

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: State Clearinghouse
Responsible Agencies
Trustee Agencies
County Clerks
Interested individuals and organizations
Federal Agencies

**Subject: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Over Snow Vehicle Snow Program
Challenge Cost Share Agreements
Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, 1725 23rd Street, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95816, will be the Lead Agency for the Over Snow Vehicle Snow Program Challenge Cost Share Agreements EIR. The purpose of this NOP is to invite comment on the scope and content of the environmental review which is germane to the proposed Project.

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15082 (b), you have 30 days from the date of receipt of this NOP to respond. **Responses must be received by May 25, 2009.** Please send your responses to Ms. Connie Latham, Project Manager at the address shown above or to clatham@parks.ca.gov. Agency responses should include the name of a contact person at the agency.

EIR scoping meetings will be held by the OHMVR Division on the dates listed at the following locations:

May 18, 2009 (Monday) 6-8:00 pm

Redding California
Shasta Trinity National Forest Supervisors Office – **Large Conference Room**
3644 Avtech Parkway
Redding, Ca 96002

May 19, 2009 (Tuesday) 6-8:00 pm

South Lake Tahoe California
Lake Tahoe Community College- **Aspen Room**
1 College Drive
South Lake Tahoe, Ca 96150

May 20, 2009 (Wednesday) 6-8:00 pm

Fresno California
Mariposa Mall – **Auditorium**
2550 Mariposa Mall
Fresno, Ca 93721

Project Title: Over Snow Vehicle Snow Program Challenge Cost Share Agreements

Project Applicant: California Department of Parks and Recreation

Project Location: Eleven National Forests in California: Eldorado, Inyo, Klamath, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Sequoia, Shasta-Trinity, Sierra, Stanislaus, and Tahoe. See attached project location map.

Project Description:

For the next 10 winter seasons 2009-2010 through 2018-2019, the OHMVR Division Challenge Cost Share Agreements (CCSA) would provide funding to 11 National Forests and 3 County Public Works/Road Departments for the operation, maintenance and grooming of winter recreation trails and trailheads within the Project Area. The proposed Snow Program funding represents a continuation of funding for routine maintenance of winter recreation facilities in the National Forests that has been occurring for many years. Groomed trails are predominately maintained for snowmobile or other over snow vehicle (OSV) use; however, ATV users in limited areas, Nordic skiers, snowshoers, and other recreationists can also use the parking areas and groomed trail systems.

The CCSA funded activities (the Project) occur in National Forests and on county right-of-ways located throughout the mountainous regions of California. The project locations extend from the Oregon border (Klamath and Modoc National Forests) south towards Bakersfield (Sequoia National Forest) as shown in Figure 1 (see attached). The roads and trails are generally located between elevations 5,500 and 7,500 feet. A list of agencies and project locations is presented in Table 1 (see attached). Collectively, these project sites comprise the Project Area.

Snow Plowing. Snow plowing occurs on paved roads and trailhead parking areas accessing the groomed trails. Roads and parking areas are plowed several times during storm events as necessary dependent upon weather conditions. Typical equipment used includes a motor grader or a snowplow blade mounted on a standard dump truck, and a snow blower. In total, the Project involves plowing 72 miles of access road and plowing 28 trailhead parking areas.

Snow Grooming. Groomed trails are designated for winter recreation and OSV use by the Forest Plans governing the National Forests. All snow groomed trails are existing dirt or gravel trails or paved roads. These trails are used in the summer for OHV and non-motorized recreation. All project trails have been used annually for winter recreation for many years. Trails are typically groomed using a snowcat (Pisten Bully, Bombardier, or Tucker Sno-Cat) with a blade and tiller attachments. Trail grooming is done in accordance with 1997 Snowmobile Trail Grooming Standards set by the OHMVR Division. The grooming season generally begins in December and continues through mid-March. Start and stop times vary per trail location dependent upon snow presence. Grooming starts in most locations with minimum snow depth of 12 inches. In total, the Project involves grooming 1,721 miles of trail.

Maintenance. The Snow Program provides funds for the servicing of trailhead restrooms, garbage collection, and sign maintenance and replacement. Pre-season trail maintenance involves removal of obstructions along trails such as down trees before first snow.

Environmental Review:

