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First name: Lynn

Last name: Foster

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am opposed to Project 63649, Trails at Mena, in its current form. I live in Pulaski County, and the new bike trails in Pinnacle Mountain State Park have had a harmful effect on both wildlife and people. Wildlife such as wild turkeys have left. Both wildlife and people who are walking the trails are disturbed by cyclists who are noisy and careless. And this is the effect with just trails. This project involves parking lots and lifts and other unspecified "amenities" and will have a huge impact on the habitat.

I moved to Arkansas 37 years ago and have stayed because of the amazing nature in this state. This is how it disappears, though. Project by project. I understand that people with money and power are pushing these projects around the state. Each project will create jobs and bring money to the area that wants the project. But each project eats further and further into habitat that's becoming more and more scarce. People can ride bikes elsewhere. But the black bears, birds, orchids, and other species who live in this area essentially have nowhere else to go. I speak for the habitat and wildlife that will be degraded by this project.

Our forests are gems that should be preserved, not carved up by ever more invasive trails, parking lots, etc. Most of the positive comments discuss the benefits to the people of Mena and to the people who will come and use the trails. But the purpose of these wild spaces is not to bring money to communities. It's to preserve the wild spaces themselves. If people from Texas and Oklahoma think this is a great idea, let them build such trails and lifts and parking lots in their own states.

I agree with the comments of the Ozark Society and Arkansas Audubon Society. Respectfully, I oppose Project 63649. Rather than grabbing a dollar today, let's preserve the incredible habitat and wildlife we have, which is priceless, for ourselves and future generations.