

**SO YOU'VE BUILT A BUNCH OF TRAILS...
NOW WHAT?**



PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Why are we here today?
- Destination lifecycle
- Best Practices
- Making the most of the the opportunities
- Recommendations
- Discussion



WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?



Our presentation is based on the following:

1. That people travelling to experience MTB in amazing locations can be a triple bottom line win for all if done correctly.
2. This is a MTB tourism symposium. Our assumption is that all of you are interested in learning more about driving tourism benefits from your MTB trails.



Let's go back in time and review the history and evolution of mountain biking.... Mountain biking started with amazing people building cool trails to ride with their friends. Tourism was the farthest thing from their mind.

It's 2019 and so much has changed...

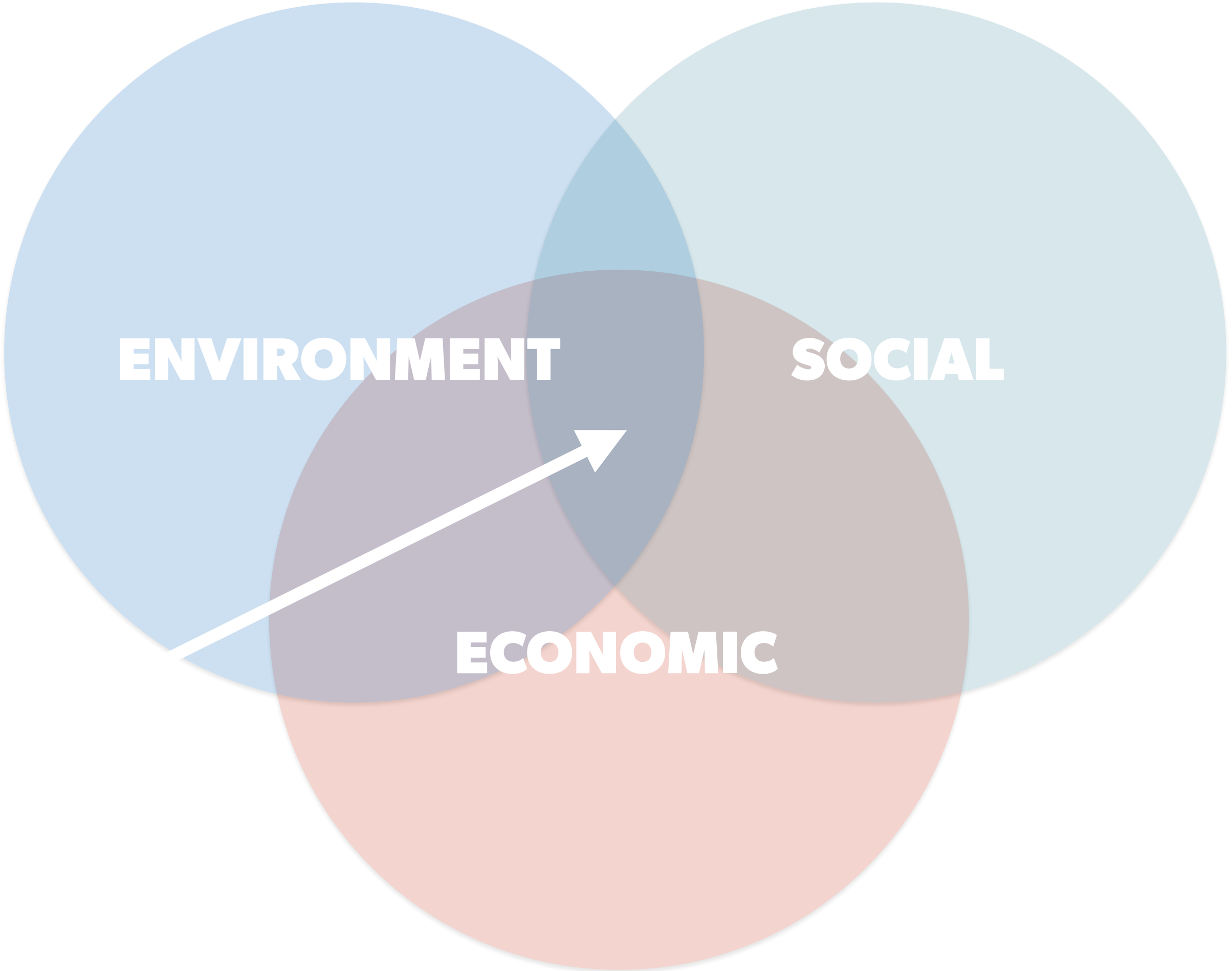
- We have seen huge growth in MTB Tourism and in communities transforming themselves into amazing destinations with a diversified economy, sustainable trails and myriad of social benefits.
- We have seen incredible industry innovations and technology in bicycles, trails, management, governance, advocacy and so on. The sport keeps getting more and more fun!
- There are more than 200 people at a regional MTB tourism conference!



