



United States Department of Agriculture



U.S. Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
Stanislaus National Forest
19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95370
Voice: 209-532-3671

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus/>

**Stanislaus National Forest
Over-Snow Vehicle Use Designation Project (46311)
Opportunity to Comment
Comment Form**

Public Open House

Thursday, Sept. 6, 2018: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor's Office
19777 Greenley Road, Sonora, CA 95370

36 CFR 218.25 Comments on Proposed Projects and Activities

Requirements. To be eligible to submit an objection, individuals and entities must provide the following during the comment period:

NAME (LAST, FIRST)	Watts, John T.
POSTAL ADDRESS	P.O. BOX 1173 TWAIN HART, CA 95323
EMAIL ADDRESS (Recommended not Required)	john+wt1@shcglobal.net
SPECIFIC WRITTEN COMMENTS <i>Specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.</i>	<p>I am speaking for and with the 80 members of EMRPOA Eagle meadow Road Property Owners Association, all of which own property along USFS Road 5N01 accessed only by OSV in winter.</p> <p>I am also commenting along with other members of Alpine County Search and Rescue.</p> <p>(continue on back if needed)</p>
SIGNATURE	John T. Watts

Stanislaus National Forest OSV PROJECT (46311)

NAME: JOHN T. WATTS

P.O. BOX 1173 TWAIN HARTE, CA 95383

EMAIL ADDRESS: johnstw1@sbcglobal.net

ATTACHED ARE COMMENTS FOR BOTH HIGHWAY 108 OF WHICH I AM ROAD COMMISSIONER and FOR EMRPOA WHICH INCLUDES 81 PEOPLE AND I HAVE PROPERTY. ALSO ATTACHED ARE COMMENTS ON HIGHWAY 4 CORRIDOR WHICH I OWN PROPERTY.

Historically my family and friends have ridden snowmobiles unrestricted up Hwy. 108 touring and playing in areas such as Herring Creek Loop, FS Road 5N01 as far back as East Flange Rock, Clark Fork to the end of the road at Ice Berg Meadow, Kennedy Meadows to the top of Sonora Pass just to name a few.

We own property and a cabin in Long valley so our trips are more than day rides – sometimes we stay as much as a week. My first trip to Long valley on a snowmobile was in 1971 to a camp that Meb Martin owned and was doing snowmobile tours out of. We rode with him for a day and now I own that Private Property.

I want to start my comments by saying the Winter Creek crossings designated for Eagle Creek and Long Valley Creek will save people from being injured trying to cross this water. This helps everyone not just the snowmobile community. My family and I ride every weekend either on Highway 108 to our cabin in Long Valley or on Highway 4 from our cabin in Bear Valley.

I have never seen tracks or a person on snow shoes or cross country skis beyond 3 miles from the snow park,

Most of the areas we are talking about are well beyond this 3 mile point. Rather than discuss every point on your map it would be much easier for me to say that the use of "Near Natural" land designation applied to OSV does not work. Case in point – you show a small corridor in Long Valley with plenty of riding room to the West and South Borders of the Emigrant Basin. The Stanislaus Forest created the "Near Natural" definition and you have the ability to amend it so that it makes more sense for Winter Use. Back to Long Valley. Listed below are some bullets re: land definition.

There is no way to define this corridor in the winter.

Therefore – How can it be enforced

In certain snow conditions I know of riders that use Long Valley as access to Private Property for example: Silver Mine.

This Valley is a safe place to play- Let the riders decide where they want to go.

You already have established Wilderness boundaries to the South and West. Let them define the area.

You need to look at all areas as a rider and or law enforcement view.

Your map as drawn would have made Past DR Molly Fuller, and Miguel Macias criminals when we toured these areas.

In closing, I want to say this is not a new concern for me. I was appointed and sat on the State Winter Rec Committee Board in 2014 and I have been to almost every USFS meeting re: OSV on the Stanislaus NF. I have even helped at the S.O. with the mapping after our tour. It is frustrating to work with a new group that has not been through this entire process and are new comers to this Forest.

