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First name: Aaron

Last name: Smith

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support the Lemon Gulch trail network in the Ochoco National Forest. As an avid mountain biker and a cattle rancher, I feel there is a great need for more recreations in our forests. I believe there is a need to provide a variety of options to bike with varying terrain, and to not overload one specific forest because it's too close to a large population town (Bend). We need more options in Central Oregon for recreation to include trail networks that are built specifically for Mt. Bikes, which will be safer for the riders and for the forest. Trails that are built/maintained properly by organizations such as COTA keeps the rider on the trails and out of areas that are sensitive forest areas.

I would like to give my opinion about the concern with conflicts between cattle and riders. I have been ranching with my family for over 40 years and know and understand livestock pretty well. I have been around cattle with horses, atv, trucks, and bicycles. Horses and bicycles are without a doubt the lowest impact. I have ridden my bike across the state in areas that have cattle and every time they stand and watch me go by with no concern of what I am on. Truthfully in my experience, I get more of a reaction if I am just walking by on a forest trail. As a rancher and biker I see no issue with this concern.

I also believe this is just the boost that Prineville needs to bring visitors into this town, and I am speaking as a past resident. Recreation is a large economy booster, and this town has struggled since the mills closed down. I am not sure why anyone would not want their town to thrive, but in my opinion, this is a good thing that I support 100%.

Thank you for your consideration.