Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/7/2023 6:27:32 PM
First name: Bonnie
Last name: Holman
Organization:
Title:
Comments: The proposed over snow vehicle (OSV) use plan currently includes unrestricted use in the Sherwins area where high traffic occurs and which represents a safety risk. This area is a high traffic multi-use area with XC skiing, backcountry skiing, snow shoers, winter walkers, dogs, and sledders. I have used this area for many years and each year OSVs habitually use high speeds in close proximity to others. Currently, there is nothing that can be done because it is a 'no restricted' area. I am not clear on the criteria used to determine that the speed restricted area should be put in place around the Mammoth Knolls residential area; however, it is very clear to me from a user perspective (having lived both in the Mammoth Knolls and now in Snowcreek V) that there are far more users in the Sherwins area in winter than in the forest surrounding the Mammoth Knolls. Simply put, this area where there are multi-users needs to have a speed restriction applied to it.
Secondly, the OSV unrestricted use extends to the border of several residential areas in such close proximity that causes disturbance to residential neighborhoods. The unrestricted use map incentivizes OSV to enter into the meadow below Mammoth Rock where OSV use habitually and consistently occurs outside the allowable area. In 5 years of residency, I have never seen this area patrolled in winter and residents, are subject to both noise disturbance and to incursions into non-permitted use areas because the map arbitrarily defines a no-use area for roughly 1/3 of the meadow. The access from both mill city and Sherwins require OSVs to travel adjacent and in very close proximity to residences. The mill city allowable use area is SO SMALL that there is literally no where for a OSV to go, except into non-allowable use areas (which are not adequately patrolled by forest service) or else down a very steep slope into the meadow where again incursions into the non-allowable space occur regularly and without any response from forest service. The meadow provides an important wildlife corridor between the Sherwins, Mammoth lakes basin, and lower elevations forest land. Because of the following three reasons: 1) the reoccurring and habitual incursion into the non-allowable spaces in the Meadow, 2) the required disturbance to nearby residences to even enter and leave the meadow, and 3) the inability of the forest service to patrol or respond to reports of misuse in this area, the unrestricted use map should be revised to exclude the Mill City, Meadow below Mammoth Rock, and the immediate perimeter around residences, such as Snowcreek V. Please see the attached image of the map with blue (restricted) and green (speed limitation) on the areas that represent the two issues detailed in this comment.
I can see from the map that there are other unrestricted areas that essentially allow OSVs to use high speeds next to public walkways, roads, and other commonly used roads where even cars and trucks are subject to speed limitation. For example, there is no speed restriction around the one plowed town loop path that parallels mammoth creek and mammoth creek road and this also runs right up against the community college. Without understanding how the US Forest Service determines when a speed restriction should be in place, I must comment that the speed restrictions around any other high-use area around Mammoth town should be reconsidered from a safety perspective.