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Title:

Comments: We are disappointed by the fact that the Castle Peak area of the Herring Creek Loop will no longer be a designated snowmobile area. This area has been well respected by snowmobilers since the beginning of the sport. The ridge line above is a clearly defined closure point for snowmobilers as this is barrier for the Emigrant National Forest. As a snowmobiler we use these ridgelines to determine our rideable area and this has proven to work for many years in this area without any issues. The area inside the Herring Creek loop is completely un-rideable territory and to only give us this area to ride is quite an insult to all snowmobilers that utilize this area. Please reassess this area before coming to your final decision. If given this area to snowmobile we can facilitate volunteers to clearly mark the immigrant off as a closed area. This has been not been done by the Department of Forestry for years.

In the Long Valley area of Eagle Meadows your map has no natural barriers for us to use to determine what is open or not. What you would use to determine boundaries in the summer cannot be used when the area is covered by snow and the drifts form.

The area on top of Sonora Pass where there is Deadman Creek (right side of the meadow) traditionally has been used for snowmobiling by people from both California and Nevada. We were told 4 years ago by the Summit Manager, Charlie that this area was open and legal riding and that Forest Service could not prohibit snowmobiles from this area. You have not had this clearly marked on any maps. This area has been open to riding along with St. Marys Pass. Please reconsider this area as well. The ridgelines here also clearly mark boundaries.

As for this project as a whole, the Department of Forestry has not been clear on what you truly want designated.

The proposed map has changed so many times between your open houses. The map here on your web-site does not show the areas or boundaries clearly and has prohibited out of area riders from making comments.

Those at the Department of Forestry have admitted that they have not even been out in these areas on snowmobiles. How can they be successful in creating a map for snowmobiles when they have never seen it for themselves? The Summit District has relied on one individual (Mr. Montoya) for their only input. This individual has no experience on snowmobiles and in fact has admitted that he hates the snowmobile part of his employment. Perhaps, if they had a patrol ranger with adequate experience the map would have been constructed differently and would protect our rights as snowmobilers.

The past 10 years of snowmobiling in the Stanislaus has proven frustrating. We were told we needed 12 inches to ride in areas, only to be told a few weeks later that we needed 6 inches. We were told an area is open to have Mr. Montoya come to us in a very unprofessional matter (screaming and yelling) that we are in a closed area. Then we went to his supervisor to have him (Charlie) tell us that Mr. Montoya was out of line and that we could be in that area. So in one week we were told yes, then no, then yes again. Now at these meetings we were told that the Department of Forestry has never had any forest order on snowmobiles. This proves the fact that we as snowmobilers have known for years. Summit has just made up what they wanted, when they wanted, as they wanted. There has been no clarity ever.

Who we are. We grew up riding these forests, we were raised in Pinecrest and Twain Harte and know these areas under debate more than anyone at these meetings. Other riders know us, respect us. The Department of Forestry needs to start using locals as volunteers. We have been asked over the years to find those that are lost or those that could be in harms way. We do whatever within our power to help those in need. This saves resources and time for you. We have even helped out the Forest Rangers when they get stuck and don't know how to get out due to a lack of experience. We are asking for one thing only. Help us and we will continue to help you. We have respected the boundaries, other riders, your forest patrol, the animals and the mountains we love for decades now. We would appreciate your respect and your consideration when it comes to the areas we love to ride, we live for this. This is our passion and the next generation deserves access to these mountains.