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**cc: Georgette Theotig
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Subject: Comment #4 - Boulder Gulch OHV Restoration Project; Lower Kern Canyon and Greenhorn Mountains Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Restoration Project, and the Borel Relicensing Recreation Enhancement Project

The Scoping document mistakenly claims that improving the multiple use trails and signage for trails and separating campgrounds for OHV users from campgrounds for other users will reduce user conflict. We believe that the user conflict will continue as long as OHVs are able to race on trails with other users who are seeking a quiet forest experience.

The Scoping document says,

“The Greenhorn Mountains offer a quiet high elevation camping experience.”

“The Greenhorn Mountains lie northeast of Bakersfield via State Highway 178 and 155 making this area readily accessible to a variety of recreation users.”

“The second phase of the project proposes to relocate two campsites and decommission approximately 1/8 mile of road within Evans Flat Campground where conflicts among OHV users and the non-motorized public are a consequence of unmanaged OHV use. Routes, leading away from the campground, were developed in part by recreationists exploring the area and seeking a four wheel drive experience.”

“Deleting roads and trails, and changing use type on existing trails may decrease problems such as noise and dust, as well as the potential for user conflicts (Sequoia National Forest Motorized Travel Management/Motorized Vehicle Route Designation Project, pgs. 364, 365 and 437).”

“OHV’s are legitimate uses of the National Forest. They may be used on designated routes except where closed by law or by Forest Supervisor order to prevent: Resource

damage (e.g., soil compaction, vegetation damage, wildlife disturbance, fire); Facility damage (e.g., roads, trails, signs, fences); and User conflicts (e.g., motorized and non-motorized use) to maintain specific recreation opportunities/experiences (LRMP, pg. 4-18).”

“Forest signing, both directional and informational, will assist the public to ensure they stay on designated trails; and out of the wilderness and other sensitive areas. Adding signage along the primary access roads, travel routes and trailheads would help disburse information, control congestion and avoid conflicts. District level administrative actions such as improved signing is a simple and inexpensive way to address safety and user conflict problems and would result in all forest users being better served “

Because the Greenhorn Mountains only offer a quiet forest experience where OHVs are not present within the “sound shed,” conflicts among OHV users and the non-motorized public seeking that quiet forest experience are not going to improve as a consequence of managed OHV use. Seekers of the quiet forest or mountain experience with their recreational activities, like backpacking, fishing, hiking, equestrian use, nature viewing, photography, and birding, will be chased away by the noise pollution and air pollution, in addition to the race-track attitude of some OHV users who insist that all multiple use trails are theirs at any speed, regardless of who else, (young or old) is using those trails.

Wherever OHVs are found, the noise level rises as do the conflicts between those seeking a fast thrill-ride and those seeking a slow and peaceful mountains experience.

Putting up signage indicating that this is a multiple-use trail will not make the experience any less offensive to those seeking the solitude of a quiet mountain or forest experience. So we doubt that providing multiple-use trails with “improved signing” could solve “safety and user conflict problems and would result in all forest users being better served.“

Since we believe that most parents would prevent their young children from playing on the highway where traffic is racing by, we believe that hiking and OHVs are incompatible uses on public trails. We believe that the only way to better serve all forest users is to separate OHVs to a distinctly different part of the forest and “sound shed,” so other forest users can have the quiet forest experience they seek and OHV users can experience the thrills and speed in a forested area that they seek. Like Oil and water, OHVs and the majority of those quiet forest experience users don’t mix.

While it is true that forest users seeking the quiet forest experience can go to high country wilderness and roadless areas, those wilderness and roadless areas are inaccessible for much of the year and difficult for many families reach. And wilderness areas and roadless areas represent a small portion of public trail systems and lands. But for the rest of the year when wilderness and roadless areas are not available, the agency must find ways to provide access to trails that provide the quiet forest experience for users seeking solitude.

Sequoia ForestKeeper and the Kern-Kaweah Chapter of the Sierra Club thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please keep us on the contact list for all stages of this project and for all actions in your district.

Respectfully submitted,

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