



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Idaho Panhandle
National Forest

Coeur d'Alene River
Ranger District

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File Code: 1950

Date: March 15, 2007

Hello –

The demand for outdoor recreation opportunities in northern Idaho is greater than ever. In the right places and carefully managed, motorized recreation is an appropriate way to enjoy the National Forests. However, if not managed carefully, motorized recreation can damage both the land and the resources that visitors come to enjoy.

Motorized travel on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District is managed through a Travel Plan that is periodically updated to reflect changing conditions and uses. In 1998, the Forest Service proposed changes to the Travel Plan for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District and conducted an environmental assessment to document the underlying analysis and rationale for their proposal. A new Travel Plan was issued in 2001, with the understanding that the plan would be revised every couple of years to reflect changes.

In 2003, the Forest Service amended the Travel Plan based on public comment and agency analysis. A lawsuit was filed against the Forest Service, alleging the Travel Plan did not complete the proper analysis and documentation decision. In March 2005, a federal judge ordered the Forest Service to review and analyze the Travel Plan in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements within a period of two to three years. Also in 2005, a national Travel Management Rule was issued, requiring all National Forests to complete travel management plans in compliance with the new rule, and identify those roads, trails and areas open to motorized vehicle use on a map to be published annually.

Over the past several months we have been working with members of the public to develop a Travel Plan to comply with the new travel management rule, which also demonstrates compliance with the judge's order. After a number of public meetings and consultation with wildlife managers at Idaho Fish and Game, we have ready for your review a proposed designated road and trail system that meets access needs while protecting the resources of the area. The attached document describes our process for developing the motor vehicle use map, proposed changes to the existing travel management system, information on how and when to comment, and whom to contact for additional information. Please take time to review the document, and contact us if you have any questions.

For more information about this proposal or the process we are using, please contact Project Team Leaders Linda McFaddan, (208 783-2101) or Rob Davies (208-769-3067). Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Linda McFaddan*

LINDA McFADDAN
Deputy District Ranger

enclosure





Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District Travel Plan Project - Scoping Document

Background

Recreation opportunities in the National Forests are managed to protect the land for the benefit of all users. Motorized travel on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District is managed through a Travel Plan that is periodically updated to reflect changing conditions and uses. The following chronology reflects the events leading up to the current proposal.

- 1996: Prior to 1996, the area known today as the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District was administered as two separate units, the Fernan Ranger District and the Wallace Ranger District. Each District had its own Travel Plan and somewhat different means for managing access. In 1996, management of the Fernan and Wallace Ranger Districts was consolidated to form the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. The new administrative unit immediately pursued development of a single Travel Plan that integrated the access management approaches of the two previous Districts.
- 1998: An environmental assessment documenting the underlying analysis for the new Travel Plan was completed and made available for public review.

Concurrent with the preceding analysis, the Forest Supervisor issued the 1998 Travel Plan map and order based on existing access management decisions for the Fernan and Wallace areas. This plan remained in effect until the completion of the new Travel Plan.
- 1999: A supplement to the environmental assessment was completed in response to public comment.
- 2001: Supported by the preceding assessment, the new Travel Plan and map for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District was issued with the understanding that the plan would be revised every couple of years to reflect changes. The 2001 Travel Plan designated a backbone system of roads and trails for a variety of motorized uses and precluded motorized use off of these designated routes.
- 2003: The District considered proposed changes to the 2001 Travel Plan based on public comment. An environmental analysis was completed and a decision issued to amend the 2001 Travel Plan. The 2003 amendment made several adjustments to the designated route system, and a new map referred to as the 2003 Travel Plan was prepared.
- 2003: A lawsuit was subsequently filed against the Forest Service, alleging the 2001 Travel Plan and subsequent 2003 amendment did not complete the proper analysis and decision documentation.
- 2005: In March, a federal judge ordered the Forest Service to review and analyze the Travel Plan in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements within a period of two to three years. In the interim, the judge ordered the Forest Service to manage motorized use under provisions of the 2001 Travel Plan as amended in 2003.

During the same time frame, a new national Travel Management Rule was issued. It required all National Forests to complete Travel Plans in compliance with the new rule, and identify those roads, trails, and areas open to motorized vehicle use on a map to be published annually. Activities that were exempt from the Travel Rule included aircraft, watercraft, over-snow vehicles, limited administrative use, emergency and law enforcement response, national defense purposes and uses specifically approved under a written authorization (for example, preferred fuelwood cutting permit, grazing permit, or special use authorization).

