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Comments: I am writing to strongly support the alternative 2 plan as it will offer the best multi-use solution for the area, minimize environmental impact, introduce variety to the existing central Oregon trail stock, and provide a positive benefit for the proximal communities. The alt 2 plan is also appealing in its strategic offering of a variety of trails in a discrete locale.

Building trails has environmental impact, and considering that the Ochoco National Forest has stated it desires to provide up-to 450 miles of trail networks, it has embraced the fact that some impact is going to occur. The Lemon Gulch plan works to minimize this through strategic, careful planning while yielding enormous benefits in trade.

Some commenters seem anxious that this development will substantially change Prineville, making it 'more like Bend.' Other communities have shown that it is possible to grow and evolve while still maintaining a distinctive identity. Communities like Oakridge, OR. and Downieville, CA. have become destinations not just because of the trails themselves, but because of the local culture. Culture is created, and these two towns are examples of a community that has fiercely held on to its cultural identity while embracing bikes and trails. It is impossible to know exactly how the proposed Lemon Gulch development will impact Prineville, but the net result for other communities has been to increase economic resilience and strengthen roots.

I've also noticed that some commenters are concerned with environmental damage, trash and human waste issues with the increase of mountain bikers. Although anecdotal, I cannot imagine that I am the only trail user to note that these specific issues are much more prevalent in areas where motorized use occurs. Problems will inevitably occur, but most mountain bikers will clean up after one another, offer a genuine respect and gratitude for the trails we do have access to, and generally minimize our negative impacts.

Mountain bikers are likely to be the exact people one would want to visit a community and its metaphorical back yard. You are likely to find MTB riders to be self reliant, good problem solvers, persevering, respecting of the natural world and local community, and desiring to foster an intimacy with the local geography.

In the past decade, there has been a shift as more and more mountain bike riders choose to be active trail stewards: participating in trail development, maintenance, care, volunteering labor and services, training to become certified sawyers and learn sustainable trail maintenance techniques.

Another exciting development is the mountain bike community working collaboratively with other user groups like equestrians, hikers, and trail runners. These are groups that may have had adversarial relationships in the past, (though I believe that this has always been somewhat of a false narrative.) The Ochocco Trails Collaborative is a perfect example of this.

My family lives in Bend and we would certainly visit the Lemon Gulch trail network once completed for day and weekend trips.

Respectfully,
Eric Speakman