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First name: Matt

Last name: Dickens

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am commenting today to be an advocate for our right to our public land. I am a cabin owner in the Cow Creek area in the highway 108 corridor since the 1970s. I have been involved in all aspects of outdoor activities in this and surrounding areas my entire life. From hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, packing, and OHV use in the summer to snowmobiling, snow camping, back country skiing, snow shoeing all from my cabin in an around the areas in question, and would consider myself to be well versed in the area. I have nothing but respect for this area/land and treat it with our future generations in mind. I am a father of 4 children that is passing on my knowledge, respect, and care for this land to them with hopes that they will be able to use and do the same with this land and area in question.

I have seen no dramatic change in all the years of my activities in this area be it visual or scientific from OSV use in the areas of question or anywhere for that matter. For a select group to complain about a very small percentage of public land that is designated for summer use for OHVs (specifically the Herring Creek and Eagle Meadow area) already, been established and respected as OSV area as well for just as long is absurd. There is plenty of other places in the Stanislaus National Forest to enjoy if these already designated areas are not enjoyed by the groups in question.

The existing areas for OSV use should not be changed or altered in any way from it's current form. I believe that there needs to be clear designation of groomed trails and riding areas at question and make this easily available for users/public to see. The alternatives I have seen for OSV area are not acceptable as these proposed areas are at lower elevations with historically low snow depths that would not allow for operation of OSVs ethically or legally. It would appear that option number 2 would be closest to what existing area is now but it even has room for improvements. Access to areas with historic snow levels that are sufficient for operation of OSVs, such as Eagle Meadow and Kennedy Meadows turn off areas on highway 108 and Herring Creek rd at the Gargoyles trail head area in years that lower snowfall OSV areas are not available needs to be considered for future access. We seem to be going backwards on managing and using our public lands for OSVs. It appears that we are working on officially designating areas so the public knows where OSVs are allowed to operate. We need to be looking at expanding and adding to the available riding areas and not taking away established/existing areas. There is huge economic benefits for all communities involved to support and promote OSV use in our public lands as money flows into these areas with OSV use. Limiting OSV use in these areas will impact these communities negatively in an already tough economic time in winter months.

Thanks for helping make our public lands available and enjoyable for all parties involved
Matt Dickens