Purpose and Need for Action

We are conducting the 2006 Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District Travel Plan project to comply with the new travel management rule, which also demonstrates compliance with the judge's order.

The purpose of the Travel Plan project is to:

- ✓ *Designate a sustainable motorized route system for non-over snow use providing public access and recreation travel on the District.*
- ✓ *Bring the current travel plan into compliance with laws, regulations and other management direction.*
- ✓ *Provide a diversity of motorized opportunities, for non-winter use, while balancing the needs of forest resources, such as water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and rare plants.*
- ✓ *Identify the types of use and restrictions associated with each designated motorized route.*

Types of use are addressed through 4 categories: full-size vehicles, 4-wheel drive vehicles, ATVs (50 inches wide or less), and motorcycles. Non-motorized use will be discussed but designation of trails, identifying specific types of non-motorized use is not addressed with this project. Restrictions include seasonal designations, which are used to manage resource concerns such as disturbance to meadows and floodplains, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat needs; and to allow trail grooming during the winter months.

Baseline for the Proposed Action

A project interdisciplinary team comprised of Forest Service personnel reviewed the planning record and environmental documentation for the 2001 Travel Plan and the 2003 amendment. In addition, they reviewed project decisions since 2003 that affected motorized travel.

Prior to the development of the 2001 Travel Plan, motorized use had been managed under the 1998 Travel Plan. The 1998 Travel Plan was still divided between the Fernan and Wallace Ranger Districts, and reflected a designated route system for motorized use based on previous Forest Service project decisions, such as timber sales and watershed improvement projects and road / trail condition surveys. It highlighted area and route restrictions, but did not specifically preclude cross country travel.

The objectives for the 2001 Travel Plan and subsequent 2003 amendment were to develop a travel plan that provided access for a variety of users commensurate with other resource objectives, including wildlife habitat and watershed restoration. The resulting analysis further refined a backbone system of designated routes and prohibited motorized travel off these designated routes.

Using the preceding information, the IDT developed a starting option for the current Travel Planning effort. The starting option might best be defined by the following equation:

***Starting Option = 2001 Travel Plan as amended in 2003 +
Project Specific Decisions since 2003***

The result was a "backbone" designated route system for motorized use during the non-snow period. It also precluded cross country motorized use off of designated routes. This latter stipulation was consistent with the 2001 Travel Plan recommendation and the 2005 Travel Management Rule which prohibited motorized vehicle use off of designated roads and trails and outside of designated areas (36 CFR 261.13).

This information and an associated map was packaged as the Starting Option and was used as a tool for opening dialogue with other agencies and interested publics. Input received from these discussions was used to refine the Starting Option and develop the Proposed Action.

To ensure we could complete the project in the time allowed under the 2005 Travel Management Rule and the judge's order, we focused on routes that currently exist on the landscape which would not require substantial earth disturbance (such as new construction or reconstruction) to be suitable for the proposed method of travel.

Consideration of user-created Routes

User-created routes have been developed without agency authorization, environmental analysis, or public involvement and therefore do not have the same status as National Forest system roads and trails included in the forest transportation system. Some user-created routes may be appropriate for inclusion in the transportation system, but site-specific field review and separate environmental analysis would be required. This would take longer than the timeframe allotted under the national Travel Rule for completion of the motor vehicle use map; therefore, user-created routes will not be considered under this Travel Plan project. That is not to say that those routes may never be designated for motorized travel; we are committed to working with user groups and others to identify such routes and consider them on a site-specific basis under separate project analysis.

Collaboration With the Public

Collaboration has been an important part of shaping the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District Travel Plan. Beginning back in 1996, the District used news articles, legal ads and public open-house meetings to inform the public of their travel planning effort and encourage feedback. Further public input was received during reviews of the 1998 Environmental Assessment and a subsequent supplement. In 2002, the District solicited public input on any needed changes to the 2001 Travel Plan, and used this information in crafting the 2003 amendment.

We first contacted the public about the current travel planning effort in early April 2006, when we sent out a letter asking for their help in gathering information about existing routes and uses, and in developing a detailed list of proposed routes available for motorized use in non-snow months. (Winter travel usually occurs over snow, which represents a different set of issues and concerns, and is therefore addressed separately.)