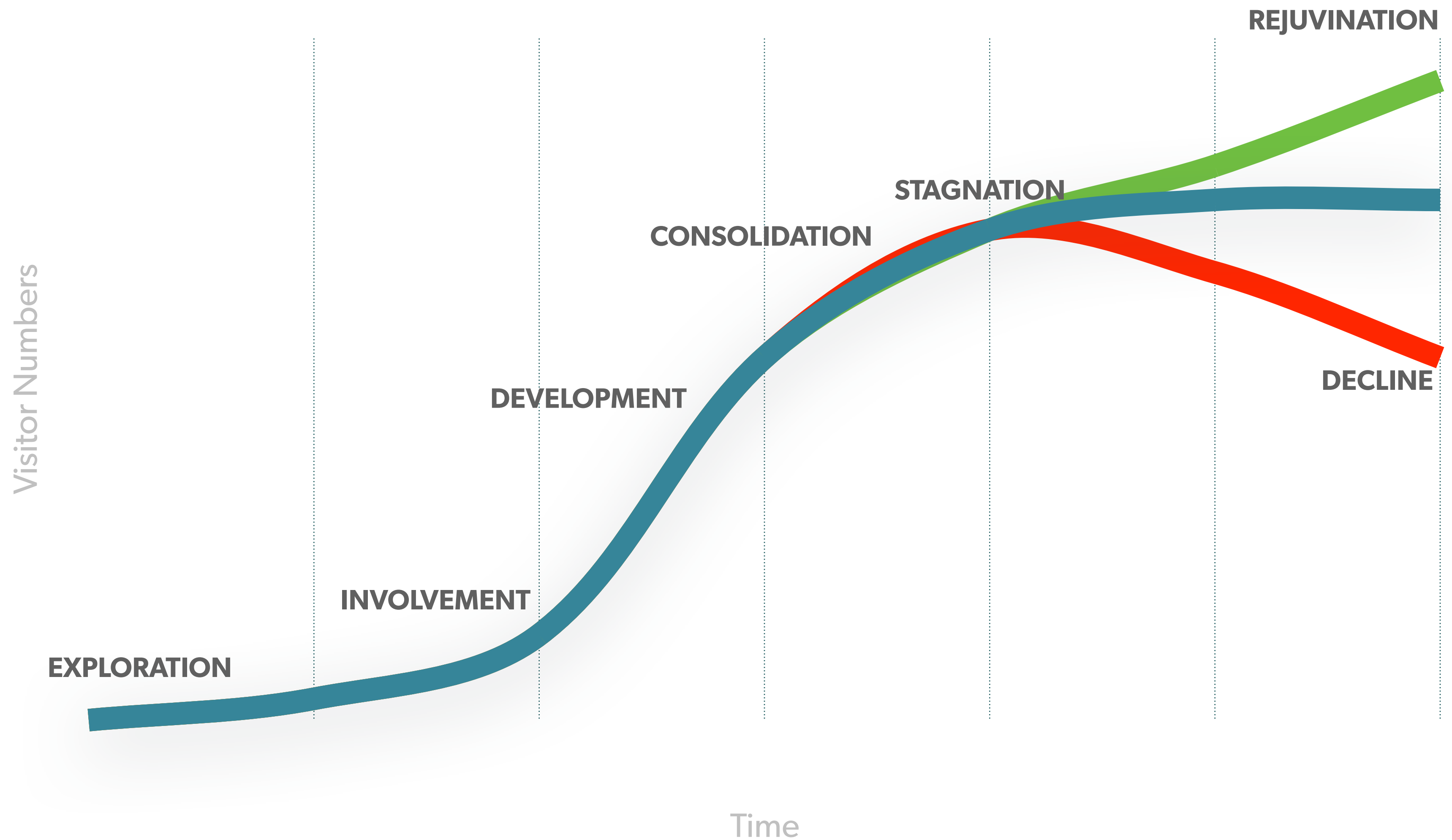
THE DESTINATION LIFECYCLE



Sustainable MTB Economy Model

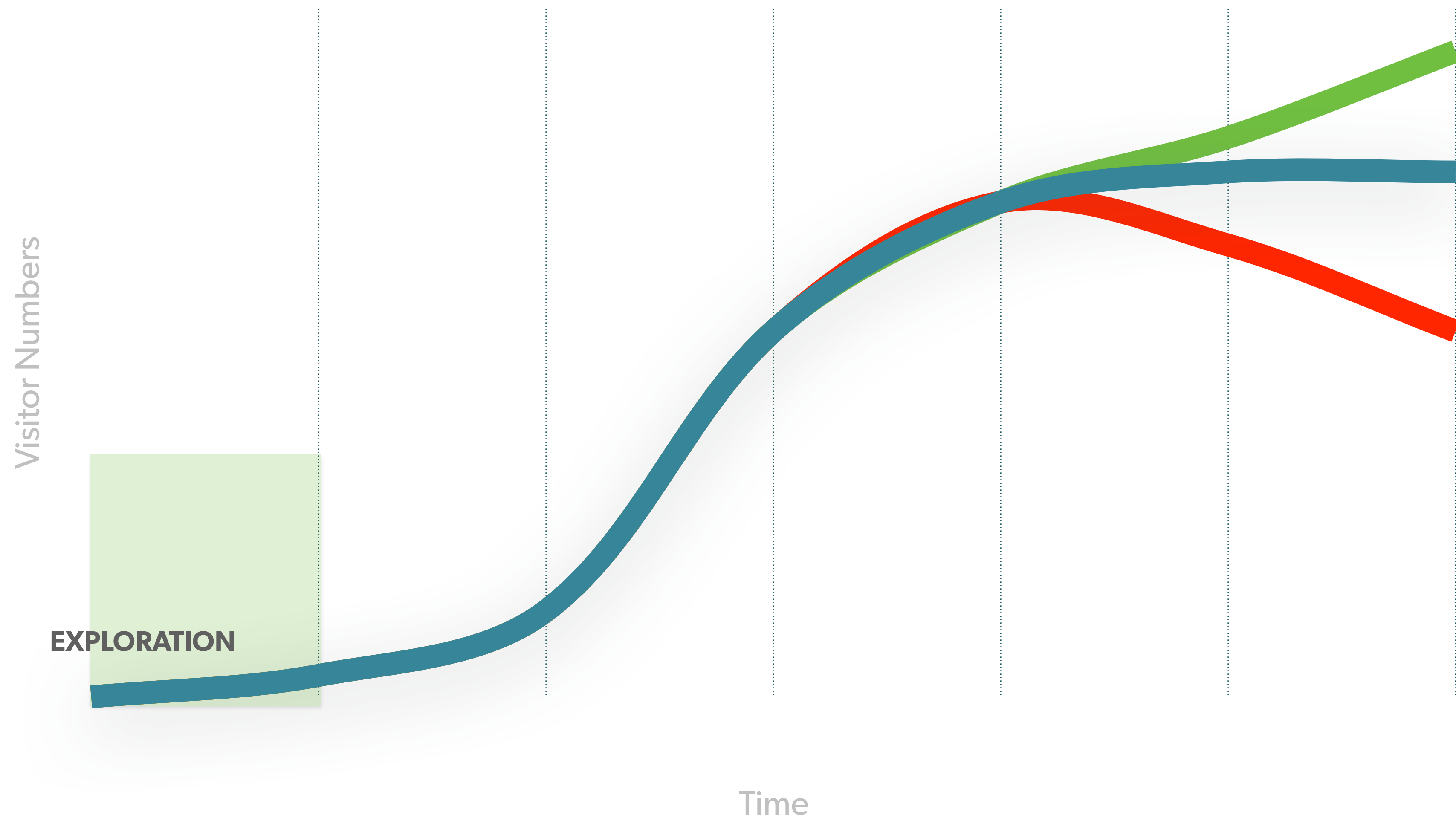


Tourism Area Lifecycle



Tourism Area Lifecycle

Definition: The area remains unspoilt and tourist facilities are minimal. The area attracts few visitors.



Exploration Phase

Environmental

- Trails are developed
- Ridership is small and local
- Impacts are insignificant and manageable

