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Title:

Comments: Central Oregon Trail Alliance is a trail advocacy group representing mountain bikers throughout Central Oregon. We have chapters in Bend, Sunriver, Sisters, Redmond, Madras and Prineville and have a decades-long history collaborating with the Forest Service in both the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests. Since 2016 we have been a member of the Ochoco Trails collaborative group, working with other user groups and interested parties towards the goal of a long-term sustainable trails plan for the Ochoco National Forest. Included in that plan is the Lemon Gulch mountain bike trail network which is located within the Mill Creek watershed.

As part of the Ochoco Trails group, COTA and other volunteers have dedicated many hundreds of hours to developing the Ochoco trails proposal, including strategic planning, mapping and field work. COTA has also spent thousands of dollars specifically towards the Lemon Gulch trail network.

COTA is aware of the overlap and potential conflict with the Mill Creek Restoration Project and the Lemon Gulch trail network. We always welcome the opportunity to work with the Forest Service and our hope as an organization is that we can work collaboratively so that neither project experiences significant setbacks in timeline or scope. Identifying specific zones within the Lemon Gulch proposal that have minimal or no conflict with the restoration project would allow trail building to progress concurrently with timber harvests.

Additionally, COTA would like to see considerations taken to mitigate as much of the adverse impacts to the proposed trail network as possible. For example:

- * Consideration to remaining tree spacing and location to enhance the proposed trail corridors to maintain an enjoyable user experience.
- * Leaving a vegetation buffer for shade along trail corridors, where appropriate.
- * Strategically locating skid roads and landings created for the thinning project.
- * Avoid leaving large slash piles within visual distance of the trail corridor.

COTA looks forward to continuing our collaboration with the Forest Service on this and future projects.