During the next several months, we held four public meetings. At the April meeting, we introduced ourselves and the project, and outlined the process that we would use to develop the Travel Plan. At the May and June meetings, we asked the public to begin defining specific proposed changes to the Starting Option that were needed to provide a balance between resource protection, public access, and forest management. A total of 209 proposals were received during the collaborative process. The input from individuals, organizations, and other agencies helped shape the Proposed Action, as well as assess potential resource and social issues. At our September meeting, we presented a draft Proposed Action to the public. Information regarding each of these meetings is provided on the project website (www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/).

Screening Proposals

Each proposal was subject to two levels of screening. The first level was done with the help of the public at the May and June public meetings. Proposals were set aside if they:

- ✓ *Were **too generic** to map (for example, "close all trails to motorized use," or "open all routes to motorized use").*
- ✓ ***Did not recommend any change** from the existing condition (for example, "Keep Trail XYZ open to motorized use").*
- ✓ *Would require new **construction or reconstruction** of a route (which is beyond the scope of the designated provisions under the 2005 Travel Management Rule).*
- ✓ *Would require designation of a **user-created route** (as stated earlier, user-created routes were developed without agency authorization, environmental analysis, or public involvement, and do not have the same status as National Forest System roads and trails included in the forest transportation system).*
- ✓ *Would conflict with travel management strategies on **neighboring federal lands** (for example, designating a motorized route that would lead into an area designated as nonmotorized on a neighboring ranger district).*
- ✓ *Involved a route through private land, for which the Forest Service does not hold any legal right-of-way **easement**.*
- ✓ *Addressed **winter (over snow) travel**, which presents a different set of management issues and environmental impacts than other types of motor vehicles, and is therefore outside the scope of this project.*

Throughout much of June and July, the project team further screened the proposals, considering:

- ✓ **Recreation** experience (types of use, vehicle classes, difficulty level and safety, and ability to link routes, attractions and facilities);
- ✓ **Environmental** issues (soil, water, vegetation, wildlife and cultural resources, and the relationship between motor vehicle use and other national forest uses); and
- ✓ **Operational** issues (speed, volume, type and distribution of traffic, support from user groups and other agencies, access for emergency, maintenance and enforcement; and ability to fund maintenance, operation and enforcement of the system).

Based on these two levels of screening criteria, the team set aside proposals that could not be completed under this project and documented the reasons why in a spreadsheet that was shared with the public at the September meeting, and is posted on the internet at www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/.

Vehicle Requirements

Any roadway open to public use where cars and trucks are allowed is considered a maintained public route. All Forest Service and connecting Bureau of Land Management and many County roads designated as open to full-size vehicles would allow ATV, UTV, and motorcycle use only if they comply with Idaho State requirements. All off highway vehicles using designated routes for motorized use are required to have a valid Idaho State OHV sticker or valid license plate and registration and functioning mufflers capable of limiting noise emissions to 96 decibels at one-half meter. Operators under 18 are required to wear a helmet.

Coordination With Idaho Fish & Game

Motorized travel provides increased opportunities for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing, but it can also disrupt and adversely affect certain species and their habitat. This was an important consideration in developing this proposed action as well as the 2001 Travel Plan and 2003 amendment.

We continued to work with specialists from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to determine where important fish and wildlife populations and/or habitat are located on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. We asked them to review the Starting Option and proposed changes to the Starting Option and provide feedback relative to their responsibilities to manage fish and wildlife populations. We considered their recommendations in preparing this Proposed Action, seeking to advance a backbone system of roads and trails available for motorized travel in balance with protecting important fish and wildlife populations and habitat.

The Proposed Action

Two sets of five maps representing the proposed Travel Plan for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District are available on the internet at: www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/, or on compact disk (CD) by contacting the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. A printed set of the maps is available for review at the Forest Service's Fernan Office at 2502 E. Sherman Avenue, Coeur d'Alene, ID, and the Silver Valley Office at 173 Commerce Drive, Smelterville, ID. One set of maps identifies the routes that would be available to motorized use under the Proposed Action; the second set provides additional information regarding each proposed change from the Starting Option.

The changes that would be made from the Starting Option under the Proposed Action are listed in Table 1 and summarized in Table 2. Table 2 provides a summary of the available miles for each class of motorized vehicle under the Proposed Action. Each change to the Starting Option is identified with a proposal number and depicted on each of the five maps through unique line symbols. Table 3 includes the rationale for the proposed change with a map number (1-5) for easy reference.

