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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ochoco Forest Service,

I am writing this letter to express my strong support the proposed trails in the Lemon Gulch area.

With mountain biking being a major part of my partner and I's lives, when looking at places to move from the Seattle area, one of the major considerations were availability of mountain bike trails in the area. One of the biggest reasons we almost ended up in Bellingham over Central Oregon was the lack of downhill mountain bike trails. If this proposal was already a reality, Central Oregon would have been the clear choice for us. In talking with many other mountain bikers that have moved here, this was a similar dilemma they faced.

Even though I do not live in Prineville, residents of the city and surrounding area would see the most immediate benefit in health. Since moving to Bend from Seattle, my time from home to trail has been reduced from 1hr to 15 min. This has led to a difference of me riding from maybe 1 time a week to 3 or 4 times a week. With this increase in exercise comes better health. There are plenty of research and studies that show regular exercise can make a huge impact on health and lifespan.

The Ochoco area is in need of dedicated mountain bike trails. Currently many of us travel to Lookout Mtn where there can be user conflicts between mountain bikers and equestrians. The Lemon Gulch system would significantly reduce these occurrences. Alternative 2 would provide long term reduction in these conflicts as mountain bikers will continue to visit Lemon Gulch. Reducing any of the trail mileage will lead to mountain bikers eventually exploring other options out of the Lemon Gulch area, and thus increasing potential user conflicts.

I think the last reason as to why these trail would be great for the region is the economic benefit. I found this study on the CAMBA trails in Wisconsin. They found that there was a \$7.9 million per year economic benefit from mountain biking. The trails have also led to 118 jobs in the immediate area. <https://cambatrails.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Survey-Report-2020-Final.pdf>

Alternative 2 is strongly recommended as it allows for long term growth of the Prineville area. The system will be able to handle an increase in ridership as everyone is able to spread out. Also, all of the other alternatives remove the main uphill route which would force riders onto the road. Uphill routes which are scenic and provide safety from vehicles are some of my favorite parts of the different trail systems I frequent. I don't have to watch out for downhill traffic (Tyler's Uphill vs Funner). I don't need to worry about a car flying around a corner.

Thank you!

Tyler