

**Cortney Ingle**

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**From:** Natalie Kuehler <nkuehler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2019 12:58 PM  
**To:** Cortney Ingle  
**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan Comments

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept the following comments on the draft Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan. As an initial matter, I would like to encourage the County to hire a qualified profession to assist in writing and editing the final comprehensive plan. I believe this would enable the County not only to craft an internally-consistent plan, but also a document likely to withstand (or even eliminate any need for) a court challenge. I understand that one law suit regarding the County's comprehensive plan planning process remains currently active, and the Yakama Nation are similarly seeking to reopen their litigation.

Secondly, I would like to encourage the County to ensure that the comprehensive plan takes into account legal water availability under current Washington State law, including specifically the Methow and Okanogan Rules, to direct planning. The Comprehensive Plan will set expectations in the County for years to come, and it is vital to ensure that its planning parameters reflect what is legally permissible.

Thirdly, as a board member of Methow Trails, I would like to strongly encourage you to prominently emphasize recreation and non-motorized commuter trail options in Okanogan County, and especially the Methow Valley. A specific project that the Plan should endorse is the construction of a year-round non-motorized commuter trail from Mazama to Twisp; this project has received overwhelming community support, but will need political and planning support as well before it can become a reality.

Trails and recreation are a vital part of the Methow Valley's local economy, and recreation-related tourism - including trail users - drives a significant portion of both local population growth and visitation. Trails provide alternatives to driving, opportunities for physical and mental health, facilitate community connectivity, contribute to our economy, and act as wildfire barriers, among other things.

Accordingly, as the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area is further designed, specific provisions for a community trail linking Twisp, Winthrop and the Methow Valley Schools should be made.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments,  
Natalie Kuehler

