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First name: Brook Stephan

Last name: Schoenfield

Organization:

Title:

Comments: the proposal to open up the area to OSV directly accessible from Round Valley sno-park and north of the Lake Alpine sno-park will be a disaster for backcountry skiers. We discussed this when I spoke at a community meeting. Hi-marking by snowmobiles and skiing are diametrically opposed. The Western Sierras experience big melt/refreeze cycles almost every single day of the Winter. Once a hi-mark has re-frozen, it becomes dangerous for a ski descent.

Up until this proposal, the area including Poison Canyon, Bee Gulch, Lakewood, Round Valley, and Underwood have been off-limits - thus protecting this area for back country skiers.

It is NOT true that only experts ski in the backcountry. Backcountry skiing is the fastest growing portion of the sport of skiing. Skiing in the backcountry does not require more than modest descending skills. But even experts have trouble negotiating a refrozen hi-mark - especially in cases (all too often) where all the available descents have been chewed up, as sno-mobilers search for ever more untouched snow - exactly the same snow that skiers love - untouched.

I do not see a reason why the only decent skiing near Bear Valley has to be given over entirely to snow mobiles. There is so much territory that I gladly share with OSV, why can we not have some great area? If you remove protections to this area there will be no North-facing areas that are protected. What's left on the map shown is only south facing, which means that in low snow years, that there's nothing to ski. And it also means that the famed powder bowls (north-aspects) beyond the sleeping Indian and Mt. Reba will also get chewed up. That's not even vaguely a fair compromise.

This proposal seems like a slap at skiers - "go away, we put you skiers on a tiny, crappy, south-facing reservation - we'll even give you small pox infected blankets to kill you off." this is the worst proposal that I can imagine, basically, nothing worth skiing.

After all the warmth and understanding that the Forest Service gave me to try and understand the hi-mark problem and the great conversations that I had with snow-mobilers who "got it" and were happy to leave this one area for skiers - why have you now decided to cut our ski legs off completely giving us only the crappy, south facing back side of Bear Valley, which, frankly, we can ski anyway, since the area considers that area in bounds.

I'm NOT AT ALL HAPPY with this proposal. It stinks. And I'm hardly a snow mobile hater; I own one!