DEPARTMENT: Board of Supervisors

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Approve a Letter of Response to the Stanislaus National Forest Motorized Travel Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

See attached letter

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Financial Impact? ( ) Yes ( X ) No  Current FY Cost: $ ____________
Budgeted in Current FY? ( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) Partially Funded
Amount in Budget: $ ____________
Additional Funding Needed: $ ____________
Source: ____________
Internal Transfer

Unanticipated Revenue ( ) 4/5’s vote
Transfer Between Funds ( ) 4/5’s vote
Contingency ( ) 4/5’s vote
( ) General  ( ) Other

RESPONSES:

List Attachments, number pages consecutively

Response letter
News release from US Forest Service Stanislaus National Forest
Email from Ag Commissioner

CLERK’S USE ONLY:

Res. No. ____________  Ord. No. ________
Vote – Ayes: 5  Noes: ________
Absent: ________
Approved: ________
() Minute Order Attached  () No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.
Date: ________
Attest: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
County of Mariposa, State of California
By: ____________
    Deputy

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

() Requested Action Recommended
() No Opinion
Comments:

CAO: ________

Revised Dec. 2002
TO: SUPERVISOR TURPIN
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
SUBJECT: Approve a Letter of Response to the Stanislaus National Forest Motorized Travel Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter
RESOLUTION 09-198

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPosa COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
ADOPTED THIS Order on April 28, 2009

ACTION AND VOTE:

Supervisor Turpin;
Approve a Letter of Response to the Stanislaus National Forest Motorized Travel Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter

BOARD ACTION: Supervisor Turpin initiated discussion relative to the letter of response and addressing the use of County roads (Old Coulterville Yosemite Road and Anderson Valley Road), noxious weeds and extreme fire dangers. Supervisor Bibby requested that CHP and CALFIRE be included in the distribution of the letter, and Supervisor Cann requested that the Yosemite National Park Superintendent be included. Supervisor Allen initiated discussion relative to the disbursement of the green sticker revenues and law enforcement services that are provided.

Input from the public was provided by the following:
Keith Williams, speaking as an individual, stated he is a motorcycle rider and uses those areas. He noted that they try to loop the routes for the trails and he provided input on the disbursement of the green sticker fees.

Further discussion was held relative to the disbursement of the green sticker fees and on the services provided. (M)Turpin, (S)Allen, Res. 09-198 was adopted approving the letter of response with the changes to distribution as requested/Ayes: Unanimous.

Cc: File
Stanislaus National Forest
Susan Skalski
Forest Supervisor
19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95340

Subject: Motorized Travel Management Draft
Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Dear Forest Supervisor Skalski:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors would like to thank the Forest Service for providing the County with the opportunity to comment and have input on the Stanislaus National Forest proposed Motorized Travel Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The process the Forest Service has taken with the leadership of Sue Warren, the Forest Service Coordinator for Motorized Travel Management has been very informative and understandable.

The Forest Service Initial Mission Statement of no roads or trails encroaching on private property, respecting all other multiple users with as little interference from off-highway vehicles traffic as possible and the protection of our natural resources is supported by Mariposa County.

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors enthusiastically supports the Forest Service’s compliance with its mission statement. The Board support off-highway vehicle routes with proper management and maintenance, off-highway vehicle use is critical to the economic visibility of several communities in close proximity to these public lands. These visitors support numerous local businesses. Enforcement of an adopted motorized travel management plan will be necessary.

We have three major issues that must be addressed.

1. Mariposa County cannot be responsible for non-licensed vehicles on portions of old Coulterville Yosemite Road (F.S # 2S01) and Anderson Valley Road
(F.S. # 2S02) which are County maintained. See attached map from Mariposa County Public Works.

2. Mariposa County, in partnership with private land owners, have taken an aggressive approach on the reduction of noxious weeds. Specifically Yellow Star Thistle in the Bull Creek area. We are very concerned with the proposed one car length off the travel way for parking. See attached response to the Motorized Travel Management Draft by Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner.

