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September 9, 2015

## US Forest Service Travel Planning / Management Primer

**Why do National Forests update / revise their travel management plans?** To provide a clear, standardized designation of where motorized / mechanized recreation is appropriate, sustainable, and desirable on the forest. All national forests are required to update their travel plans as a result of the 2005 Travel Management Rule. For many Forests, their last major travel plan update may have occurred more than 20 years ago. Since then, many Forests have seen increased visitation along with an increase in the types of vehicles that use the Forest, including some with significant new capabilities. For example, mountain biking was not nearly as popular 20 years ago as it is today and many motorized vehicles are more capable of accessing more difficult and remote terrain.

### **What Directs Forests to do travel management (not including oversnow Subpart C)?**

- Executive Order (E.O.) 11644 (February 8, 1972), "Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands," amended by E.O. 11989 (May 24, 1977). These direct Federal agencies to ensure that the use of offroad vehicles on public lands will be controlled/directed so as to prevent resource damage, promote the safety of all users of those lands, and minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.
- **FSM 7700**: On 11/9/2005, the Forest Service published a final travel management regulation, governing use of motor vehicles on NFS lands. The regulation requires identification of a minimum road system and route and area designations. These determinations may occur separately or simultaneously.
- **36CFR Subpart B** describes the requirements for designating roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use and for identifying designated roads, trails, and areas on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM).

### **Besides addressing conflicts between motorized/nonmotorized uses, what are some other goals of travel management planning?**

- Enhance and ensure the quality of recreation experiences
- Protect natural resources and wildlife
- Address confusion regarding where and when motorized use can occur and types of vehicles allowed
- Reduced budgets for maintenance of infrastructure on national forest system lands

**How can the public become involved in travel planning?** There are a several ways to get involved. Each unit publishes a schedule of proposed actions, that's available at the Forest Service website, documenting all proposed projects & POCs. A scoping notice is a letter that requests ideas, suggestions, or issues from the general public, local, state or federal partners, and groups at the onset of the project. The NEPA analysis will include a public comment period, the length of which can depend on whether it is an EA or EIS. These comment opportunities often coincide with field trips, open houses, or other meetings. Submitting substantive, relevant public comments is critical to helping shape an analysis and/or decision. Prior to the decision, an objection period may be held, during which people, agencies, or groups that submitted comments may send in objections.

**Can local government "veto" a Forest plan or travel management plan through their growth plans?** In light of the Property Clause and the Supremacy Clause, a county ordinance is valid and enforceable against the federal government only if it is consistent with federal law and enacted pursuant to explicit congressional authorization. It is unlikely that county ordinances will meet these requirements (*excerpt - July 15, 2009 USDA Office of General Counsel Attorney Rebecca Harrison memo to R5 Acting Planning Director*). It is the goal of the Forest Service to involve local government early and often in the process so they have the opportunity to provide input and better understand the process involved in how the deciding official arrived at their decision.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
COUNCIL. 2015-16