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Title: Board Member
Comments: It has come to the attention of Trans Cascadia (501c.3) that several concerns have been raised about new trailproposals in the Willamette National Forest on Bunchgrass Ridge and Cowhorn Mountain.Trans Cascadia is an organization that advocates for and represents Mountain Bikers. Our interest in these newtrail proposals is due to the opportunity for connectivity in the Oregon Cascades Recreation area and along thehistoric Bunchgrass Ridge .It is our understanding that these two proposed new trails create connectivity between existing trails where therewas none previously. Each is roughly 2.5 miles long and has been studied by the environmental analysis team fromthe Willamette National Forest. In neither case were any impediments to the proposed trails found.We believe that these proposed trails will:1. Create a more direct, singletrack route over the cascades for long distance cyclists and other forest users.2. Create better connectivity between the Windy Lakes trail system and Timpanogas trails in the OregonCascades Recreation Area, and3. Close an important gap along the Eugene to Crest Trail from the historic Bunchgrass Ridge to FujiMountain.4. Reduce illegal use of the PCT by cyclists by creating preferable alternatives, and5. Create a pristine backcountry trail experience, uninterrupted from Waldo Lake to Oakridge.6. Create an opportunity to manage user behaviour in a sustainable fashion.We believe that these proposed trails will not:1. Degrade the natural resources of the area.2. Increase the potential for user conflict in the Willamette National Forest.3. Negatively impact wildlife in these areas.Furthermore, multiple scientific studies have found that mountain bike use on trails results in no more negativeimpact than that of hikers, and much less than people on horses: "The environmental degradation caused bymountain biking is generally equivalent or less than that caused by hiking, and both are substantially lessimpacting than horse or motorized activities. In the small number of studies that included direct comparisons ofthe environmental effects of different recreational activities, mountain biking was found to have an impact that isless than or comparable to hiking.." (Michael Quinn and Greg Chernoff, Miistakis Institute, 2010)In short, Trans Cascadia believes that the negative impact to wildlife and sensitive ecological areas by increasedbicycle traffic is negligible, tenuous, and far outweighed by the positive impact that can be reaped throughhuman-powered recreation on public lands.Sincerely,Adam Craig