HIGHWAY 4

JOHN WATTS, ALPINE SEARCH AND RESCUE

Historically, my family and friends much like on Hwy. 108 have ridden Highway 4 since 1987. We have ridden unrestricted from Bear Valley where I have a cabin. We ride to the West along the Wilderness Border to places like Bear Trap Basin, Mattley Meadow, and Jelmini Basin. We ride as far West as snow allows using trails and forest roads throughout the area. When we ride to the East from Bear Valley we use the Groomed Access Trail from Bear Valley village to the snow park – road closure at Lake Alpine. We usually and for years ride the groomed road to at least Stanislaus Meadow. From that point on we ride all the area using the Wilderness boundaries as our limit clear to Highland Lakes. Like my comments on Highway 108 I applaud the fact that I see Winter Creek crossing both in town to the snow park access trail and Silver and Duck Creek. The use of creek crossings for all users makes sense.

COMMENTS:

The Spicer groomed trail from the Snow park is not groomed on a regular basis so you cannot count on it as an area you can ride.

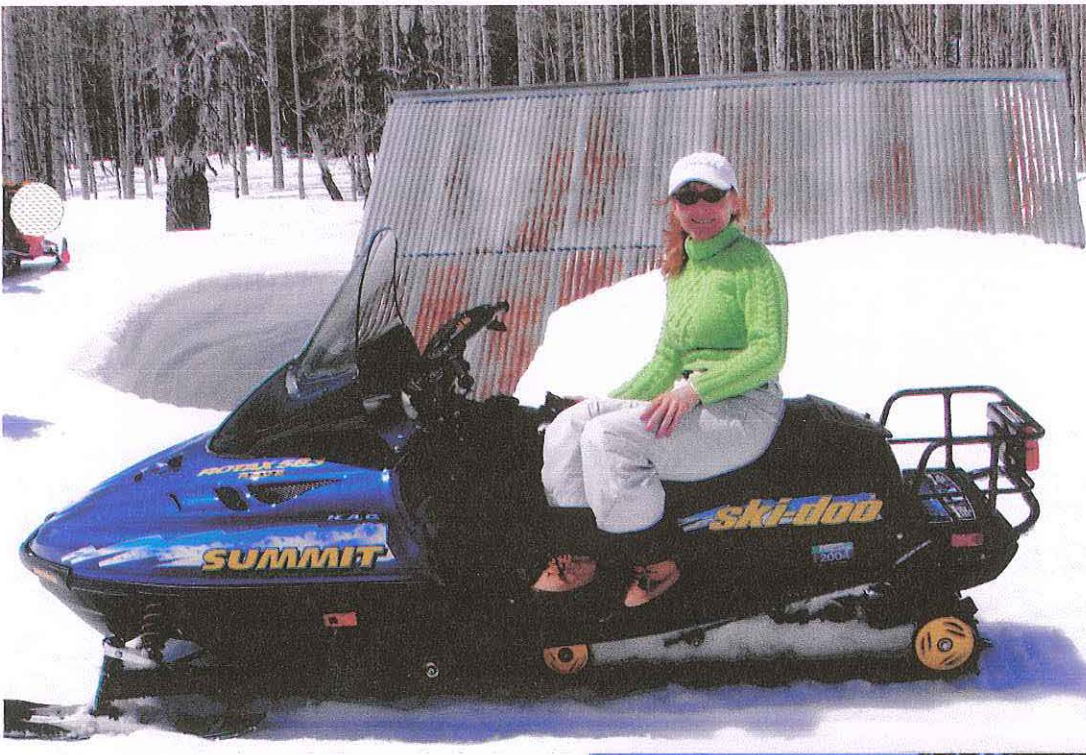
IF YOU SHOW IT GROOMED – It needs to be groomed on a regular basis so you can count on it. Beyond Cape Horn we see very few if any snow shoe or cross country skiers. I have never seen tracks at or beyond Stanislaus Meadow. We use Pacific Valley, Marshall Canyon, Willow Flat, and areas to the East all of the time. Most of the time we use this route to access Highland Lakes. Riding beyond Ebbetts Pass is Rare.

I am on Alpine County Search and Rescue and with my riding partners use our recreational weekend riding to find the fastest ways in case of an emergency in these areas.