*Compliance
with the Forest
Plan*

The Land Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests describes the desired condition for the Forest, and establishes the objectives, suitability and guidelines that help achieve those desired conditions. Land management plans are strategic and typically do not include site-specific decisions. The IPNF Forest Plan is currently undergoing revision, and should be completed in 2007. The District's Travel Plan will be developed to be consistent with the revised Forest Plan, and will be updated as necessary, with the involvement of the public, once the Revised Forest Plan is available. For more information on the IPNF Forest Plan revision, please visit their webpage: www.fs.fed.us/kipz/.

*Changes in
Seasonal
Availability*

During the public meetings, one of the most vocal concerns about the Starting Option was seasonal restrictions on particular roads and trails. The original restrictions came about through a number of independent decisions that were issued up until 2001; these decisions were connected to timber sales or other projects that closed roads year round to public access to protect elk security in the spring and fall, along with addressing watershed concerns.

Public comments during the development of the 2001 Travel Plan brought forward issues concerning summer recreation use and how it might be allowed without impacting elk security during the more critical periods of time, fall breeding, and spring calving. In response to public comments the 2001 Travel Plan applied spring and fall restrictions on a particular set of routes which superceded previous decisions that completely closed routes after timber sales year round. The IDT looked carefully at the rationale that led to seasonal restrictions under the Starting Option and consulted with our partners at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to evaluate when and why seasonal restriction might be needed using current conditions and best available science.

Under the Proposed Action, the roads and trails with seasonal motorized use restrictions are identified on the maps. The affected routes are generally the same as those displayed in the Starting Option, however the length of seasonal use has been expanded for trails. There are only two types of seasonal restrictions, one for roads and one for trails:

- 1) **Roads** with seasonal restrictions – Allow public use from the start of Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.
- 2) **Trails** with seasonal restrictions – Allow public use from April 1 through Labor Day weekend.

Most of the new ATV and 4-WD trail proposals incorporated into the Proposed Action do not include seasonal restrictions unless a specific concern was identified that warranted limited motorized use. A number of other routes do include seasonal restrictions, to address the following concerns:

- *Key areas of elk habitat are affected by disturbance of motor vehicles during the rutting season (generally beginning in September); decreasing breeding success and affecting overall population stability.*
- *Success of elk harvest by rifle and archery hunters tends to increase when motorized access is available because greater areas can be accessed more efficiently and game retrieval is easier. Managing the timing of use on specific motorized roads or trails helps to manage for stable elk populations.*
- *Snow conditions vary from year to year; continuous monitoring spring road and trail conditions to determine when opening a route is appropriate is difficult. Setting a consistent opening weekend allows a manageable time frame to accomplish opening of seasonal roads while still meeting the demands of recreation during a heavy use period.*

In addition, soft road or trail conditions occur typically in the wet seasons, spring and fall, on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. During wet periods, closure orders, already established through 36 CFR 261.54 may be used to prevent damage by motor vehicle use. The purpose of the closure is to prevent surface rutting, protect water quality, and reduce costly road repair that could occur if motor vehicles were to travel on soft wet routes. The closure order would prohibit travel until the route has hardened sufficiently to avoid damage and to ensure public safety. The Motor Vehicle Use Map, route barriers, and signs would be the primary tools used to manage seasonal use on restricted routes.

*Availability of
Access to
Dispersed
Campsites*

All roads available to the public for motorized use would have a 300-foot zone on each side of the route where motor vehicles could pull off for the purpose of dispersed camping. The exception to this 300 foot access are those existing dispersed camping sites where established access has been developed and closure orders are in place. Traveling off road for any purpose other than accessing developed routes to get to developed sites is prohibited under existing orders (36 CFR 261.53f, 261.54a and 261.56). These sites are displayed on the Proposed Action Maps and include:

- *Bumblebee Meadows along Road 206*
- *Big Hank Meadows along Forest Highway 9*
- *Independence Camp: at the end of Road 925, trailhead for Trail 22*

Areas where the 300-foot zone does not apply would be along 7 specific roads or sites where “no camping” orders are currently in place (36 CFR 261.58e):