Social

- Community of early adopters forms
- Formality is low and stoke is high

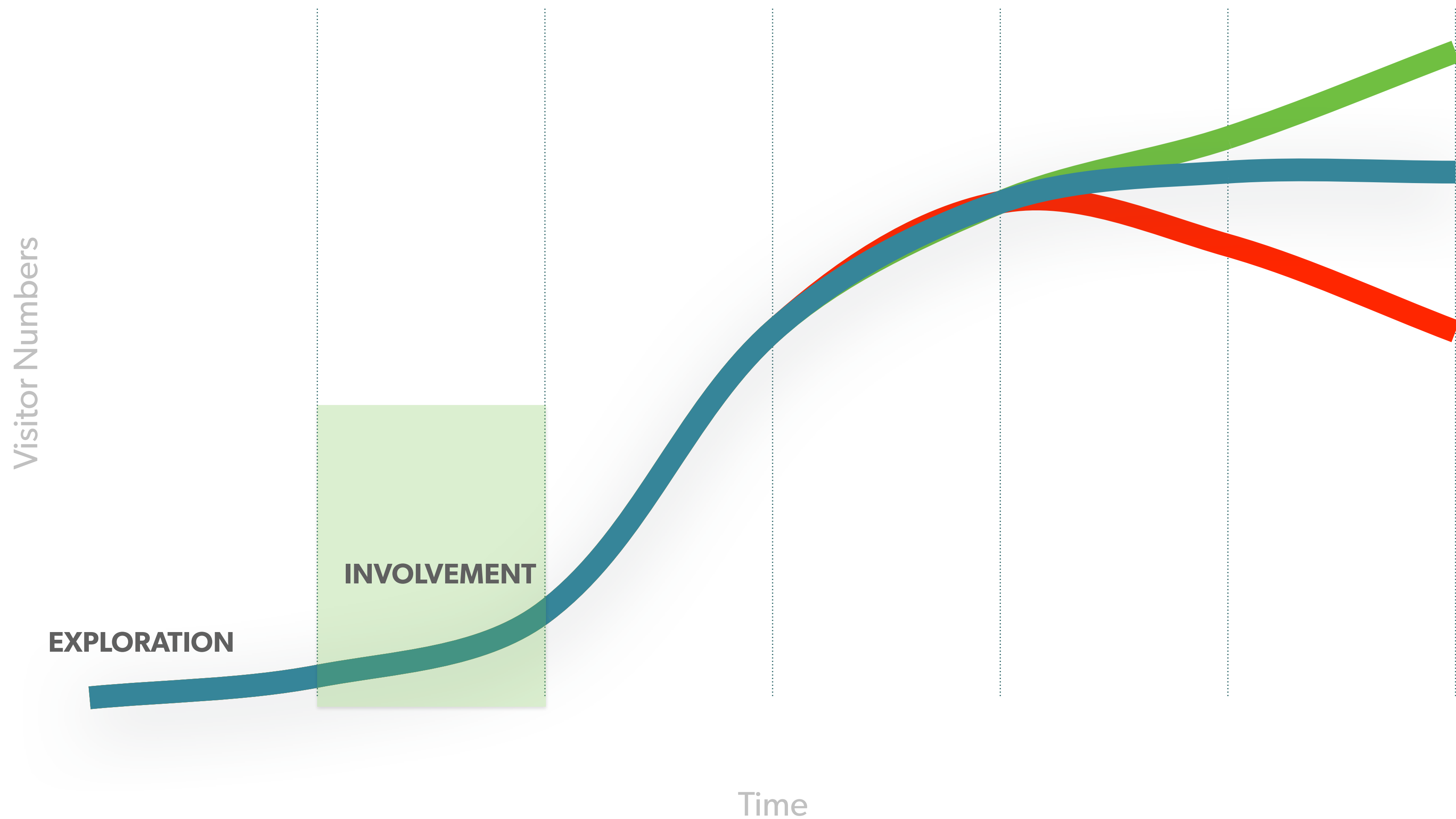
Economic

- Limited to no resources exist to support the volunteer effort infrastructure
- Measurement maybe limited or more likely non existent



Tourism Area Lifecycle

Definition: Additional facilities are provided by locals and small businesses. Busy periods or a season will start to be recognized.



Involvement Phase

Environmental

- Rider impacts start to become apparent
- Trail infrastructure is improving and increasing
- Increasing attention paid to building more sustainable trails (i.e. if I build better drainage, the trail requires less maintenance and we have less dirt runoff into the forest)

Social

- Word is out and “core” ridership increases
- Local riders start to achieve a shared (mtb) community vision
- Early adopters formalise into clubs and associations
- More locals are attracted into the community experience
- Community pride and stoke is high

