

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/21/2022 8:35:13 PM

First name: Whitney

Last name: Martin

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I am writing to lend support for the Lemon Gulch trail system project. As a Central Oregonian, mountain biker, and student health professional completing my medical training in Prineville, I see this project as an important step towards a healthier, more active, and more prosperous town.

I travel all around the United States to mountain bike, and frequently encounter other riders who ask where I've come from. When I say Central Oregon, immediately people respond with "I just spent a week in Oakridge, Bend, and Hood River!" I often ask people whether they had a chance to get out to the Ochocos. People have said they saw a few trail systems on the map in Prineville, but didn't feel there were enough trail options to make a trip. By creating 50+ miles of new trails, especially ones located so close to town, I feel that the allure of Prineville as a mountain biking destination will multiply exponentially - and word gets around.

Ochoco trails are among my favorite places to ride anywhere, particularly Scotty/Cougar and Lookout trails. I am very intrigued at the prospect of creating steeper and more technical trails, which our area is desperately lacking. Having a high-caliber trail system in this area would pull not only visiting riders towards Prineville, but also locals who want a quick escape or weekend away.

Mountain bikers in a community brings huge economic benefits - we will spend a lot of money on groceries, lodging, gear, and dining. Oakridge, OR provides a good example of how biking can influence a small economy. I typically spend 3-4 weekends each summer there, with periodic day trips as well. Having an option closer to home with more temperate weather and near-round riding opportunities would be incredible.

Lastly, and most importantly, having a trail system like this would be a huge benefit to Prineville residents. I am an aspiring NP working in a clinic here, and folks are struggling with weight and healthy choices. Mountain biking is not only fantastic exercise - it can also be an enormous source of pride, personal accomplishment, and growth, as it is challenging, attainable, and rewarding. By inviting local shops to hold mountain biking clinics here in Prineville, you could turn residents on to a whole new avenue of health and fitness, let alone the economic developments that would certainly arise from such a project.

I apologize for any typos (I'm writing on my phone on my lunch break) - please reach out if I can be of any assistance.

Very sincerely,

Whitney Martin

RN, BSN

OHSU FNP/DNP-S, class of 2023