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November 6, 1997

Mr. Warren Ely, Chief
Division of State Forest Management
Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
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Bureau of Forestry
Div. of State Forest Mgt.

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Dear Mr. Ely:

I read with great dismay the proposed "user friendly" regulation (Section 21.27) that seeks to prohibit bicycles from the two National Hiking Trails and the 18 State Forest hiking trails unless otherwise posted. This seems to be a massive "give-away" of public land to a few elitist groups that seek to polarize outdoor recreational activities. I am sure that if asked, or even notified, the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) of the League of American Bicyclists would be happy to assist in the maintenance of those trails that "pass through fragile ecosystems." They have plenty of experience in states that are looking to bring outdoor recreation groups together for the betterment of the environment.

I agree (and have worked with Forester Mark Bodimer in the northwest), that some trails, in fact very few, are too fragile or dangerous as to allow recreational cycling. They should be posted. But, to systematically or bureaucratically close public trails to cyclists simply to appease a few activists is short sighted and not "user friendly." I hope that this section is carefully reversed and re-written to encourage all forms of recreation on our designated trails. Implementation of this section will send the wrong message to the thousands of cyclists who enjoy off-road riding in Pennsylvania.

Please reconsider Section 21.27 of the proposed regulations concerning state forest land.

Very truly yours,

Handwritten signature of Rod E. Wilt in black ink.
Rod E. Wilt

REW/pt

cc: Secretary John Oliver, DCNR