



May 2, 2018

Michael Liu  
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 Submitted electronically to [rseifried@fs.fed.us](mailto:rseifried@fs.fed.us)

**RE: Buck Mountain Trail Improvement Project**

Dear District Ranger Liu:

The undersigned conservation and recreation organizations and local business leaders are writing to express our support for the proposed improvement of the Buck Mountain Trail. The project would designate this 13-mile long loop as a Forest Service system trail, include improvements to manage growing recreational use and offset potential impacts to the trail and the surrounding resources.

Buck Mountain is the Methow Valley’s signature mountain bike ride and one of a handful of iconic mountain bike loop trails in the area. Close to Winthrop, this ride showcases everything from wildflowers to open space to mountain tops. This moderate loop can be pedaled the traditional route from Cub Creek Road or the alternate route from Buck Lake. Both options involve a Forest Service road climb, long, flowy descents and great views.

This trail serves a variety of non-motorized users. In addition to mountain bikers, the trail will be open to hikers, trail runners, equestrians, snowshoers and pets.

The proposed improvements would be focused on 4.78 miles of the trail to provide a higher quality recreational experience and provide easier long-term maintenance:

- 3.57 miles would involve reconstruction of the western portion of an old horse trail
- 1.21 miles would refine smaller sections of the trail throughout the Buck Mountain loop to improve sustainability.

Many of our organizations have supported sustainable recreation opportunities on Washington's national forests including the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Each year in Washington, outdoor recreation generates \$26.2 billion in consumer spending and 200,000 direct jobs.<sup>1</sup> The steady flow of visitors is critical to the economies of local communities like Mazama, Winthrop and Twisp in the Methow Valley. Visitors stop to spend money on meals, buy groceries, purchase gear, sign up for paddling, horseback riding, backpacking, mountain biking or other recreational trips, and stay overnight at hotels and vacation rentals in towns that are the gateways to our national forests.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for this project.

Sincerely,

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<sup>i</sup> Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State," Earth Economics. 2015.  
<http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/ORTF/EconomicAnalysisOutdoorRec.pdf>