- *Road 437 along East Fork of Hayden Creek (from the Forest Boundary to Hudlow Saddle). Road 206 along Stump Creek (from the junction of Roads 437 and 206 to mile post 2). Hayden Lake was below State water quality standards for nutrients and human waste from campers along the stream bottoms which became a concern for water quality, fish spawning, and fish-rearing habitat.*
- *Road 438, Beauty Creek Road (from the Forest Boundary to mile post 4). Effects to water quality in Beauty Creek and nearby Lake Coeur d’Alene are a concern due to riparian disturbance and human waste.*
- *Mullan Historic Site near Fourth of July Summit. It is important to protect historic land marks and physical features from disturbance that could occur as a result of dispersed camping.*
- *Marie Creek Trailhead Parking Area, along Road 202. Water quality and stream health is a concern since this trailhead is located near a stream.*
- *English Point Parking Area and recreation site. This is a day-use area with equestrian and hiking trails. Camping is not a compatible use with the current management of this area.*
- *Nettleton Gulch, Road 1562 to the parking area. This is a day-use area and trailhead for motorcycle, ATV, bicycle, and hiking use. Camping is not a compatible use with the current management of this area.*
- *Settlers Grove, Road 805 along the West Fork of Eagle Creek. This is a unique and rare site with sensitive vegetation, fragile riparian areas, and water quality concerns. Camping is not compatible with the protection of this unique site.*

Besides the specific reasons listed above, general reasons for restricting off-road use for camping at these areas are to protect aquatic habitat, wet meadows, bogs, and fragile soils and prevent spread of noxious weeds in areas with rare native plants.

*Glossary of terms
and vehicle class
Definitions*

Roads and trails are designated for use based on vehicle class.

- **Administrative Roads:** Not available to the public. The majority of these roads are brushed in and not drivable unless recent forest management projects have occurred on them. A good portion of these roads are not actively being used for forest management and they are not all necessary for long term administrative access. Unnecessary roads, not needed for long term management will likely be decommissioned over time as priorities are established and funding becomes available. Some administrative roads will also be used for special use permits, utility maintenance, forest research, wildfire activities, and other authorized uses.
- **Full-size vehicle Roads:** Available to passenger cars, trucks, four-wheel drive vehicles, sport utility vehicles, utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) and motorcycles.
- **4WD Trails:** Available for high clearance vehicles and/or vehicles with improved traction; ATVs, UTVs, and motorcycles. These routes would be maintained to the lowest standard necessary for public safety and protection of environmental resources.
- **ATV Trails:** Available to any vehicle 50 inches or less in width. These routes are also available to motorcycles.
- **Motorcycles Trails:** Available to motorcycles or other motorized vehicles with two wheels (with "in-line" wheel alignment).
- **Nonmotorized Trails:** Available for hiking, horses, bicycles, and other nonmotorized vehicles, unless specific restrictions are identified on the travel map and through signs (these will not be displayed on the Motor Vehicle Use Map).

Designation of nonmotorized trails is not within the primary purpose and need of this project, but when motorized use is restricted on a trail, the designation is - by default - nonmotorized. Nonmotorized uses are allowed everywhere in the National Forest, including roads and trails that are available to motorized uses; however, there is an increased hazard when motorized and nonmotorized uses are sharing the same trail. To allow a mix of recreation uses on the District and avoid safety concerns such as noise, dust and other potential issues associated with motorized travel, some trails are designated for nonmotorized uses only.

*Correction of
Errors*

Several mapping errors were identified in the Starting Option; these errors have been corrected to reflect decisions since 2001 and true conditions on the ground today.

- ✓ **Spruce Ridge, Road 205** The current travel plan approved the use of this route as a ATV trail. Since the location and condition of the road doesn't prevent full-size vehicles from using it the project team recommended that motorized use not be restricted.
- ✓ **Spruce Creek, Road 240** The current travel plan approved the closure of the segment of this road located between the Junction of the Road 3099 and the crossing of the Coeur d'Alene River. In 2003 the need to utilize the area adjacent to the river crossing as a trailhead for Trail 452 had not been anticipated. As this need has now been identified, the project team recommended that this segment of road remain open to all vehicle use.
- ✓ **Marie Saddle, Road 413A** The current travel plan identified that this road would be open to all motorized use on a seasonal basis. Since implementation of the current travel plan, funding has not been available to remove encroaching brush or to maintain the road to the standard necessary for the intended use. Based on this, the project team recommended that motorized use of this road be limited to administrative uses until improvements can be initiated and completed.
- ✓ **Road 534SC** Located in the upper Potter Creek area, this route was displayed on the 2003 Travel Plan as an administrative road. This is a map error. The route is open, driveable and maintained.

