

April 2, 2010

Michael C. Mitchell
2089 Hacienda Street
Redding, CA 96003

Ref: Grant Applications
Shasta Trinity National Forest
#72-0564834 – Ground Operations
#14-2875800 – Patrol District

CALIFORNIA OFF HIGHWAY
MOTOR VEHICLE RECREATION
Attn: Sixto J. Fernandez, Grants Manager
P.O Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Dear Mr. Fernandez:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments to the preliminary 2009/2010 OHMVR grant applications submitted to you under the Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program. My comments are directed specifically on the applications submitted by the Shasta Trinity National Forest.

I have carefully reviewed the current forest Motorized Travel Management, Record of Decision, (ROD, March 19, 2010) and the applications for funding the projects referenced above. I have also communicated directly with four individual forest staff members to seek clarification on specific program questions I had. I contacted the Blue Ribbon Coalition, Mr. Don Amador, Western Representative and spoke with him about the forest record on OHV management. In addition, I spoke with several members of the local Redding Dirt Riders organization to seek their input on the proposed forest applications.

I have concluded that it would be pre-mature and ill advised for the OHMVR division and the commission to approve funding for these projects for the 2009/2010 grant cycle.

The basis of my conclusion is as follows.

- 1) The implementation of the controversial ROD on the future management of OHV use would substantially change the existing condition and diminish current OHV recreation opportunities on the forest to unacceptable levels for many.
- 2) The forest has not demonstrated a strong enough commitment to contribute shared costs and resources towards the management of OHV use on the forest.

- 3) The forest is not working closely enough with the local governments or invested groups and organizations in the management of existing and future OHV programs.

The Record of Decision for the Motorized Travel Management Plan proposes to significantly restrict permitted motorized recreation on the forest that is most important to the registered owners of OHV's. These routes are currently classified as the "user" created, unauthorized or non-National Forest Transportation System, (NFTS) roads and trails. The ground operations proposal requests significant funding to implement and administer this new OHV route management.

One ill advised example of funding the proposed patrol and ground operations project is to use OHV registration funds to administer operations of "**highway legal vehicles**" only below the high water mark of both Shasta and Trinity Lakes. These areas have been open for the use and enjoyment of "greensticker" OHV's for many years. The network of roads and trails that appear as the water resides annually are not maintained as apart of any forest NFTS. In my opinion OHV registration funds should not be used for administering "street legal" use and excluding OHV use under these circumstances.

The Chappie-Shasta OHV area is an primary example where the forest has reduced it's administrative involvement and commitment to OHV operations and maintenance over the years. I have been informed by forest staff that this O&M grant does not include any specific funding for the forest administration of field operations in this area. It appears that the Bureau of Land Management, Redding Field Office is performing this function. I strongly support BLM's grant request and record of achievement with O&M, volunteer involvement, and commitment. The forest should be matching project cost estimates in the form of OHV "line item" appropriations in their annual fiscal program of work budgets.

The consistent theme and comment I am hearing from contacted local elected representatives and members of OHV groups and organizations, is that the forest is receiving low grades in effectively communicating and working closely with them. With the exception of administrating special use events authorizations, group members do not believe that they are unable to participate or being effectively involved with OHV management on the forest. This is not good.

As a long term user and advocate of outdoor recreation access and OHV opportunities I am deeply concerned about the future direction of the program. I hope the OHMVR division and commission will closely evaluate funding agency projects and provide the OHV community accountability with the expenditure of these funds.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Mitchell