



Winter Recreation and Over Snow Vehicle Travel Management Plan



USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

HOW CAN I HELP SHAPE THE PROJECT?

This LTBMU has prepared a document called the proposed action for the Winter Recreation and Over Snow Vehicle Travel Management Project. It was developed based on input we received from stakeholders, as well as agency input. You are seeing this document during what is called the public scoping period. This is an opportunity for the public to help us shape the proposed action moving forward. **The project scoping letter describes the methods you can use to comment on the project during the scoping period.** There will be additional opportunities for public input as the project moves forward in the NEPA process. **Figure 1**, below, illustrates the expected process of environmental documentation and opportunities for public input during the development of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and the Final Decision Notice.

The public scoping phase of the project is the time when the public has the opportunity to tell the Forest Service how close we are to the right solution that meets the purpose and need for the project and moves the land towards the desired condition. Comments received during the scoping period are used to inform the analysis in the draft Environmental Assessment, which is the next phase of the NEPA process. Comments are also used to help us develop alternatives that could provide a different solution while still meeting the purpose and need for the project.

The public comments that help the Forest Service in getting to the absolute best solution are based on effects. The comments that are most helpful for the Forest Service in informing the analysis, developing an alternative, or modifying the proposed action answer one of the following questions:

- What are the effects of the proposed action on wildlife, plants, water quality, recreation, heritage, social values, or other resources? Are the effects positive or negative?
- Does the proposed action adequately address the purpose and need for the project?
- Are there unintended consequences from the proposed action?
- Are there alternatives to the proposed action that should be considered because they can accomplish one of the following?
 - Mitigate a negative effect of the proposed action
 - Better address the purpose and need for the project
 - Better provide a positive benefit to one resource, while not causing negative impacts on other resources (including wildlife, plant, heritage, water quality, recreation, and other social resources)
 - Provides a better solution that prevents unintended consequences

Comments that address the questions shown above are the most helpful. **There are some comments that we commonly receive that do not provide the Forest Service a path forward.** Some of these comments include general opinions on the proposed action without any supporting rationale. Suggestions to include actions that are outside the scope of the project (meaning they are not part of the purpose and need for the project) are beyond what the Forest Service can accomplish with the project. While we strive to accomplish the most good with each project, we cannot accomplish all of the goals we have for any one piece of land with a single project. And not every piece of land can provide every type of resource, recreation, or social benefit to all at one time. And of course the Forest Service must remain within law, regulation, and policy. Suggestions to take actions that would require a change in a law, regulation, or policy to accomplish are also outside what the Forest Service can achieve through the proposed action. Reading the proposed action closely and commenting on the actual proposal is very helpful in making sure that your comments are addressing the actual proposal and are not based on generalities or misperceptions.

Providing input during the designated scoping period is the most helpful in allowing the Forest Service to meaningfully respond to comments. Comments will be most helpful if received by November 19, 2019. The Forest Supervisor has the option to extend the public scoping period if they feel the public needs more time to provide meaningful input. The comment periods for the next steps in the NEPA process are prescribed by law and have a designated length that cannot be extended.

Help the Forest Service get to the best solution by providing meaningful comments during the public scoping period! If we don't hear from you, we won't know if we got it right or wrong.

Thank you for taking the time to read the proposed action and provide comments.

Figure 1: NEPA Process for Environmental Assessment (EA)

