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News Release

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Final Environmental Impact Statement Features New Preferred Alternative for Over-snow Vehicle Use Designation on the Eldorado National Forest

PLACERVILLE, Calif. - The Eldorado National Forest has released a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Record of Decision for Over-snow Vehicle (OSV) Use Designation. The Final EIS includes a preferred alternative that was developed in response to comments from both motorized and non-motorized winter recreationists. Individuals or organizations that commented on the Draft EIS can object to the draft decision during a 45-day review period which closes on December 17, 2018. Any objections will be carefully considered before a final decision is made. Current OSV management will remain in place this year. The final decision on OSV designation will not be effective until the 2019-2020 season.

"After taking a hard look at the public comments we received on the draft EIS, the planning team came up with a much stronger alternative," said Forest Supervisor Laurence Crabtree. "This is a great example of how stakeholders help land managers make better decisions. I really appreciate how passionate people are about their forest experience."

Under the current management, 458,600 acres are open to public OSV use, which is approximately 75 percent of the National Forest System (NFS) land within the Eldorado National Forest. The original proposed action was to designate 435,600 acres (approximately 71 percent) for OSV use, whereas the new preferred alternative designates 337,100 acres (approximately 55 percent).

The reduction in the proposed acreage is largely due to not designating lower elevation areas which rarely have enough snow for OSV use. The preferred alternative is

responsive to public comments that identified important high elevation opportunities along the Sierra Crest for both motorized and non-motorized backcountry winter recreation. All of the alternatives include 58 miles of groomed OSV trails on the Silver Bear Trail System.

The purpose of OSV designation is to establish designated areas and trails for OSV use on the Eldorado National Forest to: provide access, ensure that OSV use occurs when and where there is adequate snow, promote the safety of all users, enhance public enjoyment, minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources, and minimize conflicts among the various uses of National Forest System lands. OSV designation is also necessary to comply with Forest Service Travel Management Regulations at 36 CFR part 212 and Subpart C.

Finally, OSV designation is needed to comply with the Settlement Agreement between the Forest Service and Snowlands Network et al., by identifying those designated National Forest System OSV trails where grooming for public OSV use would occur and analyzing the effects of the grooming program. Under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, the Forest Service is required to complete the appropriate environmental analysis to identify OSV trails available for grooming on the Eldorado National Forest, as well as on the Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, and Stanislaus National Forests.

The complete Final EIS and the Draft Record of Decision for OSV Use Designation on the Eldorado National Forest can be found on the forest website at:
[https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/eldorado/landmanagement/projects.](https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/eldorado/landmanagement/projects)