

# Trail Advocates

of the Clackamas River Ranger District of the Mount Hood National Forest

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## Mt Hood Wilderness 2007

**Topic:** Mt Hood Wilderness 2007

**Author:** Robert Koscik

**Topic Started:** 3/20/2007; 8:53:17 PM

**Last Posted:** 4/24/2007; 3:26:33 PM

### Mt Hood Wilderness 2007

**Robert Koscik** : 3/20/2007; 7:53:17 PM

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### Re: Mt Hood Wilderness 2007

**Donovan** : 3/21/2007; 9:45:55 PM

Reads: 214, Responses: 5 ( [view responses to this item](#))

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**Re: Mt Hood Wilderness 2007**

**Robert Koscik** : 3/24/2007; 6:10:18 PM

Reads: 211, Responses: 4 ( [view responses to this item](#))

Well it's bad for the trails, but good for those ecosystems. The earth has been hit hard by us humans and the more that's put aside these days the better. So much has been lost already, all over the planet...and especially in the Clackamas, all those clearcuts, too much.

I understand your feelings because there's a lot of your blood, love, and sweat out there. But it's also possible that all the publicity for these new wildernii will bring out more people interested in these old trails and beautiful places.

Hell let's tear down Beaverton while we're at it and plant oaks and douglas firs. I just love natural places and it's really sad to seem them go. But at least everything is a cycle and it can come back if left alone.

We have to stay positive about this!

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**Re: Mt Hood Wilderness 2007**

**Donovan** : 3/26/2007; 6:36:36 PM

Reads: 208, Responses: 3 ( [view responses to this item](#))

Trails are our heritage in the woods, living history, which also deserve to be preserved. Having larger issues with the impact of civilization has little bearing on preserving our ability to walk the trails of the Clackamas District.

Without mitigation, wilderness designation reduces the number of trails and increases the cost of maintaining the few remaining. Well meaning organizations offering help maintaining trails consistently under-perform. The best way for the environmental lobby to support the hiking community in our District will be to draft language in their dubious legislation allowing the use of the chainsaw in the clearing of wilderness trails.

It is puzzling to me that hiking organizations support the environmentalists while the environmentalists clearly state their disregard for trails.

In microcosm, our District trail issues vis-a-vis this Wilderness legislation/ Government Camp real estate transaction exemplifies the age old failure on the part of activists pro and con look forward rather than wallowing in the garbage heap of past battles. It particularly bothers me that dedicated activists are so blind to the radical and progressive developments in the management of the District lands.

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#### **Re: Mt Hood Wilderness 2007**

**Robert Koscik** : 3/27/2007; 8:16:59 AM

Reads: 212, Responses: 2 ( [view responses to this item](#))

I agree with you: yes the few surviving historic trails should be preserved, they are priceless. I put my money where th' mouth is and get out there as much as possible and do my part. However, due to extremely greedy and poor conservation practices, some as recently as the late 1980s, entire watersheds have been destroyed, not to mention the fragile few trails that once graced the slopes. It's hard to view the human induced destruction and not be affected by it. The area south of Timothy Meadow (heh) was once rich in trails, but is now a maze of roads and cutover lands. That pisses me off. I'd rather have wilderness and trails then that disrespectful mess they left behind.

We are in a period of intense global change due to these activities. Many organisms cannot adapt as rapidly as our climate is changing. Sudden Oak Death is wiping out huge tracts of California's oaks, and has crossed over into southern Oregon. Due to increased temperatures mountain pinebark beetles are destroying huge tracts of forest in Canada. Global weather patterns are at risk of shifting. Imagine the devastating effect it would have if the NW summer draught went away. Our conifer forests would be replaced by broadleaf trees. It doesn't take a hell of a lot to shift weather patterns. A change of just a few degrees can effect a tree's cycle. Trees grow at certain elevations for a reason, they are specially adapted for temperature, precipitation, snowpack, start of the

season, etc. If the conditions change faster than the forests can, then what? What happens to a tree when spring starts 3 weeks earlier? Can it cope? On and on....

I do agree with you - forestry practices have changed on public land. Private land is another story, the same sea of cutover lands. All we can do is look globally and act locally. Due to extreme fragmentation, some management is necessary. But we can't continue to harvest our lands like a corn crop. Ahh what the hell what's done is done, I understand that. But to me, I love forests first and trails second. If an area hasn't been roaded or logged it should be left the hell alone. I don't care about politics I really don't. Calling it wilderness doesn't make it any more wilderness than it already is. But will it keep the roads out? What will the politics be in 50 years when a tree is worth a zillion dollars?

Your passion is trails, and I not only respect that, but I also want to learn as much as I can about our collective history. You have been a goldmine of wonderful information which I appreciate more than you know. There IS a way to keep people like me happy and also maintain these antique routes through our forests. I'm all for a chainsaw exception, armies of manual laborers with crosscuts, whatever it takes to keep the history alive.

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**Re: Mt Hood Wilderness 2007**

**Tom Kloster** : 4/21/2007; 9:40:20 PM

Reads: 214, Responses: 1 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

I have similar reservations about the wilderness bill -- the environmental community has viewed wilderness as the only tool for coping with USFS management problems for a long time now, and lots of the odd pocket areas in the Wyden bill are really strange wilderness candidates.

There are also lost opportunities for new trails that might use structured, either new or existing. A great example is the South Fork Clackamas being discussed on the Hillockburn thread -- a trail keeping the old waterworks infrastructure relics alive would be a terrific addition to the system. But under a wilderness designation, these bits of history will simply decay into the landscape.

But the fact remains that the USFS hasn't earned the trust of enough of the environmental community to ward off wilderness bills like this. I happen to support the Mt. Hood additions, given what Meadows has been allowed to do to the Heather Canyon and Hood River Meadows areas under permits issued by the USFS. Hemming in the resorts is the only game in town for trying to turn back future resort creep on our only local snowpeak -- such as the White River additions that will block Dave Riley's ridiculous Meadows to Timberline Gondola. It might not be the best tool for slowing the commercial development of the mountain, but neither are forest plans, sadly.

One thing I've noticed here is a somewhat defeatist tone about the future of trails - especially new trails. I don't buy into that. Yes, we've had many decades of decline in terms of the overall systems and budgets to maintain what's left. But in the end, the forests near urban areas will ultimately be used for recreation, first. And while campgrounds may not be experiencing growth in use commensurate to population growth, trails most certainly are.

Plus, in the scope of federal funding, they are chump change to pay for. A slight uptick in popular support would not only pay to maintain the existing system adequately, but also allow for new routes to be developed. I work in the transportation field in my day job, and there is rapidly growing interest in "active living", with spending on urban trails growing significantly in the past few years. Look for transportation funds to be earmarked for new trail projects in the coming years, but outside USFS/USDA general fund budgets. I know for a fact that members of the Oregon delegation don't trust the USFS to do this work without very tight strings attached. That's just the political reality, though due in part to how the trail pass programs have been administered. I do think the USFS will get additional funds to maintain trails, however.

IMO, the system needs to be adapted to the increasing demand for dayhikes and loops, in particular. It's only a matter of time before the funding begins to flow, and hopefully the USFS will be positioned to bring along those kinds of improvements.

Whew! Thanks for indulging me in my mini-soapbox rant! :-)

Tom Kloster

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**Re: Mt Hood Wilderness 2007**

**Robert Koscik** : 4/24/2007; 2:26:33 PM











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Good words, thanks Tom!

And I agree with most of what you have to say. Let's hope that America's current wide bottoms will equate to more outdoor recreation/appreciation in the future. As the cost of medical care skyrockets, preventive maintenance will be sure to increase.

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