

December 13, 2022

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to object to the proposed action for the Lemon Creek (not sure who decided to I call it a gulch) Trails project #58831. I believe it is called Building a mountain bike trail Complex/Park in the Lemon Creek watershed. I would also request a personal response from Mr. Turner and Mr. Jeffries. I am requesting a "NO Action" alternative; in other words, zero mileage to be built.

I have attended public meetings, including Crook County Natural Resource meeting and Crook County Court meeting to try to educate myself and be better informed on this project proposal. I have also physically gone to the area, followed the proposed trail ribbons to see for myself what is proposed. I have listened to knowledgeable people, some experts, for their professional opinions about this proposal. I have listened to opinions on erosion and compaction issues. At the CCNR meeting, I also had the unfortunate experience of hearing a USFS rep demonstrate very bad PR and rudeness toward the residents from Mill Creek who were in attendance at the meeting....totally unprofessional and unacceptable. As a lifelong Crook County resident and experienced trail rider with some endurance competition thrown in, I have ridden in this whole area of Green Mtn, Dry Creek, and Lemon Creek numerous times, it is not rocket science to understand the seriousness of digging on these steep hillsides with equipment to construct these proposed trails. I have followed the ribbons along the creek and seen where they cross the creek and go up a very steep hillside that would not be safe to take a horse. I have seen where the ribbons disappear down a steep ravine where it also was too steep for a horse to go.

The proposal talks about being closed during winter for "winter range" What about May and June when elk and deer are giving birth? Is Summer range not as important as Winter range? One reason the deer and elk like it there is because they are more isolated from human encroachment. The rough terrain affords them more privacy. The terrain is so steep, logging had to be done with helicopter back in the 70s.

Another issue I see is our town's infrastructure not being able to handle the amount of traffic this complex would attract. We have become very congested now. What about EMT services being inadequate to handle this type of project? Cell service is virtually nonexistent in Mill Creek Valley, so injury becomes a much more serious issue.

This project will bring in more off trail camping. Since we are in a drought and area has not been logged since the 70s, there is a lot of fuel just waiting for ignition. Having grazing allotments has been very helpful to eat down some of the vegetation that adds to the fuel. Speaking about grazing allotments....I noticed there are trail ribbons going right smack through the middle of a salt lick. Not good for the cows and calves who have come in to lick salt and rest.

I would like to mention the narrow, inadequate access road for the amount of traffic this project is proposing. Having traveled it enough myself, I can see the congestion issue. Also, several years ago someone proposed building a summer camp on one of the properties up Mill Creek. I believe it was not

approved, in part, because of inadequate access road for increased traffic. This bike project is gigantic compared to that camp project. And what land will have to be dug up for parking? Then of course, there is the human waste and trash issue....people are not all "neat and tidy" nowadays.

There are already ribbons adjoining Lemon Creek project to Giddy-UP-Go trail, to the west. Even though Lemon Creek is designated for bikers, Dry Creek side is multi-use. I would predict that the bikers would soon crowd out equestrian use of these trails, as they are doing out at Skull Hollow and at Lookout Mtn trail. And it is not very far over the hill, further west, to adjoin Green Mtn. trail. It won't take long before the whole area is overrun by bikers. And let's be clear about the intent of this project. An extreme mountain biking complex is not built for a nice family afternoon biking excursion. This project wants extreme terrain trails with switch backs for speed. It is my understanding this complex has already been advertised in a national extreme biking magazine. I have heard this from two completely different sources. Please correct me if this is not true.

Regarding a few other issues: Why were the residents of Mill Creek and citizens of Crook County not notified back in 2017 when this project was apparently hatched? And according to the Crook County Court, the project was misrepresented to them. That gives me no confidence in a transparent process, when process was not followed.

What is the human impact to our community? Is there a report available from an economist, or from an engineer, for their assessment of this project? When will an Environmental Impact Statement be available to see? How can you mitigate my concerns?

I will look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joanne Fenderson, [REDACTED]

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