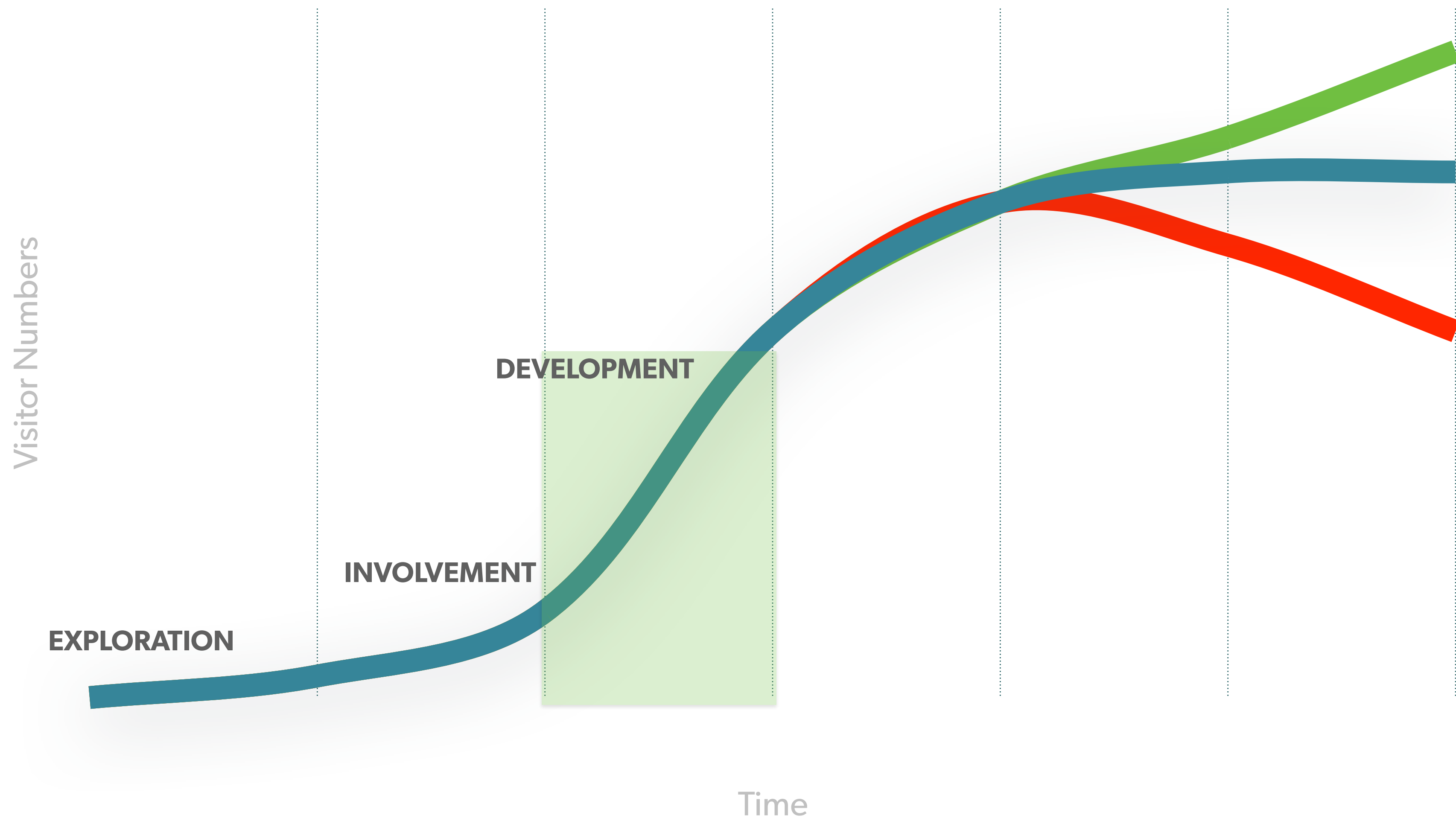
Economic

- A necessity or opportunity to diversify the local economy, for example Crosby, Minnesota Oakridge, Oregon.
- Lobbying for resources to support the volunteer efforts increase
- Local business become more engaged in the opportunities
- Participation & value measurements commence



Tourism Area Lifecycle

Definition: The area is now acknowledged as a tourist destination and may start to actively advertise and develop the area



Development Phase

Environmental

- Identifiable busy season begins to emerge
- Rider impacts are very apparent and require dedicated resources
- Trail progression and infrastructure continue to grow and improve
- Local wildlife, flora and fauna become impacted and warrant more consideration
- Advocates, land managers and land owners start to raise concerns

Social

- Ridership increases across the board Formalized clubs and associations become more politicized
- Locals are involved but its less of a local community experience
- Large amount of community pride and promotion
- User and interest group conflicts start

