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Organization:

Title:

Comments: OSV

Dear Forest Supervisor Jason Kuiken,

As a friend to, and former backcountry skiers/splitboarders and Nordic skiers, I love the _non-motorized_ winter recreation provided by the Stanislaus National Forest, and I hope for a thoughtful winter travel plan that balances appropriate OSV use with protections for important non-motorized areas, natural resources, and wildlife!

The Stanislaus has a history of backcountry skiing and snowshoeing dating back to the 1800s! 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 and PRESERVE 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 the generations to come: our grand, and great-grand kids!

I understand that Alternative 5 is the forest's preferred alternative. In general, I appreciate the balance that it tries to establish. The Round Valley zone around Mt. Reba in particular is a longstanding gem for backcountry skiing in the Sierra and I'm glad to see it NOT designated for motorized use in this alternative; likewise the terrain on either side of Dodge Ridge.

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! To achieve this, the following areas should ALSO be protected from over-snow vehicle use, as described in the final plan:

- 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 / Black Springs / Mattley Ridge (allowing for continued OSV access to terrain farther out)
- Route 7N02 in the Big Meadow Area: to allow _non-motorized_ touring to the Stanislaus Canyon overlook

Also, critically, I feel it is WHOLLY 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 CRITICAL 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.

Finally, I am highly concerned about how the forest service plans to _monitor and enforce_ their designations, especially in remote areas like Highland Lakes and Folger Peak, where snowmobile use will present SIGNIFICANT avalanche safety issues, as well as unmitigated opportunities for illegal motorized trespass into adjacent Wilderness!

Sincerely,

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