

Description of Emma Long Motorcycle and Mountain Biking Trail

Description provided by Friends of Emma Long Motorcycle Park

Known and feared throughout the Austin motorcycling and mountain biking community, City Park separates the riders from the “wannabes.” If you want technical, this is your trail. These trails began as motorcycle trails in the 1970’s. Mountain bikes were allowed when bikes and riders became skilled enough to handle the difficulty. This trail is not recommended for beginners or anyone who rides beyond their skills. Be warned, prior knowledge of the trail is virtually required. The lines through several of the drops are not visible from above. You have previous knowledge of your line, follow someone else, or stand a good chance of endo-ing down multiple several foot drops.

The trail is strewn with dozens of limestone ledges, from the straightforward and simple through the most complex of ledges that will test your skills and patience. For new comers, assume that you will walk a lot of these. A good exercise is to count the number of times you have to dismount. Every time you come back you'll be smarter and stronger and that number of dismounts should get smaller. It's a blast, but be careful, you can really mess yourself up if you're not paying enough attention. It is recommended that solid technical skills be developed elsewhere before attempting this trail. Never ride alone – especially on an unknown trail of this difficulty.

Emma Long/City Park is not only a mountain bike trail, but also an active motorcycle trail. Sharing the trail is your responsibility because the motorcycles ride fast and don't know you are there. So assume that mountain bikes have to yield and stay out of the motorcycle's way at all times. To further confuse people, this trail is also part of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat). We are not allowed to create new trails or venture off the existing trails. If you can't ride something – dismount and walk it but stay on the existing trail.

The “Main Loop” is right at 5 miles. There are some “short cuts” which can reduce your mileage and some “extra credits” to increase your mileage slightly. The main trail is one-way (start at the east end of the parking lot and go counterclockwise). The “shortcuts” and bypass trail are typically two-way. There are small signs that indicate one-way or two-way trails. There is also a “Beginner Loop” south of the parking lot that is almost a mile. There are also trials sections scattered all over the park on steeper areas near the trail. These are not marked so you need someone to show them to you.

