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Dr. C. Oswald      5940 Griffin Creek Road      Medford OR 97501

TO: Jim Whittington, Medford BLM

DATE: 18 December 2007

RE: ATV use on public lands

I am writing to encourage the BLM to take action to curtail the use of ORVs on BLM land in Jackson County. These areas are public, not private, and ORV use greatly impacts the right of other users as they try to enjoy these lands for other purposes.

As a biologist, I'm well aware of the effects of off-road vehicles on the landscape and wildlife. Erosion and compaction of fragile soils, noise that disturbs nesting birds and mammals, stripping of vegetation from wide swaths of newly formed "roads", increased runoff and damage to riparian areas – all of these result from ORV use. It's not just a matter of responsible use vs. irresponsible use. Any off road use of vehicles is destructive by its very nature. The damage from ORV use takes many years to repair and thus impacts other users (campers, hikers, hunters, fisherman, photographers, birders, etc) for a long time to come.

As a resident of Jackson County who lives a few miles from Anderson Butte, I'm well aware of the noise pollution caused by ORV use. One might think that a few miles distance would be sufficiently far enough away but the noise from these vehicles carries a long way. No one has the right to recreate on public lands in a way that disturbs the peace of others, especially for miles around.

The Mail-Tribune reported that you stated that none of these areas are currently pristine. That may be, but this observation does not justify their continued degradation. One of the reasons they are not pristine is that they have been damaged by ORV use. The appropriate action is to prevent further degradation so that these natural areas can be restored over time.

I hope that the BLM will develop policies that greatly restrict ORV use which will help to preserve the natural beauty and ecological values of this land for current and future generations.