3. The proposed one car length parking off the travel way is of great concern for Mariposa County. As proposed the policy would appear to have the potential to be an extreme fire hazard.

The Board does not endorse any alternates as proposed. To meet our request, several of the proposed alternatives would need to be modified.

Mariposa County would strongly recommend that the Forest Service consider establishing designated staging areas for the off-highway users. By implementing staging areas the off road users would have less impact on all other forest users.

Mariposa County requests that the Forest Service communicate with the adjoining State and Federal agencies on all planned and proposed projects.

Mariposa County would like to thank the Stanislaus National Forest for allowing our County to address our concerns and make recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brad Aborn
Board Chair
Mariposa County
Cc: Congressman George Radanovich
Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Dave Cogdill
Assemblyman Tom Berryhill
Ed Cole, Sierra National Forest Supervisor
State of California Parks and Recreation OHV Division
California State Association of Counties
Regional Council of Rural Counties
Brian Muller, Mariposa County Sheriff
Jim Wilson, Mariposa County Fire Chief
William Haigh, Bureau of Land Management, Folsom District Office
Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento State Office
Maggie Down, Ranger, Groveland Ranger District
Dave Price, California Highway Patrol
Chief Dale Hutchinson, CAL FIRE
Dave Uberuaga, Yosemite National Park Superintendent
April 24, 2009

Dana S. Hertfelder
Director

Stanislaus National Forest
Susan Skalski
Forest Supervisor
19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95340

Subject: Off-Highway Vehicle Use on County-Maintained Roads

Dear Forest Supervisor Skalski:

I would like to express my opposition to the Forest Service proposal to designate the County maintained portions of Old Coulterville Yosemite Road R.S. # 2S01 and Anderson Valley Road R.S. # 2S02 for off-highway vehicle use. I believe that off-highway vehicle use is incompatible with general vehicular traffic and will be detrimental to public safety. In addition, off-highway vehicle use causes additional and unnecessary damage to these County maintained roads leading to increased maintenance cost. Therefore, I am requesting that the Forest Service not designate the County maintained portions of Old Coulterville Yosemite and Anderson Valley Roads for off-highway vehicle use.

Please see the attached map relative to these roads.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dana S. Hertfelder, P.E.
Road Commissioner
Mariposa County

Cc: Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
Susan Skalski, Forest Supervisor
Stanislaus National Forest
19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95340

Subject: Off-Highway Vehicle Use on County-Maintained Roads

Dear Forest Supervisor Skalski:

I would like to express my opposition to the Forest Service proposal to designate the County-maintained portions of Old Coulterville Yosemite Road R.S. # 2S01 and Anderson Valley Road R.S. # 2S02 for off-highway vehicle use. I believe that off-highway vehicle use is incompatible with general vehicular traffic and will be detrimental to public safety. In addition, off-highway vehicle use causes additional and unnecessary damage to these County-maintained roads leading to increased maintenance cost. Therefore, I am requesting that the Forest Service not designate the County-maintained portions of Old Coulterville Yosemite and Anderson Valley Roads for off-highway vehicle use.

Please see the attached map relative to these roads.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dana S. Hertfelder, P.E.
Road Commissioner
Mariposa County

cc: Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
Motorized Travel Management DEIS Available

Sonora, February 27, 2009 - The Forest Service today announced that after four years of work and over 22 public meetings and workshops, the Stanislaus National Forest Motorized Travel Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is available for public review with a 60-day public comment period expected to start on March 6, 2009.

The Stanislaus National Forest Motorized Travel Management project is part of a national effort to define transportation systems on every National Forest. The goal is to develop a sustainable system of routes that provide an array of opportunities for access and recreation on National Forest lands, as well as protection of various resources by curtailing motorized cross country travel.

"This proposal is designed to provide access to Forest visitors while protecting Forest resources. A decision on this proposal will provide a baseline for future travel management decisions", said Forest Supervisor Susan Skalski.

