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Organization: BVRI

Title: VP

Comments: October 7, 2018

Stanislaus National Forest

Re: Oversnow Recreational Area Designation

The Bear Valley Residents, Inc., representing the homeowners of the community of Bear Valley, supports Alternative 4 as the closest approximation to the current status. We believe Alternative 5, the Preferred Alternative, would disrupt a situation which has worked well for years. We are in agreement with the Alpine County Board of Supervisors' position on this matter.

We would like to see recreationalists retain the option to ride outside the groomed trail in the area between Pacific Valley and Highland Lakes Road. This is a popular area for snowmobiling which is well beyond the reach of most cross country skiers or snowshoers. Restricting riding to the trail would eliminate the appeal for most recreational riders, dealing a serious blow to our economy.

We would like to see recreationalists retain the option to ride in Bear Trap Basin. The non-motorized groups in our area conceded this area in exchange for non-motorized designation in the Round Valley area, in meetings held years ago. The tradeoff has worked well for a long time.

We would like to see recreationalists retain the option to ride at the Skyline Bear Valley Mountain Resort ski hill after the hill shuts down in spring. The ski resort has been a popular staging area for snowmobile events after ski season, with facilities appropriate to support such events without disturbing the community of Bear Valley.

The Sierra Avalanche Center reports that their popular and much needed backcountry avalanche condition reports would have to be severely curtailed or discontinued if snowmobile access to the backcountry is unduly restricted. This would of course be a grave disservice to both motorized and non-motorized recreationalists.

Bear Valley becomes a snowmobile-based community in winter, with subdivision roads groomed for oversnow access rather than plowed. Snowmobiles here serve both a utilitarian and a recreational purpose. Our snowmobile community has become an essential pillar of the local economy. And recreational snowmobiling offers opportunities to enjoy the National Forest in a non-destructive manner. The Bear Valley Residents, Inc. has always supported the funding of the groomed trails up the highway from Bear Valley and at Spicer Road, in recognition of the importance of the recreational opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized users, and in keeping with the "Land of Many Uses" philosophy of the Forest Service. Locking out non-destructive use and enjoyment of large areas of the forest seems counter to that ideal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Jill Wegenstein, Vice President
Bear Valley Residents, Inc.