

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/9/2018 4:42:07 AM

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October 8, 2018

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regards to the OSV Management Plan for the Stanislaus National Forest. The preferred alternative 5 is heavily skewed toward human-powered use. I encourage Stanislaus National Forest to make a more balanced OSV Management Plan.

As an outdoor enthusiast, I enjoy my time in my national forests. Though I typically travel through human-powered sources, there are times when a motorized vehicle makes sense. For example, I sometimes use a snowmobile to travel large distances to access terrain that is good for backcountry skiing. I will typically park my snowmobile below my objective, then skin up and ski down. The ability to use a snowmobile to access this terrain minimizes the treachery of the approaches. The current alternative 5 would leave huge swaths of backcountry skiing terrain available to only the most elite of athletes, making thousands of acres of our national forest virtually inaccessible.

As a hybrid user, I would like Stanislaus national forest to consider the fact that great non-motorized areas already exist close to parking areas. For example, the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness sits only a mile away from the Lake Alpine Snopark parking lot. The meadow across the street from the town of Bear Valley offers great non-motorized recreation in a tame environment. Both Mokelumne and Carson-Iceberg Wilderness areas are accessible within only a few miles from multiple parking areas. Areas that are farther from trailheads are better accessed using motorized methods. Keep most of these hard-to-reach areas open to over-snow vehicles so we can enjoy them!

Alternative 5 will highly limit the use of OSV's in the Stanislaus national forest which may actually end with some negative impacts. Motorized users will be condensed, which can increase the chances of collision. Additionally, limiting motorized use shuts out adaptive athletes who use an OSV as a method of travel to experience our public lands.

Alternative 5 closes the Bear Valley ski area to OSV use. There's a long history of snowmobile-accessed skiing in this area once the ski area has closed for the season. I encourage Stanislaus National Forest to designate this as a seasonal use area to allow the use of snowmobiles once the ski area has closed so that families can continue the tradition of using this area for sled-accessed skiing!

Alternative 5 also uses minimum snow depths to designate when OSV's can and cannot be used. Eskimos have 50 different names for snow for a reason - because snow is an ever-changing medium. Dense powder supports more than champagne powder and icy or crusty snow supports more than slush. In lieu of numerical snow depths, I encourage Stanislaus National Forest to use the following for OSV use: Adequate snow cover is

defined by a layer of dense, packed snow, or deeper fresh snow sufficient to support your vehicle, and prevent damage to forest resources.

Finally, there should be no closing date on Sonora Pass for a number of reasons. First, this area is one of the few high-elevation trailheads available during the spring season. It must remain open to all users to ensure a long season. Second, many users may wish to snowmobile to other areas before parking their vehicles and skinning or climbing to springtime ski mountaineering objectives. A snowmobile closure eliminates this option to enjoy our public lands. Finally, our changing climate requires consideration. As snow levels in the Sierra continue to rise, higher elevation areas may be one of the few choices available. Arbitrarily closing Sonora Pass based on an April 15 closure date may serve to close an area that may not be available all season long due to low snowfall seasons.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration during as the OSV Management is determined. However, I urge you to alter alternative 5 with the suggestions above. I also urge Stanislaus National Forest to seek a more balanced OSV plan that is ecologically sustainable, yet allows and encourages different user groups to respectfully and responsibly coexist in shared spaces.

Brittany Konsella