

HOOD RIVER NEWS
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
August 14, 2003

Preserve 'Tilly'

A copy of this letter was sent to United States Forest Service staff:

I am opposed to the summer activities recently allowed at Cooper Spur Ski Area. I am submitting these comments to you so that you will log my concerns in your public opinion records by the Aug. 11, 2003, deadline.

As you know, the Forest Service is required to consider the effects of its actions on historic resources before funding, licensing, or otherwise proceeding with projects that may affect historic resources listed in, or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Tilly Jane Ski Trail No. 643 has been nominated for listing, and the USFS has a fiduciary responsibility to protect it from inappropriate use such as mountain biking, commercialism and noise. Further, the Mt. Hood National Forest Web site lists both the Tilly Jane Ski Trail and Polallie Ridge trail as trails not approved for mountain biking uses.

In the past, Mount Hood Meadows has attempted to get permission for mountain biking. It was denied permission due to concerns over environmental degradation and detriment to wildlife.

I love the Tilly Jane Ski Trail No. 643. The first time I ever skied it all the way to Cloud Cap was when I was 10 years old, in 1973. I have enjoyed quietly hiking it for decades. It is a historic and wild area that must remain pristine; it is thoroughly inappropriate for mountain bike use. The 1983 Master plan does not allow mountain biking anywhere within the 50 acres, nor anywhere else within the 1,350 acres currently in the permit.

As you also know, the Department of Fish and Wildlife determined that the Cooper Spur area is a major wildlife corridor for sensitive big game in 1997. A copy of the 1997 ODFW letter by Biologist Keith Kohl to Senior Planner Jeff Hunt at the County Planning Department is included in this e-mail. It is also on record at the courthouse as part of Donald Cherrington's written, oral and public testimony to the County Commissioners on Feb. 5, 2003, during the Goal 8 Public Hearings.

Noise levels and other commercial impact in the area will affect elk migrations and calving in that area. Concerts and loud music need to be prohibited, and the wilderness areas surrounding the ski area need to be fully protected from all commercial use in the summer time. Further, the 1983 Master Plan does not allow such summer time commercial use and noise.

The USFS has a responsibility to preserve the Cooper Spur area for low-impact users. The USFS also has a responsibility to protect sensitive big game in that area from noise, machinery, summertime chairlift use, music, mountain biking, and other inappropriate activity. Mountain biking and noisy commercial summertime use is not allowed in the 1983 Master Plan.

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