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Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed alternatives in the Stanislaus National Forest OSV management process and I would like to express my support for Alternative 2, or an alternative that would most closely resemble no change..

I have been an avid user of the El Dorado National Forest and Tahoe National Forest for 20 years, which includes camping, hiking, fishing, and snowmobiling. I was also a resident of the north Tahoe area for a short period of time of this 20 year span and currently reside in Sacramento.

I have often heard of the epic terrain in Stanislaus NF and have intentions of visiting assuming riding areas remain open.

My first concern stems from the scoping sessions discussed in the EIS where the Alternatives were determined. I was unaware of the scoping meetings. As someone who is interested in politics, and a local northern California resident who keeps abreast of current events, I am shocked that I was unaware that this process was happening. As I discuss with other local snowmobilers, they were also caught off guard that this process was so far along in the process. Please provide documentation that the snowmobile community was adequately noticed to participate in this process.

As I read this Draft Environmental Impact Statement I am astounded by the passive language with regard to the threats posed by over snow vehicles. Decisions that limit over snow vehicles for conservation or thwart conflicts between users of the forest should be made with facts supported by data instead of some hypothetical reason that lacks objective observation. In addition, many of these exact same concerns could be theorized for any number of human activities in forest. Nobody is pushing for the forest to be closed to hikers to limit foliage trampling. In fact, hundreds of volunteers are solicited annually in order to maintain trails, by products of which are soil compaction, destruction of vegetation, and potential disturbance to wildlife. Literally, hundreds of miles of trails are maintained in an unnatural state. Is anybody clamoring for ski resorts that are leased on forest land to be closed to limit carbon dioxide emissions or reduce traffic? No, these suggestions are unreasonable, just as the reducing the land to over snow vehicles is unreasonable. Another major concern listed in the EIS is regarding adequate snow coverage. Snowmobiles don't handle rocks and stumps well, so the two foot of coverage identified in the EIS is not enough to prevent damage to a snowmobile and so much more coverage is required for a snowmobile to be run safely in the back country.

Finally, the EIS identifies conflicts between users as a major area of interest. As someone who logs hundreds of miles in the backcountry annually, I can attest that the interaction between snowmobilers and other users is minimal. In fact, I have never witnessed a person on cross country skis or snowshoe more than 2 miles from the trailhead. The backcountry skiers and boarders I have come across have been on snowmobiles. Now, I am not naïve, I know people access the backcountry deeper than that but I do not think the potential conflict as theorized in the EIS is significant. In addition, when I have encountered people on the trail, we pass them slowly, and are within ear shot for maybe 30 seconds. The interactions as portrayed by the group bringing the lawsuit are not REALITY but a ploy to push an agenda. In addition, snowmobiles operate within the legal parameters as set forth by federal regulations. I believe that more access points with adequate parking are needed. More access points would dilute the number of users at any single location and reduce the conflict that some feel occurs. Was consideration given to provide more adequate parking throughout the plan area?

I am concerned that this document is taking land away while we are in the midst of a technological revolution. The electrification of vehicles has come to the snowmobile industry. While still not prevalent among the primary manufacturers, there are models available. Was consideration given to a changing industry? Will electric snowmobiles be treated the same as gas snowmobiles?

I personally feel that too many lands throughout the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range are closed off to

snowmobilers and if people feel they cannot obtain the full experience of the forest because a couple snowmobiles pass by them, they have the opportunity to take advantage of these areas that are available to them.

Thank you again for your time and I would like to reiterate my support for Alternative 2.

Sincerely,
Chris Dickinson