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Organization:

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Comments: To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my full support for the maximum amount of trail development in Lemon Gulch as described in Option 2 because it includes the largest amount of trails oriented towards intermediate and beginner mountain bikers as well as the most advanced level trails. This option allows the Forest Service to fulfill its mission to provide non-motorized recreational opportunities on public land.

Ignoring any of the potential economic benefit to the Prineville business community, these trails will provide additional (and much needed) recreational opportunities for Prineville residents - as well as for people coming from outside of the area. The currently available trails in the Ochoco NF, while very challenging and enjoyable for experienced mountain bikers, are not particularly close to town, nor are they accessible to less experienced riders. Additionally, with the exception of the trails on Lookout Mountain (which can be easily shuttled), they do not actually attract a large number of riders - either from the local community, or from Bend and beyond. Comparing a moderately popular trail in the Bend area (Ticket to Ride, both directions) to the most popular trail in ONF (Lookout Mountain, just downhill) using Strava data for 2022 indicates that Ticket to Ride was ridden by approximately 20 times more people than Lookout Mountain (~3,182 to ~165 unique riders). Every community deserves sufficient recreational opportunities relatively close to town and accessible to a wide range of abilities - especially a place like Prineville that has so much public land within easy driving distance. While Prineville does have the 66 Trails for convenient in-town recreational trails, it lacks the longer and more varied trails that Lemon Gulch will offer.

It would be unfortunate to allow a few vocal detractors to deprive the rest of the community (both local and not) of such a wonderful opportunity to improve access to healthy human-powered recreation.

Respectfully,

Brian Coop