

Forest Service continues public meetings on Travel Plan Project

SHOSHONE COUNTY — The Forest Service is hosting a public meeting on Thursday, June 22 to further discuss the Travel Plan Project for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. The meeting is 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Fernan Elementary School, 520 N. 21st, Coeur d'Alene.

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 roads, trails and areas open to motorized vehicle use, and identify them on a motor vehicle use map. The Coeur d'Alene District Travel Plan Project is intended to develop that map, which will be available free to the public, a recent press release stated. This will be the third meeting with the public on this project.

"At the end of April we met with interested members

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— Linda McFaddan
Deputy District Ranger

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of the public to introduce the project and discuss the new rule for motor vehicle access on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District," said Linda McFaddan, deputy district ranger. "Our most recent meeting was on May 31, when we began gathering information from the public about their proposed changes to existing travel routes on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District and, with their help, running each proposal through a simple screening process that will help us sort out which may be appropriate to include in the proposed action and which will not be appropriate to consider under the Travel Plan Project."

McFaddan noted that there has been a good representation of interests at the meetings, including ATV users, motorcycle riders, hunters, horsemen, hikers, environmental organizations, and other interested individuals. A total of 38 people attended the first meeting that was held April 27 in Coeur d'Alene, with 79 attending the May 31 meeting at Canyon Elementary near Cataldo.

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McFaddan also said there have been a total of 56 proposals registered so far.

"The June 22 meeting will be a continuation of our working with the public to define their proposed route changes and gather the information we need to be able to develop a proposed action to present to the general public," McFaddan said. "A number of people are still working on their proposals. To make this easier for them, we're working on maps that display screening information and more detailed geographic locations. By June 12, we should have printed copies at our Smelterville and Fernan offices, as well as electronic copies available on our project Website (www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/) and on compact disks."

Additional meetings are planned for July.

"We anticipate at least one or two more meetings in July where we'll sit down with the public again and look at a ten-

tative proposed action based on the proposals that have met the criteria," she said. "For example, would such a proposed action meet the needs and desires of the diverse recreational visitors to the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District? Are the routes and uses of the proposed action in harmony with the environment around them?"

For more information about the meeting or the project, contact one of the assistant team leaders at the Fernan office of the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District: Don Garringer, (208) 769-3005 or Rob Davies, (208) 769-3067, or visit the project Web page (www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/).