

To whom it may concern ---

The Little Butte Creek watershed is considered by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to be a key spawning and rearing habitat for Coho Salmon, a species listed as threatened under the endangered species act. As a matter of fact, I was on a tour of the watershed once where Jerry McCloud, retired ODFW biologist, made the statement that Little Butte Creek was the primary tributary for Coho production in the upper Rogue River, being responsible for from one third to as much as one half of the coho produced in the region, historically. Salt Creek and Lake Creek are two tributaries of Little Butte that have productive spawning habitat, as has been verified by recent stream surveys conducted by ODFW.

OHV use in this watershed,(Little Butte), has contributed significantly to erosion and sediment movement into the waters of the state. I have personally witnessed illegal use of OHVs during Black Tailed deer hunting season to drive deer from brush, with loaded guns on board "at the ready". I have hunted this area since 1964, and have observed a steady decline in deer populations over this time span, due primarily to over hunting, both legal and illegal. I have never seen any policing off of the graveled or paved portions of any of the access roads. Therefor, I can't imagine how the illegal uses can be controlled once these vehicles leave the road. Based on these observations, I have to request that OHV off road use during deer and elk season be restricted to Maintained Roads.

Also, considering that this watershed has an abundance of easily erodible clay soils, susceptible to compaction, and rutting, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prevent sediment from moving from disturbed sites into the waters of the state. Even if efforts were made to mitigate, there could be no guarantee that there would not be detrimental effects, including the possibility that beds could be covered and suffocated by fine sediments which remain suspended and travel long distances in this specific hydrological regime. This would be unacceptable in such a key Coho spawning habitat.

Thank You for your careful consideration of these matters,
Greg Walch
P.O. Box 619
Gold Hill Or
97525 541-973-4485