Economic

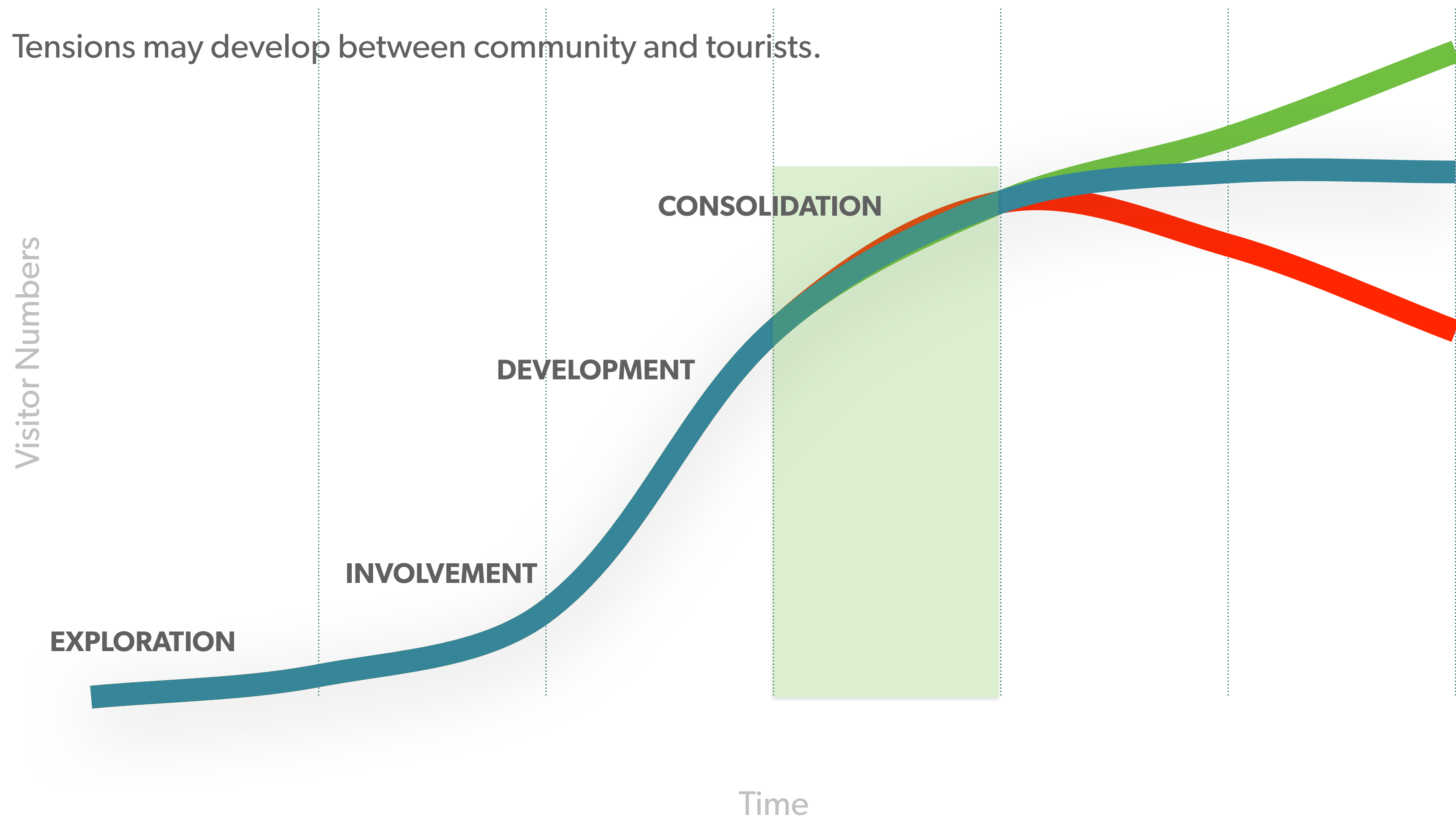
- Ancillary services companies blossom (i.e. bike shops followed by rental and guiding)
- Lobbying for resources to support the volunteer efforts increase
- Local business become more engaged in the opportunities
- Participation & value measurements commence



Tourism Area Lifecycle

Definition: The area retains its visitor numbers, although increase in tourists may not be as rapid as before.

Tensions may develop between community and tourists.



Consolidation Phase:

Environmental

- Trails require dedicated resources
- Focus becomes split between managing impacts and development
- Environmental advocacy groups take note
- Advocacy groups, land managers and land owners raise concerns if not listened to!

Social

- Clubs and trail associations become key community stakeholder
- Communities acknowledge the benefits of having great MTB trails
- Commercial interests latch on (e.g. Squamish real estate video) to the success
- Mountain biking gets more political

