



Oregon Parks Association

5/20/2015

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

RE: HB 3367 Public Hearing, 3:00 PM, 5/20/2015

Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Parks Association represents park and recreation agencies from across the state of Oregon. The majority of our members are county park agencies that provide much needed outdoor recreation facilities for rural communities outside of urban growth boundaries. These parks provide an opportunity to develop regional tourism economies in struggling communities, as well as present an opportunity for rural Oregon to partake in healthy activities that contribute to the active society that Oregonian's have repeatedly shown to embrace.

An integral part in providing linkages to our facilities and opportunities for activity is our rural trail system that citizens of all ages, socioeconomic classes, and communities enjoy. In the recent Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) conducted by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, an extensive citizen survey was completed to determine what types of outdoor recreation facilities were high priorities for Oregonians. As found by the survey, as well as many other past surveys, non-motorized trails were shown to be one of the top priorities for citizens across the state. The clear fact is that our communities want more trails to be developed across our state to provide an opportunity for active recreation, which has been shown by many studies to lead to a healthier population.

The Oregon Parks Association asks your committee to recognize that Oregonian's have spoken in many forums to express their desire for non-motorized trails in their communities. We ask that you oppose HB 3367 which overturns years of tradition allowing non-motorized trails in EFU lands; a process that has worked successfully in communities across Oregon. This bill appears to clearly overturn the desire of a majority of Oregonians based on the outcome of one, abnormal case in Benton County. In our interpretation, this is not how the legislative process should work. We encourage your committee to oppose the bill and take steps to further the future discussion of recreational facilities in EFU lands, through an open, participatory process including all stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Steve Lambert, OPA Legislative Chair