

December 15, 2022

Re: Lemon Gulch Trail System

Attention: Slater Turner, FS Supervisor

I am opposed to the trail system at "Lemon Gulch Trails Project/Lemon Gulch Watershed", the Forest Service should choose the "No Action Alternative" for the following reasons: increased vehicle traffic to the Ochoco forest and wildlife, management of public parking/facility, invasive weeds, disruption to the watershed/drainage in a forest, impacts to the community public services and the impact it will have on the grazing allotments/Permittee.

I have lived near and had the privilege of enjoying the Ochoco forest for the last 17 years. I have witnessed the human traffic increase expediently in the last few years. It is very disappointing to see the increased amounts of trash, human waste, erosion, disruption of watershed, invasive weeds and "new trails" throughout the forest in the last 5 years. Adding a "new trail system" will increase traffic to all of the forest in the Ochocos in areas that are already stressed and lack management. If the natural increase of the human use to date is not being cared for, how do propose to manage additional "public use and trail systems" in the Ochoco Forest?

Please see F1 Zoning in Crook County Code 18.28.010 Forest Practices Act: (1) *Uses to Conserve soil, air and water quality for wildlife and fisheries resources.* I do not see any research/studies on the impact the new trails, parking lots and use will have on the Mill Creek Watershed or of the critical habitat for elk, deer, antelope and other wildlife species.

Grazing Allotments are necessary to private landowners and their livestock management to succeed in their business and provide food to the communities. These grazing permits are essential for ranches who are putting food in our grocery stores and on the tables of thousands of families. The ability for the ranches to continue using the grazing allotments as they have for decades to provide food should not be impacted by recreation or additional use in the forest. Mountain Bikes and Atvs do have a noticeable conflict with cattle and wildlife pushing them into monitored riparian areas and creek beds. Livestock and wildlife will move away from increased wheeled traffic and relocate into private ground or different areas of the state. This disrupts the wildlife birthing patterns, migration patterns and general overall health of the forest. Livestock and wildlife have a successful history of coexisting in the public lands for years and are already part of the F1 (Forest Zone) Zoning and the Elk/Deer Range/habitat in the Mill Creek Valley.

I believe in recreation and understand the economic impact tourism and trails have on a community, but I do not think recreational pursuits should alter an areas historic use or change the environment by pushing wildlife and ranchers out. In my opinion, these types of trail systems should be located on pre-existing ski hills or areas of the forest where there are established services and resources to support additional traffic without impacting the existing ecosystem, community and wildlife.

Sincerely



Brook Havens, Crook County Resident