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First name: Kirsten

Last name: Burch

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Slater Turner and the Ochoco National Forest,

I would like to voice my strong and excited 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. Mountain biking at Lookout Mountain and Cougar Creek is excellent and I wish there were more opportunities in the Ochoco's as my family loves spending time there. 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.

As a mountain biker, hiker, backpacker, hunter and general outdoor enthusiast, 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. I know my family spends a weekend or two in Oakridge every year - we contribute to the local economy by spending money on lodging, food and gas. We enjoy Prineville and have been part of the community through the school district. We would love to see Prineville flourish and this project will help the area become more prosperous and create lifelong hobbies for its residents.

User conflict with cattle grazing is a manageable issue. We ride dirt bikes in open grazing areas and have not had issues with cattle, and motorcycles are far more obnoxious and intrusive than mountain bikes. Public land should be able to be used by all for a variety of activities and shouldn't be gate-kept by the few for only their benefit.

Thank you for your consideration.