

Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District Travel Plan 2006

USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, Idaho Panhandle National Forests
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District

April 2006



The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.

Albert Einstein
(1879-1955)

The maze of roads and trails that allow each of us access into all but the deepest backcountry of the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District didn't get there overnight. Historically, roads were built following early paths and trails, frequently along streams, rivers and lakes.

Over a period of decades, roads were built for mining and timber harvest. In addition, roads were added to provide access for fire control and management of forest resources. The past couple of decades have seen development of motorized recreation vehicles that can climb higher, faster and further than ever before. Even in the 1960's, a 50-mile trip just for the fun of it was a rare occurrence. Today, there are many more people in northern Idaho and eastern Washington. Visitors come to the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District every day of the week, and think nothing of the distance. As a result, the scattered trails that were once traveled only by horse or on foot have become a widespread network heavily used for all means of recreation.

As the needs and uses continually change, so do the laws and regulations that guide management of roads and trails to ensure public safety and protection of resources. We hope you'll join us as we take a look at our current on-the-ground conditions, and develop a proposed Travel Plan. With your help, we'll identify changes that are necessary to provide a balance between resource protection, public access, and forest management. The following pages describe what we hope to accomplish, how we plan to get it done, and how you can help throughout the process. **Our first meeting will be held on Thursday, April 27, starting at 6 p.m. at Fernan Elementary School, 520 N. 21st, Coeur d'Alene.**

If you have questions, suggestions, or need more information, please call us. We'll be glad to talk with you over the phone, meet with you in a convenient location, or travel the forest roads and trails together to answer your questions.

Randy Swick

Randy Swick
District Ranger

Linda McFadden

Linda McFadden
Deputy District Ranger



What's Our Destination and How Do We Get There From Here?

In 2005, the Forest Service published a new rule for providing motor vehicle access to national forests and grasslands. The rule requires each national forest to designate those roads, trails and areas open to motorized vehicle use, and identify them on a motor vehicle use map. The map will be published annually, and will be free to the public. The motorized vehicle use map does not replace visitor maps or other maps intended to convey visitor information—the map only addresses routes designated for motor vehicle use.

This is a public process, and we need you to participate. The national forests are shared resources held by all Americans. Recreational visitors experience them in many different ways. Across the country, some of our most effective examples of travel management involve State and local governments, motorized and nonmotorized users, and other affected citizens working together.

Come Along for the Ride

We'll be using a variety of tools to ensure that anyone who has an interest is kept informed and has plenty of opportunities to be involved in shaping the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District Travel Plan along the way. Collaboration is an important part of this process.

Collaboration is a long word for a simple concept. It represents a group of people willing to attack a common problem rather than each other, and to go beyond the basics of public involvement. Collaboration focuses on interests, not positions; on problem-solving rather than policy setting. We're looking for a balance of representation for all interests. Participants, whether representing a group or their own interest, have to be willing to work with people who have interests they may not agree with, and be willing to work toward solutions.

The goal of our collaboration efforts is not to solve all the problems associated with national forest access, but to improve the on-the-ground situation on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. Working together, we can provide a balance between resource protection, public access, and forest management.

Whether you want to comment from the comfort of your home computer, roll up your sleeves and pour over a map of routes with others, or get out to specific roads and trails with the Forest Service employees that make up the District Travel Plan team, we'll have a way for you to do it.

Are We There Yet?

In order to arrive at our Travel Plan destination within the desired two to three years, we've set up an itinerary if you will—checkpoints that will assure we complete the process on time. The following are some of the key checkpoints:

April—June 2006: Through collaborative activities with interested members of the public, we'll develop a proposed action and gather information on the condition of roads and trails.

July—August 2006: We'll present the proposed action that was developed through the collaborative efforts to the general public for their comments and suggested changes. To ensure that there is ample time to discuss the proposed Travel Plan, this "scoping" period will last 60 days.

September—December 2006: After incorporating any necessary changes identified during scoping, the project team will analyze and document potential effects of the proposed action and any alternatives developed during scoping.

January—March 2007: Our findings will be presented to the public in an environmental assessment for their review. We will work with interested members of the public to respond to their concerns, comments and specific recommendations for designation of roads and trails. This review period will last 90 days.

April—May 2007: We'll prepare a Decision Notice to document the details of the new Travel Plan.

If you choose to join our collaboration efforts, you can expect to attend at least 3 or 4 meetings over the next few months.

Our first meeting will be on Thursday, April 27, at Fernan Elementary, 520 N. 21st, in Coeur d'Alene.

(The location of following meetings will vary, and may occur in more than one community.) We'll discuss the national Travel Management Rule, the problem we're trying to solve, and our collaborative process.

For more information, please call:

Linda McFaddan

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(208) 783-2101

Don Garringer

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(208) 769-3005**

Visit our webpage:

www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/eco/manage/nepa

Please return one of the coupons below to indicate your interest in receiving information related to the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District Travel Plan 2006 project. If your response is "Yes," please let us know your preferences for involvement using the attached comment sheet.

If we don't receive either coupon by May 15, 2006, your name will be removed from the project mail list. Thank you!

No Thanks!

Please take my name off the Travel Plan 2006 mail list!

Attach the envelope label or print your name and address here:

Return this coupon to:

Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District
Attn: Travel Plan Revision 2006
2502 East Sherman Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814



Yes—I'm Interested!

Please keep my name on the Travel Plan mail list!

Attach the envelope label or print your name and address here:

I'd like to receive updates and information via email instead. My email address is:

Return this coupon to:

Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District
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Our Travel Plan will only be as good as the effort that we all put into it. Use this page to tell us what can we do to make it easier for you to participate.

Will you join us?

Are you interested in participating in the Travel Plan meetings to develop a proposal for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District? Time is a precious commodity, and no one wants to spend time in meetings without seeing results. What can we do to make the Travel Plan meetings more productive? For example, where would be the most convenient location for you? How often are you willing to meet? How far would you be willing to travel to attend meetings? Would you prefer to attend meetings in the evening or on a Saturday?

You've got mail!

We can save money by sending email messages or documents on compact disks. If you're not computer-minded, you may prefer to get printed information through the mail. Which is more convenient for you?

What else would help?

Do you have other suggestions that would help make this a more focused and effective process?

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