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First name: Kevin

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello

To whom it may concern, I would like to take the opportunity to comment on the Inyo National Forest OSV Use Designation project # 61466.

I personally enjoy riding snowmobiles in my free time and I find it a wonderful way to spend time with my friends and family in a way that allows me to avoid the hustle and bustle of other more popular and condensed winter activities that are common in the INF. For this, I oppose reducing the area that it's legal to ride snowmobiles or other OSV's.

Whenever any of my friends and family are out riding, we make a concerted effort to respect other recreationists' space. For the most part, there are a very few and concentrated areas that see the intersection of motorized and nonmotorized recreational winter recreation, and those areas that do see it are not considered for closure anyway. We share the wonderful privileges that we all have to enjoy the range and variety of recreation activities that include a variety of motorized and nonmotorized opportunities and recreation experiences. This is specifically mentioned in the The Inyo National Forest Land Management Plan (2019). It's concerning that there are hundreds of thousands of acres that are suitable for use with the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum but we are considering to arbitrarily close them, regardless of the snowpack. Last year, the snowpack was exceptional and it was incredibly enjoyable to snowmobile in many areas that do not usually have the snowpack to support OSV use. To arbitrarily take that opportunity away based on an average or projected snowfall amount seems unreasonable. A more reasonable approach would be to designate the areas suitable to OSV use whenever the snowpack exceeded 12" locally, as opposed to drawing a line on the map. Those areas that have a 12" snowpack could be deemed suitable for use, even if only 1 storm in a winter season provided that amount of snow and it was only there for a short time. As we saw last year, that line will vary constantly from year to year, and how are we to predict how the climate may change?

While using a 12" snowpack guideline would be a much better way to deem sections of the forest suitable and legal for use, that may not even be necessary either. Most OSV's require adequate snow for safe navigation, effective cooling, and effective lubrication of moving parts. Any person that has made the investment in an OSV certainly has no desire to utilize it in a manner that makes it unsafe to navigate, causes overheating, and causes unnecessary wear and tear on the moving parts. For this reason, it could be argued that the 12" minimum snowpack may not even be necessary as it certainly isn't for people who care about their OSV's.

In addition to the above reasons, it was also specifically noted in the 61 page "Scoping Package" that, "The Forest has not identified OSV use as a substantial impact to natural or cultural resources, or other recreational uses on a Forest-wide scale." So why do we see it necessary to reduce the area for OSV use? Is there a specific reason or driver for the proposed reduction? I may be mistaken, but from what I can tell, there is not one.

In closing, I would ask the INF to please refrain from reducing the designated OSV area use. As protectors and stewards of our public lands, I would like to ask the INF to reconsider the proposal and to please, only close any areas that are truly experiencing a negative impact due to OSV use.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kirk

20 year Mono County Resident and Responsible OSV Recreationalist