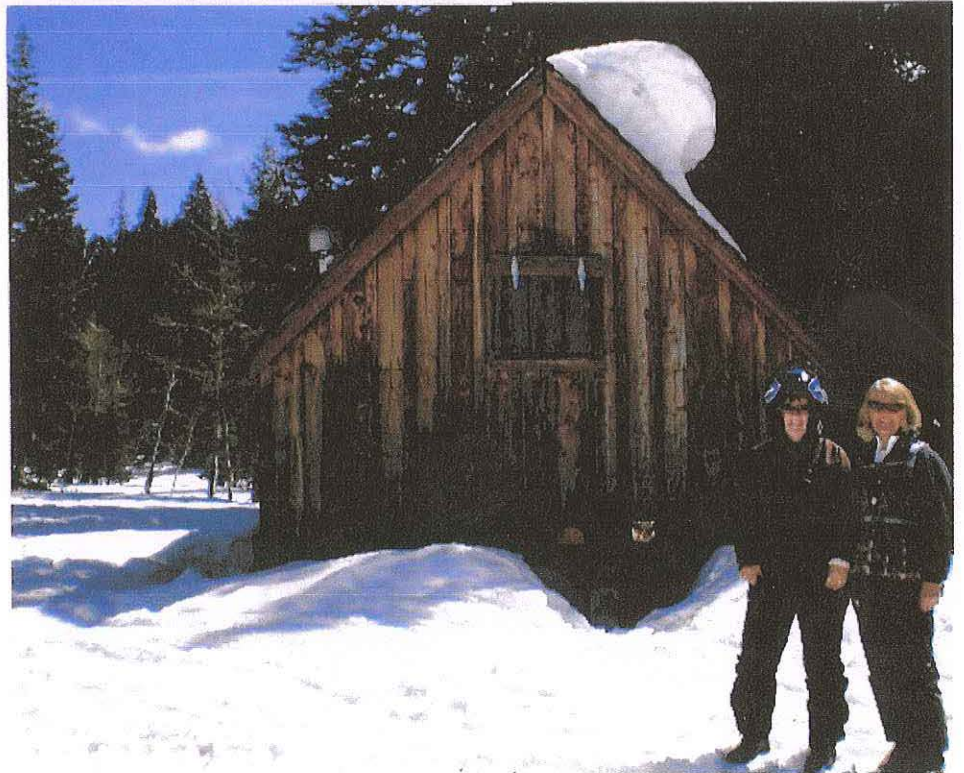
The forest "Near Natural" definition on the Hwy. 4 corridor is even more critical than Hwy 108 because it restricts use of areas ridden historically which makes it difficult to educate riders and enforce restrictions.

In closing: I ride from our cabin in Long Valley all summer long – up and down the 5N01 corridor on horse back. I have never seen any physical evidence of snowmobile.

I ride the areas West of Bear Trap in the summer time on my horse or my dual sport motorcycle. I see no physical evidence of snowmobile every using this area and they do.

