

**Presentation to the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
Board
May 9, 2017
Mike Lindberg**

I am here to represent a Coalition formed to protect Forest Park. There are close to a half million visitors to Forest Park each year. Surveys show that the public highly values the wildlife there. **The diversity and numbers of wildlife species in Forest Park is directly dependent on what happens in the wildlife corridor that connects Forest Park to the Coast Range.**

We are concerned that **the Metro plan for the wildlife corridor could irreperably degrade that corridor and that based on available data it will have a negative impact on the soil and watershed.**

Furthermore **the narrow trails built to bike standards proposed in the Metro plan are not the kind of trails that hikers will use because of safety concerns.** There have been serious conflicts and injuries on narrow shared trails in Forest Park and other PP&R natural areas. **The Statewide Comprehensive Recreation PLAN (SCORP) in its 2016-2025 trails plan determined that the greatest need is for more hiking trails and wildlife viewing areas.** New mountain biking trails are not a priority. But more important, **the top priority for 75% of the public in our area, much higher than the desire for new trails of of any kind, is the priority to preserve natural features and repair and maintain existiting trails.**

We are also concerned about the soil and watershed. The 2004 Metro Green Trails Guidelines for environmentally friendly trails recommends examining geology and watersheds first. "Potentially important opportunities and constraints become evident at this scale of analysis. These include the need to avoid geologically unstable slopes or the habitats of threatened and endangered species,," Don't we need to inventory the wildlife first, in accordance with State Planning Goal 5?

PSU Geologist, Dr. Scott Burns reports that the soil all along the Tualatin Range, called Columbia Silt Loam, is unsuitable for mountain biking trails. Hiking compacts this soil while bicycles disrupt and scatters the soil leading to erosion.

This has been demonstrated in the Riverview Natural Area at the south end of the range where bicycles but not hiking were banned from the area because of their impact on the watershed. BES continues to maintain that cycling is not an appropriate use here.

As demonstrated in the attached photos, the 2006 Forest Park Single Track Cycling Pilot Project shows serious erosion. It was built and is maintained as collaboration between NWTA (PUMP at the time), the Forest Park Concervancy and PP&R. Firelanes also have considerable damage from bikes.

Nat Lopes and Tim Brooks, the trail consultants for the BPS Off Road Cycling Committee reported that **there has been very little research on the impact of mountain biking on water resources.**

In their 2017 environmental literature review, METRO did not discuss this gap in the available literature.

In conclusion we urge you to uphold your mission to protect the soil and the watersheds and in so doing serve wildlife and citizens who clearly value preservation of our natural areas.. Trails in the wildlife corridor, particularly biking trails will have a negative and irreversible impact.

References :

2012 Forest park Recreation User Study
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/PARKS/article/317545>

Oregon Statewide Recreation Trails Plan 2016-2025
http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/Trail_Programs_Services/Documents/2016OregonStatewideTrailsPlan.pdf

2018-2022 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Supporting Documentation
http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/PLANS/docs/scorp/2017_Oregon_Resident_Outdoor_Recreation_Survey.pdf

Off Road Cycling Project Advisory Committee Meeting May 2016
Report Nat Lopes and Tim Brooks
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/579782>

Dr. Scott Burns, personal communication.

2004 Metro Green Trails Guide; lies for environmentally friendly trails p 9

2006 Forest Park Single Track Pilot Project



Firelane 5 and Firelane 1

