

## Wood, Lisa A (DFW)

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**From:** Single Track Alliance Of Yakima <stay.org@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 16, 2017 11:12 PM  
**To:** SEPADesk2 (DFW)  
**Subject:** Comment on SEPA No. 17015

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

To the Department of Fish and Wildlife,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed draft for the Oak Creek and Cowiche Units. I would like to make my comments in regards to recreation, specifically mountain biking. As a founding member of Single Track Alliance of Yakima, I have invested countless hours of my time in advocating for trail access. We have been fortunate enough to establish a trail head at Rocky Top, on the north side of Cowiche Mountain. Mostly we build and maintain mountain bike trails. We have come to learn that our mountain bike trails are loved by hikers and trail runners also. Our trails improve with use and require little maintenance. Because they are laid out sensibly they erode minimally. We've found that trails which erode or damage the landscape significantly have nothing to do with the user and has everything to do with the layout.

Since mountain bikes do not destroy trails and erode terrain, the only reason I can see for restricting access to mountain bikers in the Cowiche Unit is for wildlife movement. I would argue for seasonal closures over blanket restrictions. Seasonal closures seem like the community minded and sensible path to take over restricting access. It is not hard to look at other areas around the west where mountain bikes and conservation co-exist. Seasonal closures are a realistic and inclusive approach.

The Cowiche Unit is essential to the idea of connecting the Cowiche Canyon trail, Rocky Top, and Snow Mountain Ranch with the Oak Creek Unit and also the Ahtanum State Forest, not to mention the National Forest. A trail system of this caliber would not be a spiderweb of trails in tight proximity. It would be in essence an isolated, well traveled animal trail which humans used occasionally.

Please consider an inclusive approach which takes into consideration the community of mountain bikers who feel at home in nature and don't leave a trace on the landscape.

Thanks,

Will Hollingbery  
Single Track Alliance of Yakima



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