

NFS

EMC

December 22, 2013

~~Joel Strong~~  
~~Ben Bibb~~

Chief Tom Tidwell  
Chief of the Forest Service  
USDA Forest Service, EMC  
Attn: Judicial & Administrative Review Group  
1400 Independence Ave., SW,  
Mail stop code: 1104  
Washington, DC 20250-11042

RE: Objection to LTBMU FEIS Alternative E

Chief Tidwell,

I writing to object to the FEIS Alternative E, the LTBMU has submitted as the future forest management plan.

To give you a little background and possibly reinforce my credibility is that I have been a resident of the Lake Tahoe Basin for 36 years and have seen over three decades of forest management in the basin. In addition, I am a Fire Captain for a basin fire agency with 20 years of experience firefighting in the basin along with fighting neighboring large fires including the most recent rim fire. I was initial attack for the angora fire and am very familiar with the basin forest and past fuel reduction programs.

Overall, I confer with LTBMU on Alternative E. However, I feel obligated to make you aware of the unbalanced approach towards OHV and OSV recreation. As you well know, all of the alternatives provide little (alternative C) to no increase (Alternative A,B,D,E) for OHV and OSV recreation. Alternative E doesn't recommend any additional OHV and OSV access.

I completely understand the cost/benefit of increasing OHV in the area. I would personally like to see more of the vehicle registration fees (which hikers, bikers, and horseback don't incur) go towards maintaining roads than enforcement. That being said, my real concern is the OSV access.

Some time ago, OSV access was sufficient and managed effectively. For example, the high meadows/freel peak area was accessed by OSV. The current LTBMU will state that it has always been closed but in the past there was no gates and forest rangers were always proactive with open access. For years, my family would take weekend snowmobile trips

up to star lake and ice fish and camp. It was wonderful and there were other families that enjoyed the area as well. Since the LTBMU decided to close the area using the roadless program recommended by President Clinton, there has been no permitted access for OSV except for mountain bikes, horses, and hikers which do create an erosion problem. I have along with many other OSV users attempted to talk with LTBMU regarding opening up the area to OSV and they have given us many excuses claiming deer migration in the winter, frog habitat, steep inaccessible areas and the excuses have always differed depending on the year. All of the reasons from the LTBMU seem to favor liberal environmentalism versus using a balanced approach and fair access. I truly love this area and protect it every day with my life and I'm now telling you that OSV use in the high meadows/freel peak area doesn't create any environmental damage. I have hiked the area in the summer time for many years and never have seen any damage caused by snowmobiles. Most of the damage is from mountain bikes skidding down the road or horses breaking up the soil with their hooves. In any case, OSV should be allowed in the area. Over the years, I have stated to LTBMU that their reasoning for closing the area is unjustified since Heavenly Ski Resort is adjacent to the area and has the same topography and they allow snowmobile use (among other things) on the mountain. Furthermore, the forest adjacent to the LTBMU allows OSV literally on the backside of freel peak (which is closed on the LTBMU side) and instead of non-managing the area by just closing it, they allow OSV and are proactive with access allowing a balanced approach. I could keep justifying the reasons to open this area but I think you get my point. Please open up more areas in the LTBMU for OSV, especially the high meadows/freel peak area.

Unfortunately, I have been advocating OSV access to LTBMU for decades and to no avail and I think this letter will be a moot point because my faith in the USFS is almost non-existent, which is sad. In fact, I'm guessing you won't even see this letter. If you do, please send me a letter with an original autograph so I know that the Chief of the Forest actually read my letter instead of an extreme naturalist that will laugh at my opinion and sob over the tree that was used for this letter. I apologize for being cynical but after 30 decades of seeing the LTBMU mismanage and apply biased approaches to forest management, it's mine and a large number of local's justified perspective.

Sincerely,

Jon Anderson  
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