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First name: Hunter

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern:

My name is Hunter Zimmerman and I am writing in regards to the proposed Lemon Gulch Trail System Project in the Ochoco Mountains' Mill Creek area. I have spent my life in the field of production agriculture growing Christmas trees and raising cattle outside of North Plains, Oregon. I spend my Octobers hunting on and around my family's recreational property which is adjacent to these proposed trails and I am strongly opposed to this project.

I graduated with honors from Oregon State University with an Agriculture degree. Common sense along with basic courses on rangeland management will point towards this being a bad idea.

Increased volumes of traffic in the area will more than certainly lead to higher fire danger. Cattle pushed out of the area, as well as the wildlife that will be displaced will lead to taller, more abundant fuel, should a fire break out. We have a hunting cabin on our property that should not be put at higher risk of fire and unwelcome visitors because of this.

Ranchers have open range grazing allotments out there during "peak" bicycle riding season. Range cattle can be aggressive/territorial and won't always move off of these trails which they will surely be walking and crapping all over. A nicely blazed trail will be like a freshly paved freeway to these animals. There is hardly any cell service in those woods so there should also be concerns about cyclist safety on these steep, cattle heavy proposed trails.

The last point I would like to make is that road 3360 (Lemon Gulch) is a locked gate, closed area for 6 months out of the year for wildlife regeneration. It's going to be increasingly hard for them to stay calm and in the area with bicyclists roaming around constantly. I am an avid hunter and have been hunting in this area for 20 years. I would hate to see all of the animals run out of the country for recreational bicycling. I, along with my wife, children and parents plan to hunt there for our lifetimes and generations to come and don't want extra people riding bicycles through our hunting grounds or being drawn in closer to our secluded, quiet property. Conservation, preservation, and land management are all key components to good wildlife herds and this is at jeopardy with the proposed trails.

These are just a few reasons that myself, along with the rest of the Mill Creek residents oppose this project. Residents' opinions should be weighed higher than that of the people who are recreating there for a couple hours per year. Although National Forest land is public, this proposal is similar to the way that Portland voters control the measures, regulations and laws that do not directly effect their lives in other regions of our state.

There are direct implications with this project that will negatively affect people's livelihoods and every day ways of life that live in the Mill Creek/ Lemon Gulch area and this should please be considered.

Thank you,
Hunter and Elizabeth Zimmerman