*Correction of
Errors,
continued*

- ✓ **Flora Miller Road 616** The current travel plan identifies this road as being open to highway vehicles. Ground-truthing has revealed that this route is vegetated and has a failed culvert making it undrivable by full-size motor vehicles. New construction would be needed to connect this loop route. Flora Miller Road 616 will be designated as closed to motorized use.
- ✓ **North Fork Hayden Road 625** Analysis under the 1999 Douglas-fir Beetle Project concluded that decommissioning would be the best action to protect water quality. In 2005, the court agreed and ordered the road to be closed. This road will be gated and managed for administrative use-only until funding becomes available to decommission the road.
- ✓ **Swan Peak Road 810** The current travel plan identifies this road as open to all motorized use on a seasonal basis. Since implementation of the current travel plan, funding has not been available to remove encroaching brush or to maintain the road to the standard necessary for the intended use. Based on this, the project team recommended that motorized use of this road be limited to administrative uses until improvements can be initiated and completed.
- ✓ **Little Teepee Roads 1521 and 1521 C and D** Under the current travel plan this system of roads would be open to all motorized use on a seasonal basis. Field reviews determined the roads are brushed in, with the exception of the segment of Road 1521 between its junction with Road 323 and the junctions of the C and D spurs. Since implementation of the current travel plan, funding has not been available to remove the encroaching brush or to maintain the roads to a standard suitable for the intended use. Based on this, the project team recommended that the impassable segment of Road 1521 and Roads 1521 C and D be limited to administrative uses until improvements can be completed.
- ✓ The 2002 Iron Honey Project Record of Decision identified **Roads 1550 and 1560** to be opened as an alternate route to connect the Horse Haven area to Bunco Road 332. The decision also identified that **Roads 1552, 1560 Spurs and the segment of 1560 between the junctions of Roads 1550 and 258, 1550 and 6328 roads** would be managed as ATV trails. The Iron Honey decision was not implemented, so consequently the improvements needed to make these routes suitable for the proposed use was never initiated or completed.
- ✓ **Colt Mountain Area Roads 425, 1532 and 2346** Under the 2002 Iron Honey Project Record of Decision, the segment of Road 1532 between its junction with Roads 425 and 794 was to be closed, while the segments of Roads 2346 and 425 between Roads 794 and 1532 were to be improved to replace the closed segment. Since that decision was not implemented and funding has not become available, the improvements have been deferred.
- ✓ **Buckles Mountain Road 2302** The current travel plan identified this road as open to all motorized use on a seasonal basis. Since implementation of the current travel plan, funding has not been available to remove encroaching brush or to maintain the road to the standard necessary for the intended use. Based on this, the project team recommended that motorized use of this road be limited to administrative uses until improvements can be initiated and completed.
- ✓ **Echo Peak Road 2340** was identified on the 2003 Travel Plan as open to highway vehicles. Ground-truthing has revealed that this route is vegetated and cannot be driven by motorized vehicles. Echo Peak Road 2340 will be designated as closed to motorized use.
- ✓ **Daisy Gulch Road 6532** in the Mullan area was displayed in the wrong location on the 2003 Travel Map. It was drawn next to Gentle Annie Gulch instead of in its correct location next to Daisy Gulch (1/2 mile to the east). Road 6532 will be correctly displayed next to Daisy Gulch.
- ✓ **Silver Summit Road 6538** On the 2003 Travel Plan appears to connect to the Coeur d'Alene River. It actually stops on a bluff above the river. Delineation of Silver Summit Road 6538 will be refined so that it does not show as reaching the river.
- ✓ **Laverne ATV Trail System.** Trail 931 from Road 812 to Laverne Saddle and Trail 1544 to Trail 793 (Hemlock Mountain area). Trail 793 remains open as identified in 2003. These were identified on the 2003 Map as ATV trails with seasonal restrictions. These are not drivable and earth work is required to open these up: constructing stream fords, and removing failing culverts. Separate analysis is in progress at this time.

