

August 12, 2015

Mr. Alan Unger, *Commissioner*  
Ms. Tammey Baney, *Commissioner*  
Mr. Tony DeBone, *Commissioner*  
**Deschutes County Commission**  
1300 NW Wall Street  
Bend, OR 97701

Re: Proposed Black Butte Trail

Dear Deschutes County Commission:

In May of this year we held an Economic Vitality Summit in Sisters. About one hundred and fifty concerned citizens attended, were highly engaged, and shared their ideas on how best to enhance our local economy and protect our quality of life. At the end of the day, several key areas to take action on resulted. One topic involved improving access and utilization of our most important community assets, our beautiful outdoors and natural resources. The proposed Black Butte Trail meets this community objective.

The Sisters economy is heavily dependent on tourism. Cycling tourism is growing annually in the state (estimated at \$80 million), region, and locally in Sisters. Sisters is increasingly marketing to and attracting cyclists by having the designation of a Bicycle-Friendly Community, hosting a highly successful and growing annually Pacific North West mountain biking event (The Sisters Stampede), continuously expanding and improving the Peterson Ridge Trail system, and planning for the development of a local bike park. These are all community assets for both locals and our visitors to enjoy, and have beneficially impacted our local economy.

The new trail would provide a safe, healthy alternate connection to two economically important communities, Sisters and Black Butte Ranch. Connecting these communities would provide increased accessibility to the Downtown Commercial district of Sisters and to the public amenities and businesses at Black Butte Ranch. It also provides a safe route for those touring local road biking routes. Studies show that trails attract people and dollars (USFS, SRS, [www.AmercianTrails.org](http://www.AmercianTrails.org)). Connecting these two key communities would most certainly bring fresh dollars into the local economy.

Numerous local businesses, organizations, and events depend on visitors and locals enjoying one of most important assets, our bicycle friendly roads and trails. They attract new visitors that may become future Sisters stakeholders (business owners and residents) with shared values and a common interest in sustaining Sisters Country as a beautiful place to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,



Caprielle Lewis, *Sisters Manager*