The DEIS displays five different alternatives, each of which includes a distinct system of motorized routes and addresses the following components:

- Prohibition of cross country travel.
- Additions to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) including specified vehicle class and season of use.
- Changes to the existing NFTS in terms of vehicle class, season of use and wheeled over snow use.

Compact Discs containing the DEIS documents, resource reports, supporting documents and maps are available by request. The DEIS is also available for review at the Forest Supervisor's Office; 19777 Greenley Road; Sonora, CA 95370; or, online at http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/stanislaus/projects/ohv.

A Final Environmental Impact Statement and decision by Forest Supervisor Susan Skalski are expected this summer, with a Motor Vehicle Use Map scheduled for release by the end of 2009. Following the designation of specific motorized routes, motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails would be prohibited, unless under special use permit.

Public Meetings

In order to help the public understand the DEIS, the Forest Service will hold a series of public meetings over the next few weeks. Meetings will include optional time for: learning how to use the DEIS, maps, and compact disc; browsing maps; and, asking questions. They are scheduled as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnold</td>
<td>March 11, 2009 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm (Core 6:00-8:00)</td>
<td>White Pines Independence Hall 1445 Blagen Road White Pines, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonora</td>
<td>March 17, 2009 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm (Core 6:00-8:00)</td>
<td>Sonora Opera Hall 250 S. Washington St Sonora, CA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greeley Hill  March 18, 2009  4:00 pm to 9:00 pm (Core 6:00-8:00)  Greeley Hill Community Club House  Fiske Road  Greeley Hill, CA
Lodi  March 21, 2009  1:00 pm to 6:00 pm (Core 3:00-5:00)  Lodi Grape Festival Grounds  413 Lockeford Street, Jackson Hall  Lodi, CA
West Point  To be Determined (March 24 tentative)  Community Hall
Modesto  April 4, 2009  3:00 pm to 8:00 pm (Core 5:00-7:00)  Stanislaus County Harvest Hall  3800 Cornucopia Way  Modesto, CA

Public Comments Invited

Comments are invited on the DEIS. The Environmental Protection Agency will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS in the Federal Register (expected on March 6, 2009); the opportunity to comment ends 60 days following that date.

While comments may be submitted anytime during the analysis process, only those individuals and organizations who provide comments during the comment period are eligible to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215.

Comments may be submitted to Stanislaus National Forest; Attn: Motorized Travel DEIS; 19777 Greenley Road; Sonora, CA 95370. Electronic comments may be submitted to comments-pacificsouthwest-stanislaus@fs.fed.us with Subject: Motorized Travel DEIS. Comments may be submitted by FAX (209) 533-1890; or, by hand-delivery to the address shown above, during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). Oral comments may be provided by calling (209) 532-3671 ext. 350.

The project web page [http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/stanislaus/projects/ohv] includes the latest project updates, schedules for public meetings, and other information. To request additional information regarding this project, contact Sue Warren, Team Leader; Stanislaus National Forest; 19777 Greenley Road; Sonora, CA 95370; or, e-mail swarren@fs.fed.us (to ensure a timely response, it is important to include “Information Request” in the subject line).

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Lyle Turpin

From: Cathi Boze
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2009 3:50 PM
To: comments-pacificsouthwest-stanislaus@fs.fed.us
Cc: Lyle Turpin
Subject: Subject: Motorized Travel DEIS comments

I am writing with regard to the Stanislaus National Forest Motorized Travel Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), particularly with respect to the OHV impact.

I am extremely concerned about the dissemination of invasive weed species throughout the Stanislaus National Forest, and not only in Mariposa County, as areas are opened up to motorized vehicles.

At present noxious weeds such as yellow starthistle and Klamath weed are present along right-of-ways on Bull Creek Road and other county roads in the Stanislaus National Forest which Mariposa County is unable to control because the county only has an easement through the area. Not only are these invasive species adjacent to private property on which the property owners are actively engaged in weed control, but they are also present in staging areas for OHV use. All of which means the proposed increased motorized vehicle/OHV use will lead to increased soil disturbance and distribution of noxious weed seeds, not only along the right-of-way areas, but also into other areas of the forest as well as being transported out of the area on vehicles parked in the yellow starthistle infested staging areas. In addition, there are A-rated weeds such as diffuse knapweed in other areas of the forest which are currently under eradication by USFS personnel, not on the right-of-ways, and I feel that these could also be spread to other areas by OHV use.

