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First name: Peter

Last name: Duncan

Organization: home owner

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service

I attended your briefing on the proposed action for OSV use designations in Bear Valley on 7/13 and read your materials. As a home owner in Bear Valley and snowmobiler, I support the overall project. I have one area of concern, two suggestions, and two positive comments I wanted to share.

Area of Concern - I object to the Bear Trap and Jelmini Creek area designation as Restricted to OSV Near Natural for several reasons. First, this is a frequent location for Search and Rescue because skiers from the Bear Valley Mountain Resort often cross the ski area boundary and end up out of bounds in this area. The restricted access would make it challenging for search and rescue people to use snowmobiles to search for lost skiers, especially considering the harsh snow conditions where rescue time is of the essence. Second, this area has several points of interest that are frequented by OSV including a dirt road used by OSV to navigate safely through the area and the Bear Trap Cabin. Third, the boundaries are too complicated. They do not reflect natural terrain markers like ridge lines so it would be challenging for OSVs to comply.

Suggestion #1 - I suggest we add the Slick Rock trail on the west end of Lake Alpine as another Groomed Snowmobile Trail. This would connect the Highway 4 groomed trails to the Utica and Spicer lake groomed trails. By doing this, the lesser used Spicer/Utica parking area could be used by people wishing to go to Highway 4 and visa versa.

Suggestion #2 - A Disaster Creek connection between Highway 4 and Highway 120 should be considered. I realize this passes through a Wilderness area and may require additional bureaucratic approvals, but the additional access would be give OSV access similar to what is enjoyed today between Highway 4 and Blue Lakes in the Highway 88 corridor.

Supportive Comment #1 - The Stanislaus Meadow 24" Depth designation seems reasonable. There is generally more than 24" of snow most of the winter so this should not impact OSV access very often.

Supportive Comment #2 - The Pacific Valley 12" Near Natural designation is good because it makes the boundaries clear and clears up ambiguity on whether OSVs have rights to use this area.

Best Regards

Peter Duncan