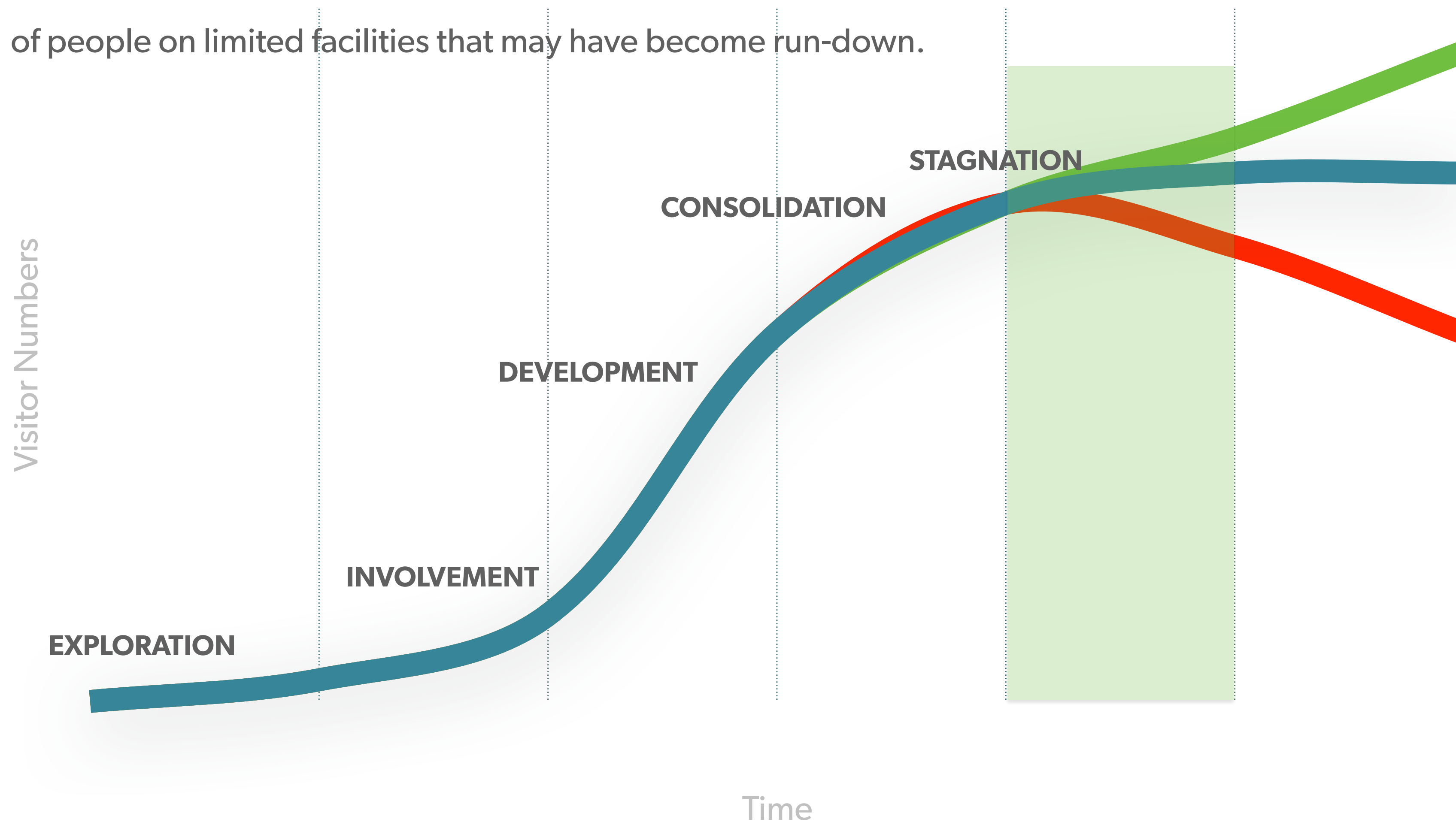
Economic

- DMOs and tourism partners get on board to sell the MTB dream
- Economic impact studies are conducted. Everyone is blown away. This helps advance the cause.
- Larger regional or international business step in to take a slice
- Real estate becomes part of the value proposition - moving to the location to live



Tourism Area Lifecycle

Definition: The area may show a flattening or a decline in tourist numbers. This is often down to a mass of people on limited facilities that may have become run-down.



Stagnation Phase

Environmental

- Trail upkeep and maintenance becomes a going concern given the volume of visitors
- Trail growth slows down in favour of maintenance. Hopefully before it's too late
- Rider numbers need to be spread out and managed to reduce impacts and overcrowding