Yellow starthistle, the number one noxious weed in California, has not only has high ecological impacts, but also spreads aggressively in disturbed soils. Invasive weed infestations directly compete with native plants and cause their displacement. They are known to occur along both forest service roads and trails and motorized trails unauthorized for motorized use. Ground disturbance causes invasive weeds to spread, particularly if the weeds are already on or near the area being disturbed. Implementation of the preferred Alternative 1 has a high risk for the spread of existing noxious weed infestations and for the introduction of new weed infestations as well as for indirect and direct effects on native vegetation and soils. Motorized vehicle/OHVs are known to enhance weed introduction in a number of ways, including increasing weed introduction by moving weed seed and plant parts from place-to-place in the mud and soil on their tires or on the vehicle itself and by creating habitat along motorized trails.

Currently most weed infestations on the Stanislaus National Forest are located along State, County, or Federal forest service roads. While most of the forest is considered relatively weed free, the lack of weed infestation in most areas of the Stanislaus National Forest may be due to less access onto the forest by motorized vehicles. It is reasonably foreseeable that, with the implementation of Alternative 1, invasive weed species such as yellow starthistle will continue to spread on the Stanislaus National Forest and will be introduced into native plant communities over both the short and long term.

Mariposa County is using County, State, and Federal (including USFS grants) funds to combat invasive weed species. It seems counterproductive to turn around and provide a source through increased motorized vehicle/OHV use in the Stanislaus National Forest to disseminate weed seeds to, not only new areas of the forest, but possibly back onto the private lands. Invasive species such as yellow starthistle are notorious hitch-hikers and OHVs would seem to be ideal candidates to provide the “ride”.

I feel that our public lands are part of the State’s critical infrastructure that we need to preserve and protect at all costs. It is much more cost effective to be pro-active and prevent the dissemination of an invasive species than to try and control and eradicate it after the fact. I would hope that the Stanislaus National Forest would take into consideration my concerns about invasive weed species and the very real possibility that increasing motorized

3/6/1988
vehicle/OHV traffic in the forest will provide an avenue for the proliferation of noxious weeds, not only in the areas where they currently exist, but also into new areas of the forest and onto adjacent private lands as well as public right-of-ways outside the forest boundaries.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Cathi Boze
Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner
(209) 966-2075

3/6/1988
Thank you for your previous scoping comments on the Stanislaus National Forest Motorized Travel Management initial proposed action. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is available for public review with a 60-day public comment period expected to start on March 6, 2009. Compact Discs containing the DEIS documents, resource reports, supporting documents and maps are available by request. The DEIS is also available for review at the Forest Supervisor's Office; 19777 Greenley Road; Sonora, CA 95370; or, online at http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/stanislaus/projects/ohv.
May 8, 2009

Stanislaus National Forest
Susan Skalski
Forest Supervisor
19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95340

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Sincerely,

Brad Aborn
Board Chair
Mariposa County
Cc: Congressman George Radanovich
    Senator Barbara Boxer
    Senator Dianne Feinstein
    Senator Dave Cogdill
    Assemblyman Tom Berryhill
    Ed Cole, Sierra National Forest Supervisor
    State of California Parks and Recreation OHV Division
    California State Association of Counties
    Regional Council of Rural Counties
    Brian Muller, Mariposa County Sheriff
    Jim Wilson, Mariposa County Fire Chief
    William Haigh, Bureau of Land Management, Folsom District Office
    Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento State Office
    Maggie Down, Ranger, Groveland Ranger District
    Dave Price, California Highway Patrol
    Chief Dale Hutchinson, CAL FIRE
    Dave Uberuaga, Yosemite National Park Superintendent