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Comments: Hello, my name is Brandon Natali and I am writing to submit my comments on the Stanislaus National Forest proposed management plan. I have been snowmobiling in the Sierra Nevada mountains for 20 years. I have also worked as a snowmobile mechanic for the same period of time. For the last 10 of those years, I have been a Ski Doo master technician. Snowmobiles are my livelihood and any additional closure of riding areas would have an adverse affect on that livelihood. I can also testify as an expert in the field, that snowmobile technology has changed dramatically in those 20 years. The old smokie, loud, and smelly 2 stroke snowmobiles of the past are no more. They have been replaced by clean burning direct injected 2 stroke and four stroke engines. They also have quiet exhaust systems(noise is the #1 complaint of human powered groups). This technology will continue to improve, eventually changing over to electric engines, which are already in development (lookup Taiga Snowmobiles). So please be sure to consider this when determining areas to keep open. I still don't understand why the forest service in California is not enforcing sound regulations for snowmobiles. In other states the forest Service does this and that is the biggest complaint about snowmobiles. Furthermore the manufacturers are always striving to make exhausts quieter. Not enforcing this makes their efforts to produce quiet technology pointless. Recently I have even seen aftermarket exhaust companies making quiet systems. Please consider this to an alternative to closure. I know snowmobilers would be receptive to keeping their machines quiet if it means keeping areas open to snowmobiles. I will describe below the areas I ride that I hope to see open in the OSV management plan.

When the maps for the DEIS were released they had a terribly inaccurate representation of current management in Alternative 2. This map displays everything that's not wilderness as open to snowmobiles, including designations that they aren't legally authorized to remove in this process. You have failed to provide a basis for a realistic comparison.

As you know the designated areas around Eagle Meadows, Pacific Valley, and a small area on Sonora pass along the Nightcap Ridge are "Near Natural, non-motorized" was completed in 1991. So technically these areas are already closed to all motorized use, even though there's never been any enforcement, and little way to even know this was the case. Please change this!! The current designation is a holdover from summer management. Snowmobiles don't require roads or trails and have no effect on the summer landscape. Please create a new designation that allows winter time motorized use! WINTER SHARED USE!

The proposed Action (Alternative 5) removes Jelmini Basin from being open to snowmobiles! These fall under the Stanislaus Near Natural designation. We need a new designation. The entire North Hwy 4 area should be managed as presented in Alternative 4!

The Herring Creek Loop area only designates the road as open. Not the slopes in the middle and not the area outside the loop. Please designate the area inside and outside of the Herring Creek Loop as open to OSV cross-country use! Willow Meadow, Hammil Canyon and the surrounding area needs to be open.

Please keep the spring tradition on Bear Valley ski area going!

The Proposed Action leaves the Bear Valley ski area as closed to OSV use! There's a long history of locals and visitors like myself having this area open for snowmobile skiing and snowmobiling after the ski area closes! Ask them to designate this as a seasonal use area! No one needs to ride the ski area during business season. But families have a long tradition of great spring days spending time with neighbors riding the hill after the ski area closes.

The proposed alternative (Alt 5) designates ZERO high alpine, big mountain terrain for snowmobile use! Sonora Pass isn't always reachable from the Hwy 108 Snopark. Wee need Lookout Mountain and the surrounding area open from Bull Run to Henry Peak to the Wilderness boundary by Peep Sight Peak OPEN!! We need the Eagle

meadows area open to the very obvious ridge that defines the Wilderness boundary from Waterhouse lake, to Cooper Peak to Castle Rock to the Three Chimneys that is easy to understand. We need Eagle Peak and Bull Run Rock open.

The proposed alternative (Alt 5) designates all the significant slopes around Pacific Valley as closed. This includes the most popular routes from Mosquito Lake into the valley! Pacific Valley needs a SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA designation that doesn't change summer management, but allows continued use in the area.

The old logging road grades from Dardanella up to Eagle Meadow along the sides of Eagle Creek are not designated as open in the proposed alternative. The Donnell fire has opened up sight lines and travel corridors. Please open both sides of Eagle Creek from 108 and have it be designated as open to cross country OSV use.

The area west of Whittakers Dardanells provides an endless network of roads and meadows, some that sit above 7k elevation and provide great low-consequence riding in high avalanche conditions. Access to this area is provided from the small bridge under Spicer Meadows Reservoir and from FS52/5N14 out of Dorrington. The area is labeled as "South Hwy 4" on the maps. Please designate it as open as it appears in alternative 4. This would help take some of the stress off of the Alpine snopark in big winter years!

Highway 108 can get sketchy from Kennedy Meadows to Sonora Pass The Bridgeport Winter Recreation area is great riding but is difficult to get to sometimes. Grooming this route would help access to the pass and reduce the potential impact of use on the rest of the Hwy 108 riding areas. Please select this portion of highway 108 be designated for grooming.

The Proposed action (Alternative 5) designates the area just west of Sonora Pass as closed on April 15 to match the Bridgeport Winter Recreation area. After the pass opens and the hundreds of skiers show up to ski the pass, this small meadow and hillsides are the only places to ride most years on the Stanislaus late in the season. Closing this area on April 15 is not acceptable! Plenty of snowmobilers drive up the pass once it's open to ride this zone. **NO CLOSING SEASON ON THE PASS!**  
We already had a Working Plan!

When the Round Valley snopark was designated non-motorized, this was a compromise reached years ago with local interests where snowmobile use would continue to be allowed in Pacific Valley. Please remember that we already reached a compromise.

The Proposed action (Alternative 5) only designates the Long Valley lowlands as open to OSV use. Please open the slopes around Long valley, have these be designated open to OSV use! The ridge up to the three chimneys and the ridge overlooking Relief Reservoir are a logical boundary. Designate the Valley OPEN!!

Thanks for for the opportunity to comment on the Stanislaus National Forest OSV management plan, and I beg you to consider compromises that don't close additional areas to snowmobiles. Please feel free to contact me with any snowmobile specific technical questions.  
Brandon Natali