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Title: Board President

Comments: The Sierra Avalanche Center is a public/private partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization known as the Sierra Avalanche Center (SAC). The Truckee Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest houses and runs the avalanche forecasting operations.

Our mission is to inform and educate the public about backcountry avalanche risks in the greater Lake Tahoe area. Our primary tool for advancing that mission is issuing a free daily avalanche advisory about backcountry avalanche conditions in our forecast region, which includes the Central Sierra Nevada Mountains between Yuba Pass in the north and Ebbetts Pass in the south (illustrated in the image to the right).

ATTACHMENT: SEE SUBMISSION FOR IMAGE

The avalanche advisory is read by 60,000-90,000 backcountry recreationalists a year (depending on snow conditions), including skiers, snowboarders, hikers, and snowmobilers, who rely on the advisory to make safe, informed decisions about backcountry travel.

The avalanche advisory is written by professional avalanche forecasters based on snowpack observations, weather conditions, and weather forecasts. An accurate avalanche advisory requires extensive snowpack observations, which are collected and submitted by our avalanche forecasters, professional observers collect snowpack data throughout our avalanche forecast area, and access backcountry terrain both on foot and by snowmobile.

Our forecasters and professional observers conduct several snowpack observations around Ebbetts Pass and Bear Valley each winter, areas that could be affected by the proposed revisions to the OSV use designations within the Stanislaus National Forest. Without stating a formal preference for or against any of the proposed alternatives, we thought it was important to note that Alternative 5 (currently the preferred alternative) would limit SAC's ability to access certain terrain off of Ebbetts Pass via snowmobile, making it harder to collect snowpack data from that portion of our forecast zone.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at mark@sierraavalanchecenter.org. For more information about the Sierra Avalanche Center please visit sierraavalanchecenter.org.