Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/15/2022 10:01:32 PM
First name: Stephen
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Slater Turner and the Ochoco National Forest,

   I would like to voice my support for the Lemon Gulch trail proposal. The Environmental Assessment outlines a clearly well planned and studied plan for a mountain bike trail network. The Ochoco Forest Management Plan specifies a need for 468 miles of non-motorized trails, including mountain bike trails. Currently there are only 156.5 miles in the Ochocos, none of which have a primary purpose for mountain biking. The Lemon Gulch proposal represents the perfect opportunity for the USFS to begin filling the need for recreational opportunities in the Ochocos as specified in the 1989 Forest plan. It is about time to allow multiple use in our forests, not just managed for cattle grazing and logging.

   As a mountain biker, it is clear to me that the Lemon Gulch network would also perfectly meet the other objectives outlined in the EA. The type of terrain offered and the downhill-oriented trail design is something that is severely lacking in Central Oregon. By providing this type of experience, in a range of difficulties, mountain bikers will much less likely to choose other trail areas in the Ochocos. The effect will be less crowding and user conflict as recreation use increases in the future.

   Alternative 2 offers the most miles of trails, as well as largest variety of riding, and therefore best achieves all of the goals outlined in the EA. I would strongly encourage the USFS to proceed with Alternative 2.

   The benefits of mountain biking to small communities can not be overstated. Studies have shown that in Oregon alone, mountain biking cuts $26 million annually in health care costs. Local businesses also stand to reap huge rewards from mountain bike tourism. For example, in Oakridge, Oregon, mountain bikers spend $2.3-$4.9 million every year. The small businesses in Prineville will benefit from this.

   Thank you for your consideration,

    Stephen Black