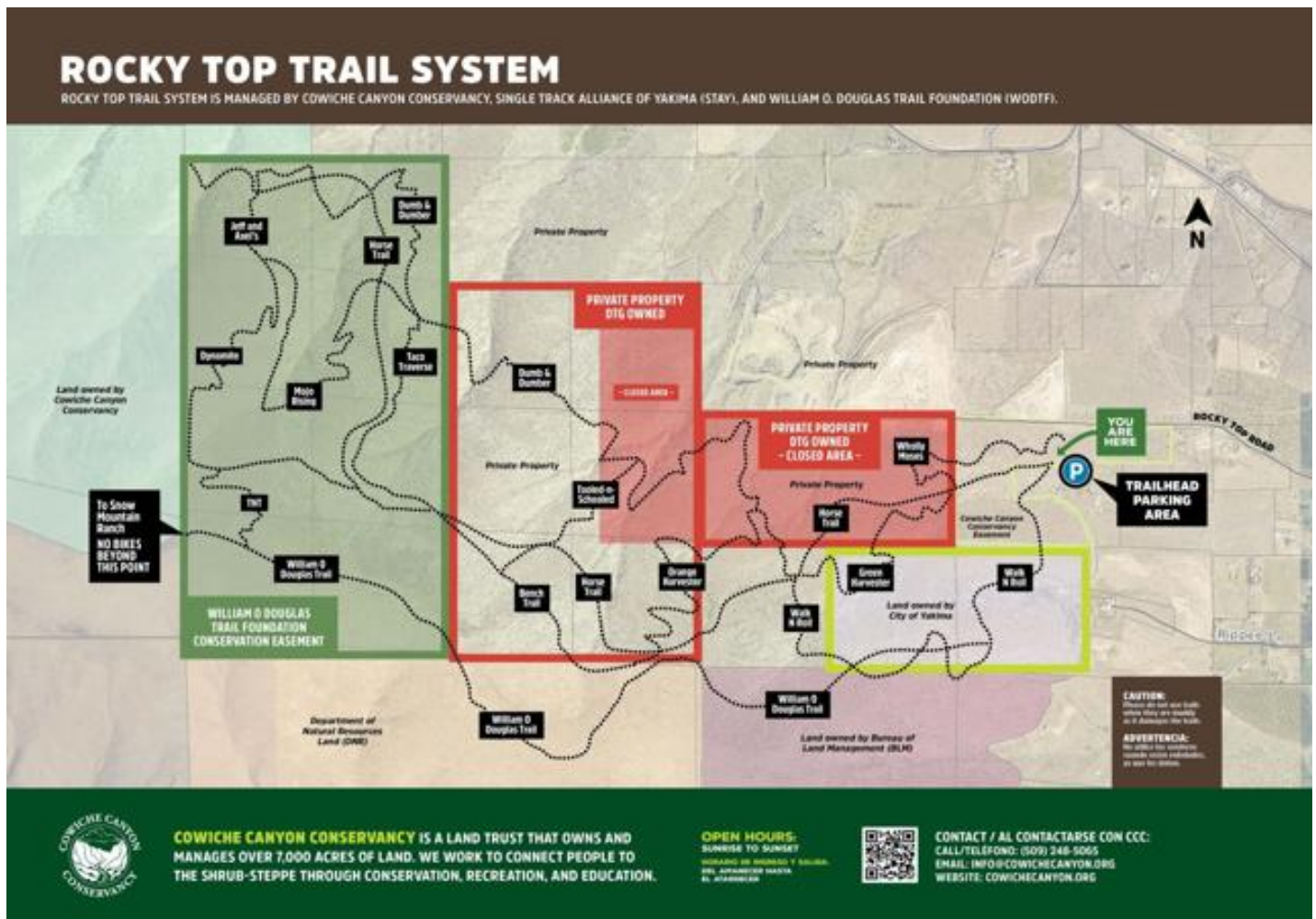
Cowiche Canyon Conservancy Executive Director Celisa Hopkins said the nonprofit is working with the city to find a way to reconnect Wholly Moses and the Horse Trail from the main trailhead, which is located on a conservation easement owned by CCC. From there, only the Walk N Roll trail heading south onto a land parcel owned by the city doesn't lead to the area closed by DTG.

Walk N Roll connects to the historic William O. Douglas Trail, which also won't be affected by DTG's closures. It runs through land owned by the Bureau of Land Management and another parcel owned by Washington's Department of Natural Resources before reaching a conservation easement owned by the trail foundation.

Go far enough east and the TNT trail connects the William O. Douglas trail to several Rocky Top routes located on the foundation's easement.

STAY Vice President Will Hollingbery hopes to establish more connections, and Ray Paoella of the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation told the Yakima Herald-Republic in February "there's a strong possibility that we can do that so that the public will continue to have full access to the general area."

Even if Hollingbery can add to the trails he's created and adjusted since starting work at Rocky Top in 2011, he's concerned about the air quality near the landfill.



This map shows what is open and closed at Rocky Top in Yakima as of Feb. 16, 2023.

Cowiche Canyon Conservancy

Reach Luke Thompson at luthompson@yakimaherald.com.
MORE INFORMATION

DTG is building a solid waste empire, and some say it's coming at Yakima County's expense

Luke Thompson

I'm Luke Thompson, a reporter in my seventh year at the YH-R following stints at seven publications in the preceding seven years. My primary focus is covering the many great prep sports stories in the Yakima Valley, as well as the sports at Yakima Valley College and Central Washington University. I also cover Pippins baseball and Outdoors features. After spending my childhood in Kansas followed by college at the University of Missouri and jobs at various papers in the South/Midwest, I've tried to make up for all those years without mountains by spending a lot of time in the Cascades skiing, hiking, camping, or just exploring on my own or with my wife and our dog.

