OREGON TIMBER TRAIL ALLIANCE

Dedicated to stewardship, education, community, and quality trail experiences throughout the Oregon Timber Trail corridor.

November 13th, 2018

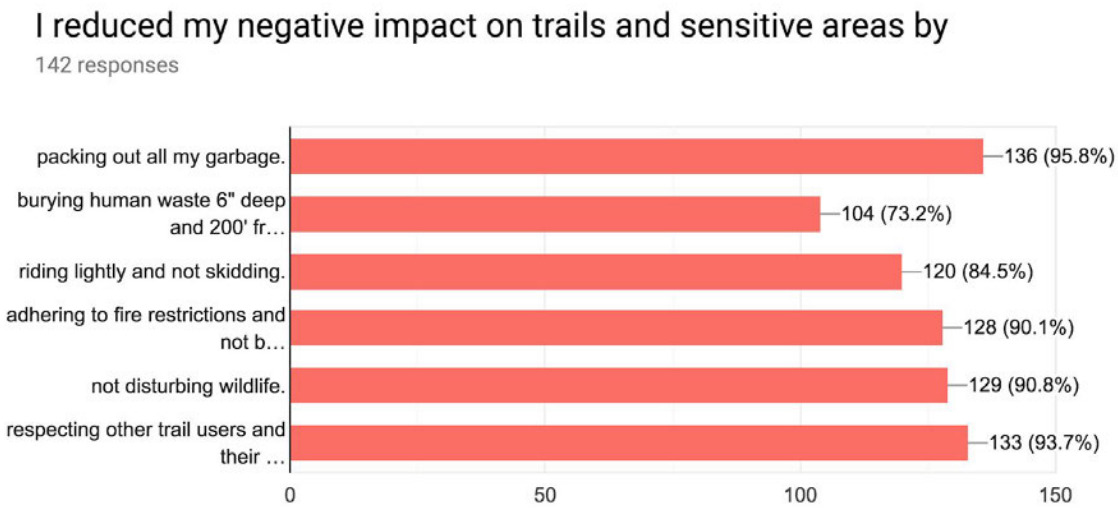
Kevin Rowell, Willamette National Forest

It has come to the attention of the Oregon Timber Trail Alliance that several concerns have been raised about new trail connector proposals on Bunchgrass Ridge and Cowhorn Mountain.

The Oregon Timber Trail is proud to have inspired many people from all over the world to recreate on Oregon's public lands. We know that increased use inherently comes with impact to natural resources, and we strive to make that impact a resoundingly positive one.

The OTTA educates our users about Leave No Trace principles and Share The Trail ethics as well as provide information on ecologically sensitive areas. In a 2018 survey when asked if they had any negative experiences with other trail users, none were reported and many respondents echoed this sentiment: "*Absolutely not. All hikers, riders and equestrians were fabulous, friendly, and stoked about what we were doing.*"

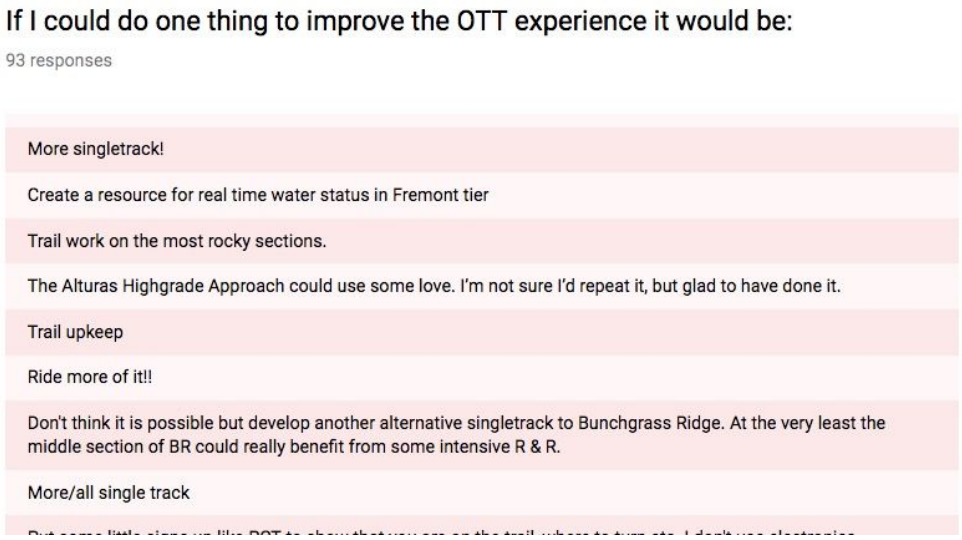
In the same survey we found that 9 out of 10 Oregon Timber Trail riders reduced their negative impact to trails and natural areas in multiple ways:



Furthermore, multiple scientific studies have found that mountain bike use on trails results in no more negative impact than that of hikers, and much less than people on horses: "*The environmental degradation caused by mountain biking is generally equivalent or less than that caused by hiking, and both are substantially less impacting than horse or motorized activities. In the small number of studies that included direct comparisons of the environmental effects of different recreational activities, mountain biking was found to have an impact that is less than or comparable to hiking.*

Still, an emerging body of knowledge on the environmental impact of mountain biking can help guide current management decisions. All of the existing scientific studies indicate that while mountain biking, like all forms of recreational activity, can result in measurable impacts to vegetation, soil, water resources, and wildlife, the environmental effects of well-managed mountain biking are minimal." (Michael Quinn and Greg Chernoff, Miistakis Institute, 2010)

The Oregon Timber Trail users also identified "*trail maintenance*" and "*more singletrack*" as some of the best ways to improve the Oregon Timber Trail experience. Both the proposed Bunchgrass-Fuji Connection and the Cowhorn Cutoff Trail would accomplish this experience enhancement with minimal negative impact.



In short, the OTTA believes that the negative impact to wildlife and sensitive ecological areas by increased bicycle traffic is negligible, tenuous, and far outweighed by the positive impact that can be reaped through human-powered recreation on public lands. In our first two years of existence the OTTA has contributed over 1,000 hours of volunteer labor on the Willamette National Forest and 6,600 hours statewide. Throughout the new trail assessment, construction, and maintenance/monitoring process we remain dedicated to mitigating any negative impacts within our means. Our many members and peers support this stance as well as our work to improve the Oregon Timber Trail experience for its users.

Sincerely,



Gabriel Amadeus Tiller
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