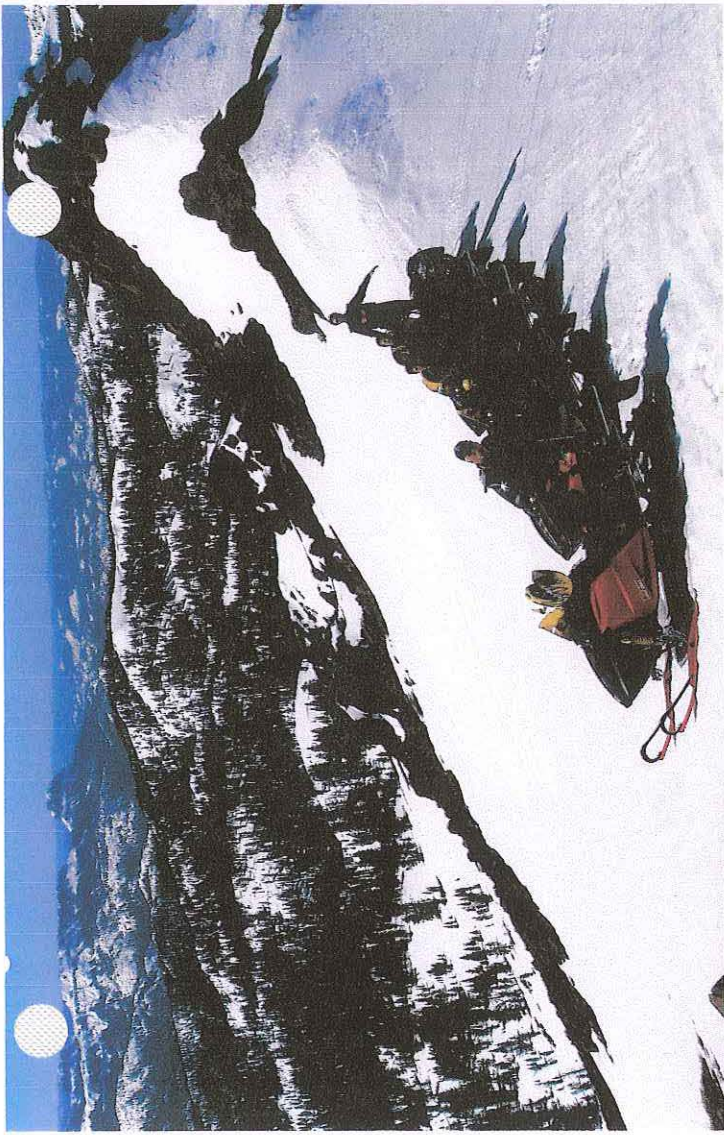


Picture taken
ON
DAY RIDE TO
Jelmini CABIN

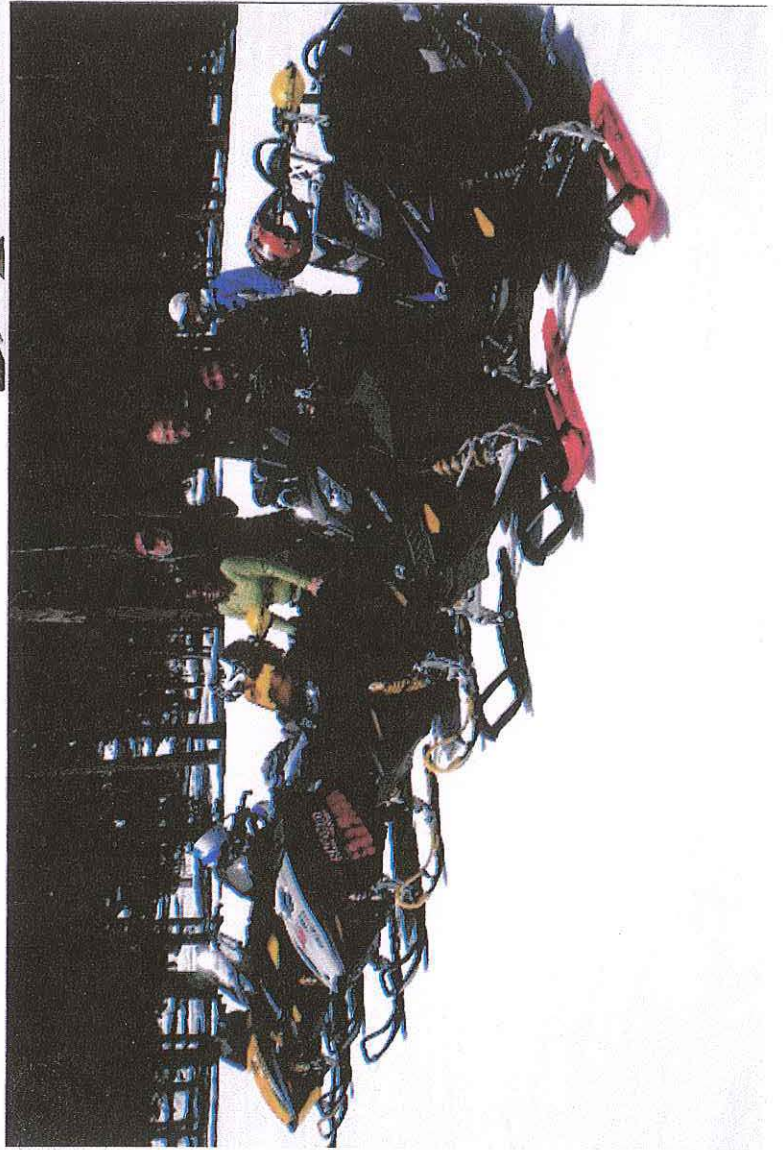


Beautiful Day at
BEAR TRAP BASIN
