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Organization: NAPgA

Title: Member

Comments: Dear Forest Supervisors Benson and Gould and Regional Forester Eberlien,

Thank you for evaluating objections that were submitted at the 2019 public discussion, in regard to packgoat use and making adjustments to the plans, of the Sierra and Sequoia Forests.

Before making any final decisions in both of these Forests, I would like to respectfully ask that the packgoat risk assessment be completed. Also, with the assessment, I ask that packgoats be evaluated separately from grazing goats/sheep. The use of packgoats are very different from the use of grazing goats and sheep and as it is always in the best interest of the owner to keep packgoats in the best health condition possible.

Please consider reviewing all studies on packgoats with possible disease transmission to the variety of Forest species, specifically the bighorn sheep. NAPgA can supply many of the studies that have been published.

While packgoats are a reasonably newer livestock animal in the Forest, management practices have been developed by the North American Packgoat Association, which better explain to persons outside of people who use packgoats and how these livestock animals are controlled in backcountry environments. These BMP's have been submitted by both NAPgA and myself during the public responses of 2019.

As people, like myself, get older, the ability to continue to enjoy hiking and camping at our previous level will need assistance to be able to reach those more remote areas. Packgoats leave a minimal impact on the land and make access to the backcountry possible for people with limiting abilities. Please consider completing the risk assessment before any decisions to exclude this specific livestock packing companion animal from use by Forest visitors.

Margaret Scott

NAPgA member

Kern County resident