

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/12/2022 9:10:25 PM

First name: David

Last name: Thomson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Slater Turner and the Ochoco National Forest,

Thank you for the detailed and well thought out EA for the proposed Lemon Gulch Trail System. After review of this document I have the following comments:

- Mountain Biking trails are a specified use in the Ochoco Forest Plan with a forecast need of up to 468 miles of non-motorized trail. Currently there are only about 156 miles of trail, none specifically built for mountain biking.
- The current proposal originated from the Ochoco Trails group which represented a wide range of community viewpoints, and was one component of a larger forest-wide trails proposal. Pushback from some community members after release of the scoping notice should have viewed in the context of the broader community consensus.
- While cattle grazing is also a specified use in the Ochoco Forest Plan it is not a higher priority than recreation. Limiting recreation opportunities in every area of the Ochoco that currently supports grazing is not compatible with the Forest Plan.
- The EA does an excellent job of identifying potential impacts and specifying how they can be mitigated. It is important to recognize that Lemon Gulch was chosen after an extensive review of potential sites within the Ochoco specifically to minimize environmental impacts.
- The EA notes that creating a relatively large trail assortment/mileage within the limited area of the Lemon Gulch site will allow the Ochoco to accommodate the inevitable growth in demand while minimizing environmental impacts to the Forest as a whole.
- While outside the scope of the EA we should recognize the positive impacts a robust Lemon Gulch trail system will have for the residents of Prineville and the surrounding area including health benefits from recreation and economic benefits from visitors.

Based on the above I urge you to adopt option 2. Since the trail build out will be done in phases the final trail mileage can be adjusted if issues arise.