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**To the State of California OHV Grants Program:**

I write this letter to ***request that the State of California delay funding of the Baldy Mesa OHV project*** to allow time for the Forest Service to do what they were required to do (but failed to do) in the first place: work with the local community to minimize the impact of the project upon the residents, the land, the natural habitat and, most importantly, the significant historic sites that are threatened by what is obviously a poorly planned and unsafe project.

The specifics as to what needs to be changed and why have been voiced and documented repeatedly by a multitude of people and organizations. The Forest Service knows very well what the issues are but so far has chosen to ignore them. ***All that is required is for the Forest Service to take these comments and concerns seriously and revise their plans accordingly.***

Please do not ignore the tremendous local and professional opposition to this project. That opposition comes from many directions: the original petition signed by over 1,200 residents, multiple individuals, historians and non-profit organizations, all of whom have sent letters of opposition to the project. Also, as you are aware, there is a website (Mormon-Trail.com) that has submitted over ***460 (and still counting as of yesterday) new petitions in opposition*** to project. I am not going to repeat all the specific objections and concerns that have been made as they are part of the record. I do, however, endorse them.

As stated on the Mormon-Trail.com website, the petition seeks to stop or at least modify the project because ***"a very important local US and Mormon historical site is being threatened."***

***It is astounding that the Forest Service could be so tone deaf to the voices and objections of so many.*** The only conclusion one can draw is that the Forest Service has lost its way, sacrificing it's stated underlying mission and goals in a self-serving and shortsighted attempt to access state OHV grant funds. Do not reward their failure to be good stewards of public lands by funding what is, at least at present, an ill-conceived, ill-planned and detrimental project.

Attached is a copy of the Mission Statement of the Forest Service taken from their website. ***All that the local residents want is that the Forest Service not ignore its own stated goals and policies.***

In the attached Forest Service Mission Statement, the FS states that its "mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people." As part of the mission, the ***Forest Service makes the following claims, none of which are true*** with respect to how the Forest Service has conducted themselves in the planning and implementation of this project. Instead, they are trying to "bully" this project through the approval process.

- ***Listening*** to people and ***responding to their diverse needs*** in making decisions.
- ***Protecting and managing*** the National Forests and Grasslands so they best demonstrate the ***sustainable multiple-use management concept***.
- ***Helping*** States and communities to wisely use the forests ***to promote*** rural economic development and a ***quality rural environment***.

To achieve their Mission, the ***Forest Service claims that they follow the following 13 guiding principles***. I have highlighted those principles that have been the most seriously compromised by the FS in their heavy-handed handling of this project.

- We use an ecological approach to the ***multiple-use management*** of the National Forests and Grasslands.

***[There is no multiple-use planning by the FS. The Project is detrimental to and unsafe for hikers, equestrians, historic, cultural and environmental resources]***

- We are ***good neighbors who respect private property rights***.

***[Patently false- the FS has repeatedly thumbed their nose at the neighbors to the project area while having been advised repeatedly of the negative impact on adjacent homeowners]***

- We strive for quality and excellence in everything we do and are ***sensitive to the effects of our decisions on people and resources***.

***[Again, false- the decisions taken by the FS are to maximize grant money at the expense of the safety and well being of people and resources]***

- We strive to meet the ***needs of our customers in fair, friendly, and open ways***.

***[The FS does not appear to acknowledge that local residents are "customers" and instead insist on pushing forward with their self-serving plans, they are not transparent, minimize or hide community input, cancel meetings, etc.]***

- We ***form partnerships to achieve shared goals***.

***[Not with any of the local residents, non-profits or historians they haven't]***

- We ***promote grassroots participation in our decisions and activities***.

