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Title:

Comments: I have recently been informed that some concerns were raised about trail proposals in the Willamette National Forest on Bunchgrass Ridge and Cowhorn Mountain. I am a local mountain biker, a member of the Oregon Mountain Biking Coalition steering committee and the Team Dirt board. I am writing today as a mountain biker and a hiker. My understanding is that these two proposed new trails create connectivity between existing trails where there was none previously. Each is roughly 2.5 miles long and has been studied by the environmental analysis team from the Willamette National Forest. In neither case were any impediments to the proposed trails found. I 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 Oregon Cascades Recreation Area, and
3. Close an important gap along the Eugene to Crest Trail from the historic Bunchgrass Ridge to Fuji Mountain.
4. Reduce illegal use of the PCT by cyclists by creating preferable alternatives, and
5. Create a pristine backcountry trail experience, uninterrupted from Waldo Lake to Oakridge (exciting!).
6. Create an opportunity to manage user behaviour in a sustainable fashion.

I do not believe that these proposed trails will:

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.

Since moving back to Oregon after 10 years away in Colorado, I have been somewhat surprised at the resistance I see to investing in mountain bike trail improvements. My work in bicycle planning makes me well aware of both the growing demand and the positive economic impact that comes with trail investments. I firmly believe that finding and filling key connections like this one is hugely beneficial not only for the riding experience, but for nearby communities and long-term user group relationships. I sincerely hope that these concerns will be heard, but that the project will move forward.

Thank you for your time and your work.

Jenna Berman