CABIN

ABOVE MARSHALL
CANYON

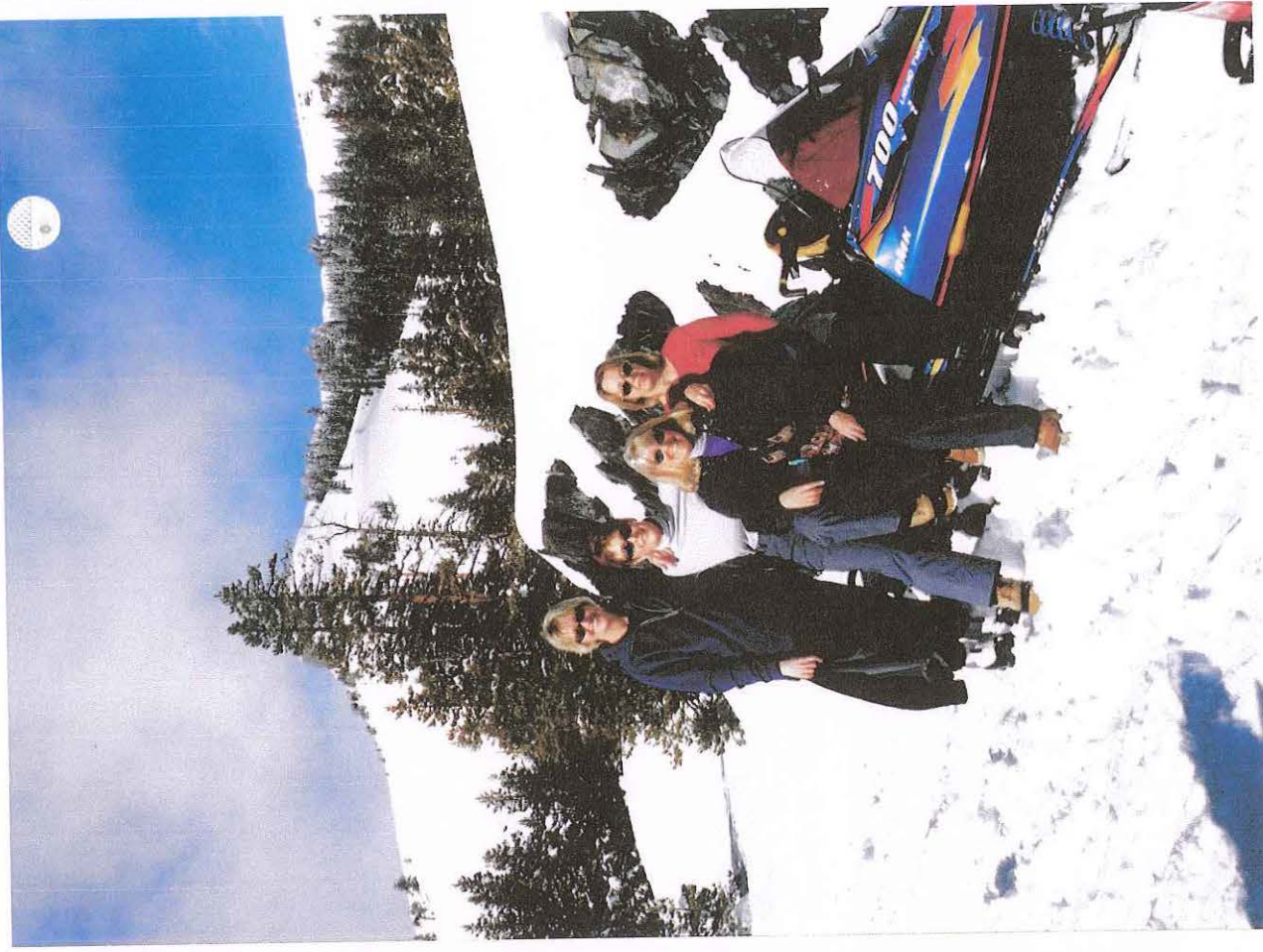


PACIFIC VALLEY





SUNSETS LIKE THIS
are
WHY WE RIDE



CAPE HORN
HIGHWAY 4