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First name: Mark

Last name: Menlove

Organization:

Title:

Comments: OSV

Dear Forest Supervisor Jason Kuiken,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on winter management of the Stanislaus National Forest. As a backcountry skier, I value the non-motorized winter recreation opportunities provided by the Stanislaus, and I look forward to a thoughtful winter travel plan that balances appropriate snowmobile use with protections for important non-motorized areas, natural resources, and wildlife.

I appreciate the balance that your preferred alternative, Alternative 5, tries to establish. However, Alternative 5 fails to protect several other important non-motorized areas and therefore fails to provide an adequate variety of conflict-free non-motorized recreation opportunities on the forest.

On the plus side, I appreciate protection of The Round Valley zone around Mt. Reba for backcountry skiing and I'm glad to see it not designated for motorized use in this alternative. Likewise the terrain on either side of Dodge Ridge.

Very importantly, I feel it is unacceptable the way that Alternative 5 proposes to designate as open to OSVs the Pacific Valley and the Eagle/Night Near Natural Areas. These areas are important roadless areas including recommended wilderness, sensitive watersheds and habitat for endangered Sierra Nevada red fox. They should be managed as semi-primitive non-motorized as indicated in the 1991 Forest Plan rather than the forest simply rewarding years of inappropriate OSV use with open designation.

Also, please adjust Alternative five to include the following as non-motorized in the final plan. In other words, do NOT designate these areas for OSV use:

- The Herring Creek area immediately adjacent to the Leland Snowplay Area on Highway 108
- Osborne Hill and other accessible Nordic touring terrain to the immediate east and west of Lake Alpine
- Some portion of the terrain between Cabbage Patch and Black Springs and Mattley Ridge (allowing for continued OSV access to terrain farther out)
- Route 7N02 in the Big Meadow Area to allow for for non-motorized touring to the Stanislaus Canyon overlook

Finally, I am very concerned about how the forest service plans to monitor and enforce designations, especially in remote areas like Highland Lakes and Folger Peak where snowmobile use may present significant avalanche safety issues as well as unmitigated opportunities for illegal motorized trespass into adjacent Wilderness.

Dating all the way back to the 1800s, the Stanislaus has a long history of backcountry skiing and snowshoeing and I urge you to uphold that tradition by ensuring quality access for these activities. With easy access to snow provided by Highways 4 and 108, and with ever-increasing numbers of winter recreationists, it's important that the Forest Service protect highly valued non-motorized recreation areas as well as designated OSV areas, and to manage these areas so they continue to provide quality experiences with minimal user conflict and resource impact for generations to come.

Thank you for your hard work and consideration,

Sincerely,

Mark Menlove

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