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Title:

Comments: Please see attached file.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend your open houses and comment on the Stanislaus OSV Designation. As a year-round resident and property owner in Strawberry, multi-use access to public lands is a topic near and dear to my heart. Additionally, as a business owner, directly involved in winter and summer recreation, the potential adverse economic effects of proposed alternative five are troubling.

I support access to public lands for all user groups and feel strongly that a snowmobiler and a non-motorized user can coexist. I own skis, snowshoes and a snowmobile. I regularly use public land for winter recreation, often times using a snowmobile to reach places further away from parking areas to ski. I believe that snowmobiles have minimal impact on resources, provide a network of safety access to back country skiers and riders, and provide access to areas in what would otherwise be a twenty mile or more hike.

Recreation is the economic driver for Tuolumne County. To limit snowmobile access or open areas will be detrimental to all businesses on the 108 corridors. We depend on sales and taxes for survival, both on a private and public level. Property values increase when a year-round recreation experience is available, to limit the acreage for snowmobiling could harm our property values and subsequently tax revenues to local public schools.

Alternative five seems to create a puzzle or piecemeal map of public lands. I believe it needs substantial revision to meet the historical and current use and needs of the winter recreation community. The designation of "near natural" should allow for motorized winter use with a minimum snow depth of 12". The following areas are of specific concern to me:

- The Herring Creek Loop area only designates the road as open. Not the slopes in the middle and not the area outside the loop. Designate the area inside and outside of the Herring Creek Loop as open to OSV cross-country use. Willow Meadow, Hammill Canyon and the surrounding area needs to be open.

- The proposed action designates ZERO high alpine, big mountain terrain for snowmobile use within the Stanislaus. Sonora Pass isn't always reachable from the Hwy 108 Snopark. Eagle meadows area needs to stay open to the very obvious ridge that defines the Wilderness boundary from Waterhouse lake, to Cooper Peak to Castle Rock to the Three Chimneys and Eagle Peak to Bull Run Rock.

- The old logging road grades from Dardanelle up to Eagle Meadow along the sides of Eagle Creek are not designated as open in the proposed alternative. These slopes already see use currently, and the Donnell fire has opened up sight lines and travel corridors, many of which I am excited to ski, after we ride out on a snow mobile.

- Provide grooming from Kennedy Meadows to the Bridgeport recreation area. Grooming this route would help access to the pass and reduce the potential impact of use on the rest of the Hwy 108 riding areas. Ask that this portion of 108 be designated for grooming. It may not happen frequently, but would be great when needed.

- The proposed action designates the area just west of Sonora Pass as closed on April 15 to match the Bridgeport Winter Recreation area. After the pass opens and the hundreds of skiers show up to ski the pass, this small meadow and hillsides are the only places to ride most years on the Stanislaus late in the season. Rather than a closing date, provide a snow depth to meet the mutual needs of all user groups. Often times we utilize snowmobiles on the pass in the spring time for skiing, family adventures and beginner riding. It's a great

area, it would be a shame to see it limited.

-The proposed action only designates the Long Valley lowlands as open to OSV use. Designate the Valley OPEN. This provides varied terrain and access for everyone, it's important to incorporate all levels and abilities of riders and steep terrain is certainly part of the sport.

-The entire Pacific Valley to Highland Lakes road area should be designated open to cross-country OSV use, as it was in the proposed action in 2015. There are very well-defined ridges encompassing most of this area that define the wilderness boundary. Lookout Mountain and the surrounding areas should be open. The bowls from Bull Run to Henry Peak to the Wilderness boundary by Peep Sight Peak should be open. This area offers the only true big mountain riding and skiing off of the Hwy 4 corridor.

-The proposed action removes the north ends of Jelmini and Beartrap Basins from being open to snowmobiles. This is not realistic. The slopes leading from this area are extremely steep and will be self-policing long before the wilderness boundary. The entire North Hwy 4 area should be managed as presented in Alternative 4. The Cabbage Patch/Mattley Ridge area should be designated as demonstrated in Alternative 4.

-The proposed action leaves the Bear Valley ski area as closed to OSV use. There's a long history of locals and visitors having this area open for snowmobile skiing and snowmobiling after the ski area closes! Ask them to designate this as a seasonal use area! No one needs to ride the ski area during business season. But families have a long tradition of great spring days spending time with neighbors riding the hill after the ski area closes. Let the Stanislaus know! Additionally, the forest should consider opening Dodge Ridge ski area for snowmobiling use after the close of the season for the same reasons.

-The area west of Whittakers Dardanelles provides an endless network of roads and meadows that sit above 7k elevation and provide great low consequence riding in high avalanche conditions. Access to this area is provided from the small bridge under Spicer Meadows Reservoir and from FS52/5N14 out of Dorrington. The area is labeled as South Hwy 4 on the maps having it open as in alternative 4 would help take some of the stress off of the Alpine snopark in big winter years.

Moreover, I strongly believe and have discussed with you and your staff the need for established areas for cross country skiers and snow shoe users. I encounter a large amount of this user group in my business, these folks want an established area, easy to access, close to services, with cross country track set and cell service. I encourage you to utilize and improve upon the existing cross-country areas (Crabtree, Gooseberry, Pinecrest), they offer a product suitable for all user groups and can provide easy access to the Wilderness. Expansion of hours at the Summit Ranger district to provide for winter staffing at the front desk would also provide visitors with a location to pick up maps, understand trails and mitigate user group concerns. I am happy to discuss my thoughts with you at any time.

I sincerely hope that you are willing to make modifications to the proposed action, to consider the minimal (if any) resource damage which has occurred during winter use and to better understand the negative implications the proposed action can have on our area. It's important to encourage use of public lands and to respect the heritage and historical uses of the area and the sport. I look forward to a continued beneficial partnership between the public and private sector on the Stanislaus.