***[The only grassroots input is strongly opposed to the project]***

- We value and *trust one another and share leadership.*

*[The FS refused to consider any public input or compromise during the planning process and ignored and/or minimized obviously valid comments and criticisms of the project, resulting in deep mistrust of the FS]*

- We recognize and accept that some conflict is natural and *we strive to deal with it professionally.*

*[Not in this case they haven't. The only response we got was no, no and no]*

- We *follow laws, regulations, executive direction, and congressional intent.*

*[Again, not true and this is at the heart of the problem - the FS failed to follow their own laws and regulations in a money grab attempt to bring the project in "under the radar" of the local community]*

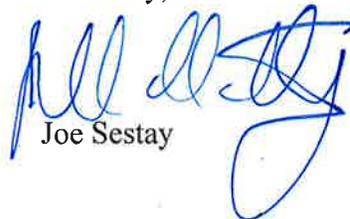
### Conclusion

While there certainly exists the possibility that a realistic, workable and safe OHV project could be implemented in the Baldy Mesa Area, *what is currently proposed should not be implemented.* For starters, the Forest Service needs to revise the proposed OHV trails such that they *do not bisect and disrupt (and likely render useless) the historic Sanford/Mormon trail.* Then, the Forest Service needs to make a good faith effort to work with the community in coming up with a plan that considers and addresses the multiple issues already raised and documented by others.

*This can be done in the coming year, and the Forest Service can re-apply for State OHV grant money next year.*

I believe that the individuals at the Forest Service want to do the right thing (and could do the right thing) but are prevented from doing so by forces beyond their control at the FS. The FS needs to abandon their obvious obsession with obtaining OHV grant money at any cost, and refocus their energy upon what they say is their underlying goal: "to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."

Sincerely,



Joe Sestay

## About Us - Mission

### Mission, Motto, Vision, and Guiding Principles

#### Mission

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

#### Motto: Caring for the Land and Serving People

The phrase, "CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE," captures the Forest Service mission. As set forth in law, the mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people: It includes:

- Advocating a conservation ethic in promoting the health, productivity, diversity, and beauty of forests and associated lands.
- Listening to people and responding to their diverse needs in making decisions.
- Protecting and managing the National Forests and Grasslands so they best demonstrate the sustainable multiple-use management concept.  
Providing technical and financial assistance to State and private forest landowners, encouraging them to practice good stewardship and quality land management in meeting their specific objectives.
- Providing technical and financial assistance to cities and communities to improve their natural environment by planting trees and caring for their forests.
- Providing international technical assistance and scientific exchanges to sustain and enhance global resources and to encourage quality land management.
- Helping States and communities to wisely use the forests to promote rural economic development and a quality rural environment.
- Developing and providing scientific and technical knowledge aimed at improving our capability to protect, manage, and use forests and rangelands.
- Providing work, training, and education to the unemployed, underemployed, elderly, youth, and disadvantaged in pursuit of our mission.

#### Vision

- We are recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in caring for the land and serving people.
- We are a multicultural and diverse organization.
- Employees work in a caring and nurturing environment where leadership is shared.
- All employees are respected, accepted, and appreciated for their unique and important contribution to the mission.
- The work is interesting, challenging, rewarding, and fun -- more than just a job!
- We are an efficient and productive organization that excels in achieving its mission.
- Responsibility and accountability for excellence are shared by employees and partners.
- The American people can count on the Forest Service to perform.

#### Guiding Principles

To realize our mission and vision, we follow these 13 guiding principles:

- We use an ecological approach to the multiple-use management of the National Forests and Grasslands.
- We use the best scientific knowledge in making decisions and select the most appropriate technologies in the management of resources.
- We are good neighbors who respect private property rights.
- We strive for quality and excellence in everything we do and are sensitive to the effects of our decisions on people and resources.
- We strive to meet the needs of our customers in fair, friendly, and open ways.
- We form partnerships to achieve shared goals.
- We promote grassroots participation in our decisions and activities.
- We value and trust one another and share leadership.
- We value a multicultural organization as essential to our success.
- We maintain high professional and ethical standards.
- We are responsible and accountable for what we do.
- We recognize and accept that some conflict is natural and we strive to deal with it professionally.
- We follow laws, regulations, executive direction, and congressional intent.