Comparison of the Starting Option to the Proposed Action

The change in the miles of designated roads and trails under the Proposed Action is described below. The source of all mileage is the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database. Mapping of the existing condition on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District was based on a combination of aerial photographs, field validation and other Forest Service data bases. Although different Forest Service data bases may provide somewhat different mileages, only the GIS mileages will be used in the Travel Plan analysis to avoid confusion during comparison of alternatives. A summary of these changes is displayed in Table 1 and Table 2, with specific proposed changes identified in Table 3.

Table 1. Comparison of Changes of Routes Available for Motorized Recreation, Starting Option vs. Proposed Action. Data source for mileages is the 2006 Geographic Information System database for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District.

Vehicle Class/Season Available	Starting Option before Corrections	Starting Option with Corrections	Proposed Action Miles	Net Change in Miles
Roads available only for administrative use	4,358	4,396	4,386	-10
Roads open to all motor vehicles, no seasonal restrictions	1,108	1,084	1,088	+4
Roads open to all motor vehicles seasonally restricted	92	80	64	-16
Trails open to 4WD, ATVs & motorcycles, no seasonal restrictions	0	0	35	+35
Trails open to 4WD, ATVs & motorcycles seasonally restricted	0	0	10	+10
Trails open to ATVs & motorcycles, no seasonal restrictions	133	132	124	-8
Trails open to ATVs & motorcycles seasonally restricted	167	154	149	-5
Trails open to motorcycles, no seasonal restrictions	223	223	179	-44
Trails open to motorcycles seasonally restricted	8	8	0	-8
Trails open to nonmotorized use only, no seasonal restrictions	109	109	152	+43

The net change in miles available for each vehicle class under the Starting Option is different than the mileage presented at the September 28, 2006 public meeting in Coeur d'Alene when the Proposed Action was presented as a draft. Further review by the project team and consultation with Idaho Fish and Game generated refinements of the Proposed Action; corrections to the Starting Option also account for some of the differences in mileages. Map corrections have been made (listed earlier in this document), and the Starting Option mileages are now more accurate.

Table 2. Summary of available miles of motorized routes per vehicle class with Proposed Action. *Those mileages denoted with an asterisk (*) or footnote are motorized routes with shared use. All motor vehicles must meet ID State law requirements on open roads designated for "Full Size Vehicles".*

	Administrative Roads (miles)	Miles available to full-size vehicles	Miles available to 4-WD vehicles	Miles available to ATVs	Miles available to motorcycles
Roads open with no seasonal restrictions	4,386	1,088	1,088	1,088*	1,088*
Roads open Memorial Day through Labor Day		64	64	64*	64*
Trails open with no seasonal restrictions			35	159 ¹	338 ³
Trails open April 1 through Labor Day			10	159 ²	159 ⁴
TOTAL MILES	4,386	1,152	1,197	1,470	1,649

Footnote 1: 124 miles ATV trail + 35 miles 4WD Trails = 159 shared use miles

Footnote 2: 149 miles ATV trail + 10 miles 4WD Trails = 159 shared use miles

Footnote 3: 179 miles motorcycle trail + 124 mi ATV trail plus 35 miles 4WD Trail = 338 shared use miles

Footnote 4: 0 miles motorcycle trail + 149 mi ATV trail plus 10 miles 4WD Trail = 159 shared use miles

Table 3. Description of proposed changes to the Starting Option with reference to the map(s) where the proposed change can be found.

