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First name: Woody

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Organization: Central Oregon Trail Alliance

Title: Trails Program Director

Comments: Central Oregon Trail Alliance would like to offer the following comments to the Cowhorn Connector proposed trail. COTA has over 1150 members with 5 chapters representing Bend, Redmond, Crook County, Sisters and Madras. We represented many thousands more mountain bikers in our area and COTA is part of the Oregon Mountain Biking Coalition.

COTA has a Volunteer Agreement with Deschutes National Forest and though we don't have any formal agreement with Willamette NF our members and mountain bikers from central Oregon often work with Oregon Timber Trail and Transcascadia on projects outside of our immediate area. We have assisted with trail work on the OTT route and also the Cascades Crest trail system.

We fully support this important proposed trail connecting 2 currently separated trail system. This connector will also greatly improve the Oregon Timber Trail experience by removing a lengthy section of forest road riding (less than desirable) and replacing with singletrack trail.

COTA is well educated and versed on relative impacts of different user groups and the trail impact science is clear that mountain bikes have similar impacts to hiking and far less than horses in all areas of measurement. COTA is also very experienced in trail design and we stand ready to assist the FS on trail design and layout if assistance is needed.

We own several trail machines and have a number of trained operators and crew leaders who are very skilled at new trail construction including benching, rock work and wood construction such as bridges and puncheon. Though a bit out of our core area, we certainly can donate some resources to make this new connector trail happen.

Should you need any reference on working with COTA trail stewards and Volunteers, please contact Marv Lang with Deschutes National Forest.

Sincerely,

Woody Keen