BIKES AND HIKER / EQUESTRIANS EACH NEED SEPARATE TRAILS IN THE ASHLAND WATERSHED

On January 28th, the public comment period for the Forest Service Environmental Assessment on the Ashland Trails project closes. This article will explain why all users of the Ashland Watershed should send in their comments before it's too late, to assist the Forest Service in creating a safe plan for this popular recreational area.

The public response taken at two public meeting October 20, 2011 revealed problems with the current system within the Ashland Watershed. 60% of the comments made by hikers and equestrians were for their safety and the need for their separation from bikes. Bikers asked for their own trails as well. An independent survey taken at two trailheads in the Watershed showed that hikers preferred being paired with horses as compared to bikes by 3 to 1. Yet in both Alternatives 2 and 3, hikers will be paired with bikes on 21 miles of future approved trails, and equestrian use will be limited. This neither addresses public demand for safety or hikers need to be paired with the user they requested, whose speeds are more similar.

These are the changes that need to be made;

1. Close the Safety Gap: Designate the .3 mile section of Caterpillar between proposed Lewis Loop and Red Queen as Hiker-Equestrian only; this will make a continuous 5 mile safe trail for hikers and equestrians.
2. Designate Wonder Trail as multi-use (Hiker, Equestrian, Biker) with a one way uphill only limitation imposed on bikes, (creating similar speeds thus allowing for safe use together.) This is important, as it is an access trail…
3. Improve overall safety of convergences of bike used trails with non-bike used trails, (thus discouraging bike use on non-bike trails, while improving line of sight for hikers and equestrians.)

Send in your comments. Let's prevent bike caused accidents through designation, trail convergence and signage. We know that signage alone won't fix the problem in the Ashland Watershed. Please log on to www. Your participation in this project is vital to a successful plan.

How to Comment: In order to be eligible to object, individuals and entities must submit comments meeting the requirements listed at 36 CFR & 218.25 (a)(3), including but not limited to the following: (i)name and postal address; (ii) proposed project or activity title, (iii) specific written comments as defined in & 218.2 regarding the proposed project or activity, along with supporting reasons; (iv) signature or other verification of identity upon request and identification of the individual or entity who authored the comment(s); in the case of multiple names, a signature or other means of verification must be provided for individuals authorized to represent multiple entities or individuals;

and (v) individual members of an entity must submit their own comments to establish personal eligibility.

Submit your specific written comments using one of the following methods:

- To conserve time and resources, I encourage you to submit your comments and attachments through the comment on project link at http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=39748. You should receive confirmation of this receipt.
- * Comments can be emailed to comments-pacificnorthwest-rogueriver-siskiyoumountains"fs.fed.us in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc, .docx.) Please include @Ashland Trails Project@ in the subject.
- *Written comments can be sent to Donna Mickley, District Ranger, c/o Brian Long, Siskiyou Mountains Ranger Distr4ict, 6941 Upper Applegate Road, Jacksonville, or 97530 or faxed to (541) 899-3888
- *Hand-delivered and oral comments can occur at the Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District during business hours: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Phone (541) 899-3800.
- * To maintain your right to file an objection, oral comments must be transcribed into writing.

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