

## Green Mechanics

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Colin Dixon of Phoenix Bikes looks over a bicycle

Several organizations come together to offer area cyclists a safe green start to Earth Day.

WASHINGTON, DC (WUSA)-At the Green Apple Festival on the Mall, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) offered a free Bike Valet. What riders got was a whole lot more.

Imagine leaving your coat at the coat check and getting it back cleaned and altered. For free. That is exactly what was offered at the Green Apple Bike Valet.

Okay, not exactly. Substitute bike, greased, and checked. For free. "FREE!?" exclaimed two participants as they turned to face each other. "You guys ROCK!" they told WABA all day long.

It was actually Phoenix Bikes, a student mechanic program out of Arlington, providing the free safety checks. With help from a group of mechanics from the Mt. Rainier Bike Co-op, these guys single handedly got Washington area cyclists ready for

the season.

Proteus owner, Jill DiMauro stresses the importance of a well maintained bicycle. So many people neglect the value of simply keeping a bike free of dirt and grit. "A clean bike is a green bike," says DiMauro.

Check under the hood? When riders dropped off their bikes they were asked if they wanted a free safety check. What they got was more of a simple tune up, something that could run upwards of \$50 in a shop. "This is awesome!" was the overall consensus.

Volunteer mechanics tightened bolts, greased rusty chains, and topped off tires. One child's handlebars were so loose the mechanic could twist them sideways with his hands.

Heading into prime riding season, this bike check was perfect timing. "We hope everyone takes advantage of safety checks," said WABA Executive Director Eric Gilliland. Promoting safety is their highest priority.

One mechanic pointed out, it's always good to have a bike checked over even when it's new. Whether a parent puts it together or someone in a store, it's always better to have a bike shop look it over. Be safe and green.

Bike Valet users were also issued a free pair of socks from Timberland when they picked up their bikes. Timberland was a sponsor of the nationwide festival.