

*Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5)*  
*Five-Forest Over-Snow Vehicle Use Designation Analysis*

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General Talking Points

- The Lassen, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Plumas National Forests are beginning an analysis based on Subpart C of the Travel Management Rule (Over-Snow Vehicle Use Designation).
  - Although revision of Subpart C is not final, it is anticipated to be final in January 2015, and each Forest will ensure their process and analysis conforms to the final rule.
- An over-snow vehicle is defined as “a motor vehicle that is designed for use over snow and that runs on a track or tracks and/or a ski or skis, while in use over snow” (36 CFR §212.1).
- These forests are undertaking the Subpart C analysis to improve management of over-snow vehicle use.
- These forests are also undertaking this analysis to designate a system of over-snow vehicle trails, including groomed trails, to meet the terms of a court-required settlement agreement.
- The project will undergo analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which provides opportunities for input from local communities, local government, and all interested parties.
- Each of the five forests is currently in the “Pre-NEPA” stage and are considering their current over-snow vehicle management and use, and examining any need for changes. Each forest will develop a proposed action for analysis based on those considerations.
- The Lassen National Forest will begin their NEPA analysis first, followed by the Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Plumas National Forests. Each Forest will prepare a separate Environmental Impact Statement.
- The start of the NEPA process for each of the five forests is separated by several months.
- Due to staffing constraints at individual forests, the Regional Office, with the help of Forest Service employees from an “enterprise team” (TEAMS Enterprise Unit), will conduct the NEPA analysis in close coordination and assistance with staff from each of the five national forests.

- The goal of the project is to designate National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands where over-snow vehicle use will be allowed, restricted, or prohibited in Lassen, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Plumas National Forests.
- These designations will apply to the lands on each of these five national forests that receive adequate snowfall for over-snow vehicle use to occur.
- After roads, trails, and areas are designated for over-snow vehicle use on these forests, over-snow vehicle use not in accordance with these designations will be prohibited.
- The over snow vehicle designations will be illustrated on an Over-Snow Vehicle Use Map made available to the public on the national forest websites and at local offices.
- Public, community, Tribal and local government participation and input is essential for the project’s success.
- Currently, the five national forests manage approximately 973 miles of groomed OSV trails:

National Forest	Groomed Miles of OSV Trails
Eldorado	60
Lassen	402
Plumas	182
Stanislaus	59
Tahoe	270
Total	973

Forests also manage un-groomed trails and areas open to off-trail cross-country over-snow vehicle use.

- The environmental impact statement for each forest will consider the issues and concerns that the public helps us identify as part of the public scoping process. In addition, we will also consider potential effects on National Forest System natural and cultural resources (including soil, water , and wildlife), public safety, provision of recreational opportunities, access needs, conflicts among uses of National Forest System lands, the need for maintenance and administration of roads, trails, and areas; and the availability of resources for that maintenance and administration.
- The designations resulting from these analyses will apply only to the use of over-snow vehicles.
- The following over-snow vehicle uses would be exempt from the prohibitions resulting from the designations:
  - (1) Limited administrative use by the Forest Service;

- (2) Use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes;
- (3) Authorized use of any combat or combat support vehicle for national defense purposes;
- (4) Law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit; and
- (5) Over-snow vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulations.
- The Forest Service will recognize valid existing rights in making designations at the local level.
- Opportunities for public input will be provided during the public scoping period and after the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. There will also be a pre-decisional objection period after the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement prior to issuing a final Record of Decision.
- Final Records of Decision for each of the five national forests will be issued by the Forest Supervisor. These decisions will:
  - Identify a complete, manageable, and enforceable system of snow trails and areas designated for over-snow vehicle use;
  - Identify over-snow vehicle use restrictions and prohibitions; and
  - Identify those snow trails, from the complete system of snow trails, where grooming for over-snow vehicle use will occur.
- Each decision will allow the Forest Service to produce an over-snow vehicle use map that will look similar to the existing motor vehicle use map for each forest.