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the OHMVR Division has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Project should be prepared. Potential adverse impacts relate to air quality, biology, geology, hydrology, noise, and recreation. Further refinement of the scope of the technical issues to be addressed will occur during the CEQA process, including input received in response to this NOP.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Table 1. Location and Description of CCSA Snow Program Activity			
CCSA Recipient	Project Location	Snow Program Facility Funded	Description Of CCSA-Funded Activity
Butte County Public Works	Butte County Access from SRs 32 and 89 near Jonesville	Lassen NF: Jonesville snowmobile area Plumas NF: Oroville Quincy Highway	Groom 67 miles of trail, plow 7 miles of access road and 1 trailhead parking (Lassen NF). Plow 10 miles of access road and 1 trailhead parking (Plumas NF).
Eldorado NF Amador Ranger District	El Dorado County Access from Pioneer 18 miles east of Jackson on SR 88	Silver Bear trail system and Iron Mountain trailhead	Groom 80 miles of trail, plow 1 trailhead, and service 3 restrooms.
Inyo NF Mammoth and Mono Ranger Districts	Mono County Access from Hwy 395; SR 203 near Mammoth Lakes; and SR 158 near June Lake	Mammoth/June Lake trail system, Shady Rest trailhead	Groom 100 miles of trail and roads, plow 1 trailhead, service 4 restrooms, and refuse collection.
Klamath NF Goosenest Ranger District	Siskiyou County Access from Hwy 97 near Tennant and SR 139 near Tionesta	Deer Mountain and Four Corners trail system	Groom 135 miles of trail, plow 18 miles of road, plow 1 trailhead, trail maintenance, facility maintenance, refuse collection, restroom service.
Lassen NF	Lassen, Shasta, Plumas, and Tehama Counties Access from SRs 89, 44, 36 in Lake Almanor region	Ashpan, Bogard, Fredonyer, Morgan Summit, and Swain Mountain snowmobile areas	Groom 332 miles of trail and roads, plow 5 trailheads, service 6 restrooms and refuse collection.
Modoc NF Doublehead Ranger District	Siskiyou County Access from SR 49 via SR 139 near Tulelake	Medicine Lake trail system and Doorknob trailhead	Groom 52 miles of trail and roads, plow 13 miles of road, plow 1 trailhead, service 2 restrooms, and refuse collection.
Plumas County Road Department	Plumas County Access from SRs 89/70 near Quincy and near Graeagle	Plumas NF: Big Creek, Bucks Lake, and Gold Lake Roads	Plow 11 miles of road and 3 trailheads.
Plumas NF Mt. Hough and Feather River Ranger Districts	Plumas and Sierra Counties Access from SRs 89/70 near Quincy and Graeagle	Bucks Lake, La Porte, and Gold Lake trail systems	Groom 182 miles of trail, signing along trails, maintenance of 5 trailside warming huts and 3 trailheads, one with restrooms and warming hut, and two with restrooms.

Table 1. Location and Description of CCSA Snow Program Activity			
CCSA Recipient	Project Location	Snow Program Facility Funded	Description Of CCSA-Funded Activity
Sequoia NF Giant Sequoia Nat'l Monument Hume Lake, Tule River/Hot Springs and Greenhorn Ranger Districts	Fresno County Access from SRs 180 and 198 (Big Meadow/Quail Flat) Tulare County Access from SR 155 (Eastside OSV/Holby) and from SR 190, 28 miles past Springville (Westside OSV/Sugarloaf)	Westside OSV/Sugarloaf, Eastside OSV/Holby, Quaking Aspen, Big Meadow/Quail Flat trail systems	Groom 157 miles of trails, plow 4 trailheads, service 3 restrooms, and maintain 3 warming huts.
Shasta-Trinity NF Shasta-McCloud Management Unit	Siskiyou County Access from SR 89 near McCloud	Pilgrim Creek trailhead and trail system	Groom 89 miles of trails and roads, plow 1 trailhead, service 1 restroom and refuse collection.
Sierra County Public Works and Transportation	Sierra County Access from SR 89 south of Sierraville and SR 49 west of Sierraville	Tahoe NF: Little Truckee Summit and Bassetts trail systems	Groom 197 miles of trails, plow 13 miles of road, plow 2 trailheads, and restroom service.
Sierra NF High Sierra Ranger District	Fresno County Access from SR 168 near Lakeshore	Huntington Lake, Kaiser Pass, and Tamarack Ridge/Red Mountain trail systems and trailheads	Groom 209 miles of trails, plow 3 trailheads, and service 4 restrooms.
Stanislaus NF Calaveras and Summit Ranger Districts	Alpine County Access from SR 4 near Bear Valley Tuolumne County Access from SR 108 near Dardanelle and Strawberry	Lake Alpine, Spicer Reservoir, and Hwy 108 trailheads and trail systems	Groom 71 miles of trails and roads, plow 3 trailheads, service 3 restrooms and refuse collection.
Tahoe NF American River Ranger District	Placer County Access from Foresthill Divide Road 12 miles northwest of I-80 near Auburn	China Wall trail system	Groom 50 miles of trails and roads, plow 1 trailhead, service 1 restroom and refuse collection.

Figure 1 – Regional Location Map



National Forest	CSA Project Locations
1. Eldorado NF	Silver Bear (1A), Iron Mtn (1B)
2. Inyo NF	Mammoth/June Lake (2A)
3. Klamath NF	Deer Mountain (3A), Four Corners (3B)
4. Lassen NF	Jonesville (4A), Ashpan (4B), Bogard (4C), Fredonyer (4D), Morgan Summit (4E), Swain Mountain (4F)
5. Modoc NF	Medicine Lake (5A), Doorknob (5B)
6. Plumas NF	Bucks Lake (6A), La Porte (6B), Gold Lake (6C)
7. Sequoia NF	Westside OSV/Sugarloaf (7A), Eastside OSV/Holby (7B), Quaking Aspen (7C), Big Meadow/Quail Flat (7D)
8. Shasta-Trinity NF	Pilgrim Creek (8A)
9. Sierra NF	Huntington Lake (9A), Kaiser Road Pass (9B), Tamarack Ridge (9C), Coyote (9D)
10. Stanislaus NF	Lake Alpine (10A), Spicer (10B) and SR 108 (10C)
11. Tahoe NF	Little Truckee (11A), Bassetts (11B), China Wall (11C)