Social

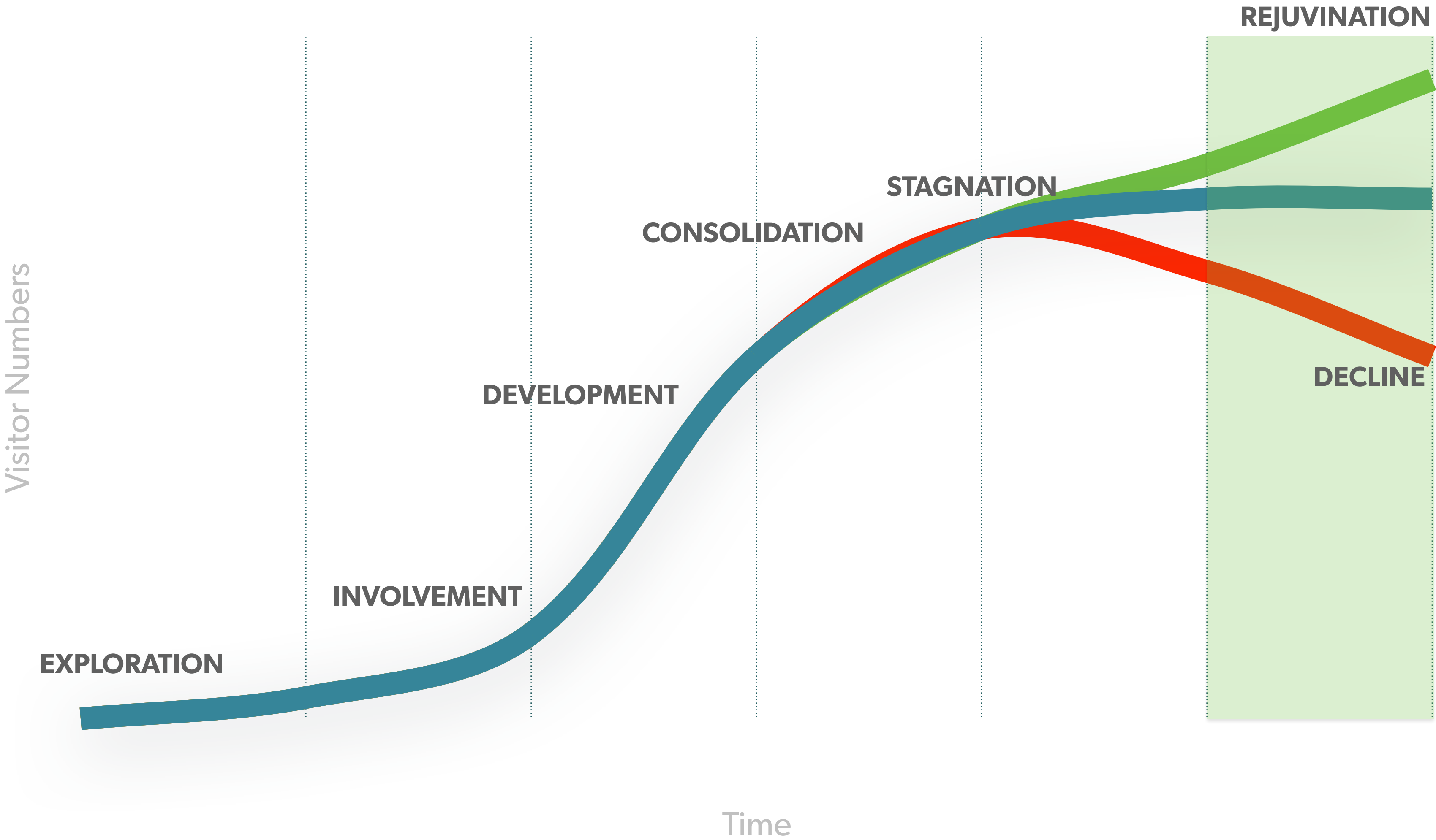
- Critical point in the life cycle.
- Large community of local riders still drive the boat but they are sometimes overwhelmed - not everyone is on board or agrees but the bus is heading in a direction
- Focus on community and what drove or made the community successful

Economic

- MTB tourism becomes more sophisticated and slick - inbound tour ops!
- It's big business but growth has slowed and things are stagnant
- Funding decisions about the importance of MTB Tourism to the country, region and community



Tourism Area Lifecycle



OPENING THE OPPORTUNITIES



Overall:

- Know where you are at in the life cycle. This will help you plan ahead for potential challenges or opportunities
- Remember the roots of mountain biking and where your trail network originated from. Your success is due to the hard work of amazing volunteers
- It's going to get political! More over it's going to require business acumen and patience
- We are starting to reach a "trail karma" tipping point. Lets all get behind this concept and drive momentum!
- Understand that when true sustainability is achieved, trails can be even better for residents & visitors



Environmental:

- Be innovative and progressive from the outset. It'll help you in the long run
- Hire professional trail builders to work alongside volunteers to build knowledge
- Consider how to shift visitors to trails that are better equipped to deal with higher volumes (Trailforks can help with this)
- Recognize trail and environmental stresses
- Communicate maintenance and closures. Build a culture of respect through education
- A well documented trail building process will discourage roguish behaviours
- Plan for growth in participation - in general biking and e-bikes



Social:

- Develop a vision and define a unified strategy.
- Develop strong and reliable strategic partnerships. Remember that it's not just mountain bikers that use trails
- Be professional
- Building a great local trail society/club can have so many benefits. More members=more clout
- Be explicit about acknowledging that your community is in the business of mountain biking.
- Track your growth and share your progress with stakeholders.
- Recognize any skeletons in the closet
- Broaden the access to entry level experience and provide a means of progression through the sport



Economic:

- Don't underestimate the value of your trails as a capital asset
- Relentlessly encourage (insist) endemic businesses to support the trails (grants, fundraising, events, membership, etc.)
- Support local MTB businesses and non MTB businesses that want to get involved
- Grow your coaches and train your trail builders
- Create easy payment vehicles to receive funds small and large (Trailforks Trail Karma) and get the word out
- Advocate the best possible visitor experience through tourism & local providers
- We live in the information age and there's lots of great case studies and information out there



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION



THANK YOU

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