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Comments: October 9, 2018

via: USFS Webform

Comments by Californians for Western Wilderness on Draft Plan
for Over-Snow Vehicle Use in Stanislaus National Forest

Ladies & Gentlemen:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 885 members and supporters of Californians for Western Wilderness (CalUWild), a citizens organization dedicated to encouraging and facilitating participation in legislative and administrative actions affecting wilderness and other public lands in the West. Our members use and enjoy the public lands in California and all over the West.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on Draft Plan for over-snow vehicle (OSV) use in the Stanislaus National Forest.

We urge you to adopt Alternative 3 and reject Alternative 5 in your plan.

We are concerned about any proposals that would increase the use of over-snow vehicles, especially in areas that have been proposed for wilderness designation under the 1964 Wilderness Act. Areas opened to OSV use will almost certainly be disqualified for future consideration.

Specifically, we are concerned about two areas that would be impacted: The Eagle roadless area and the Pacific Valley roadless area.

The Eagle roadless area is a potential addition to the Emigrant Wilderness. Emigrant Wilderness is very popular, and we support the Eagle addition. OSV use in the area would be detrimental to quiet and primitive recreation and other wilderness values, including the prohibition on motorized transport.

Pacific Valley is adjacent to the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness, and again OSV use in the area would be detrimental to quiet and primitive recreation and other wilderness values, including the prohibition on motorized transport.

Another important ecological value is wildlife, though not a main focus of the Wilderness Act. The areas mentioned above are home to the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout and even more importantly, a small population of the endangered Sierra Nevada Red Fox. There is great concern that snowmobile use might make them more vulnerable to predation by coyotes, who are able to use the packed snow that accompany snowmobile use to gain easier access to higher elevations in the winter.

For all of these reasons, we urge you to adopt Alternative 3, which will continue to allow for quiet winter recreation and protect wildlife at the same time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please inform us of your decision in this matter and please also inform us of further opportunities to be involved in your public decision-making processes.

Sincerely,
Michael J. Painter
Coordinator