Proposal	Map	Rationale Summary
1000	2	Designation of the Chilco Mountain Trail System (Trail 14) would change from motorcycle use to nonmotorized use only. These trails are badly damaged and difficult to maintain due to their steepness, which is having detrimental resource impacts (soil erosion and rutting).
1007	2	This is an old pack trail with substantial erosion. Under the Proposed Action, this route would be available only to nonmotorized uses, which would address the erosion issue, and would tie in well with other routes proposed for nonmotorized use.
1012	4	Would provide nonmotorized opportunities close to Coeur d'Alene. Over past 30 years the District strategy was to keep south side of I-90 in the vicinity of Fourth of July Pass non-motorized. The emphasis for the north side of I-90 was to manage for motorized use opportunities when feasible. The project team agreed that this is still a good strategy today.
1022	1	Proposal would utilize ~1.0 mile of Road 240 (previously decommission) to become part of Trail 452, Larch Mountain Trail. The extension would connect the trailhead near Road 3099 (i.e. at the wet water ford, where the bridge was removed) to the existing intersection with Trail 452.
1046	3	Responds to publics request to review existing seasonal closures.
1047	3, 5	Responds to publics request to review existing seasonal closures.
1056	3	Currently closed to public motorized use. Proposal would open the route to ATVs. Although it would cut through a wildlife security area, it's in an EHU where the habitat is above recommended levels.
1057	2	Roads 258UL and 379 are currently designated as closed to motorized use. This designation would change so that both routes are available for motorized use. This would provide an ATV route to Cascade Inn during the summer months; currently ATVs have to share an open road with full-size vehicles. Road 379 is already open to all motorized uses; only Road 258UL would need to be opened.
1060	2	The designation of Roads 3001, 3001A, C and D to "Open to ATV Use" would be a beneficial change to the recreation trail system. The change could reduce ATV damage occurring in Bumblebee Meadows by providing an accessible area adjacent to the valley. Wildlife habitat security in this Elk Habitat Unit is sufficient to absorb the impact of the proposed motorized use.
1065	1, 3	A trail (i.e. Road Prism) that is currently designated for motorcycle use could be made available to ATVs as well, without reconstruction. This proposal will provide ATV users with access to a viewpoint at Hulliman Peak while maintaining a loop trail opportunity for motorcycles.
1067	1, 3	This proposal would provide a loop route opportunity for ATV users in the area of Shoshone Ridge and Creek. The existing prism Road 2392 connects Road 602 (Shoshone Ridge) to Road 412 (Shoshone Creek) without the need for reconstruction. Use of full-size vehicles on Road 2392 would be limited to administrative needs, which would minimize ATV user exposure to mixed traffic.
1070	2	Under this proposal the segment of Road 1560 between the junction of Rd 1550 and Rd 258, and Rd 1590 between Rds. 258 and 1532 would remain designated for, and be added to the routes designated for ATV use, respectively. With the segment of 1560 between Rd. 794 and the Junction of 1550, along with Rd 258, 1532 and 794 a loop route opportunity will be maintained in the headwaters area of the Little NF Coeur d'Alene River basin. (ie): Designation of Road 2340 as a trail.
1087	2	This proposal would provide a ATV use opportunity that maintains access into the Echo Peak and Flora Miller Area. Road 616 which surrounds this area, and was previously designated as open to all motorized use, has yet to be improved to provide the loop proposed under the previous travel plan. Due to this, Rd. 616 does not provide a loop route suitable for recreation use and will be restricted to administrative use to contribute toward meeting Forest Plan goals for wildlife security.
1150	4	See Rationale Summary for Proposal 1012.
1168	1, 2	This proposal contributes toward providing nonmotorized trail opportunities near the Magee Historic Site. If designated to nonmotorized use the unroaded area bisected by this route could contribute toward meeting wildlife security goals. Recovery of rutting and damage due to past motorized use could be initiated and maintenance may mitigate future problems.
1206	2	Responds to publics request to review existing seasonal closures.
1233	2	Trail 2339 (Fernan to Treasure Mountain) has been available as a ATV recreation route since implementation of the current travel plan. This proposal opens up the opportunity to provide four-wheel drive vehicle operators with primitive road conditions while being maintained at the lowest possible level for public safety. The routes creates a loop system when combined with Road 499 which is open to all motorized use, and provides the opportunity to drive to the top of Treasure Mountain for the vista it may provide. Since Trail 2339 has been designated for ATV use and Road 499 designation has not changed, adding the additional routes is not expected to result in a noticeable increase or change in motorized use or effects on forest resources in this area.
1273	2	This proposal opens up the opportunity to provide four-wheel drive vehicle operators with primitive road conditions while being maintained at the lowest possible level for public safety. Due to the previous designation of these roads as ATV trails this change in use is not expected to result in a noticeable increase or change in motorized use or effects on forest resources in this area.

Proposal	Map	Rationale Summary
1275	3	This proposal would change the designation of George Gulch Trail 343 from Road 978 through to Trail 979 (in the head of Avery Creek) to Clee Creek-Bloom Peak Trail 270, and ending at Avery Saddle. Currently an ATV route, the proposal would provide four-wheel drive vehicle operators with primitive road conditions, maintaining the route at the lowest possible level for public safety. Due to the previous designation of these roads as ATV trails and retention of the seasonal restriction, this change in use is not expected to result in a noticeable increase or change in motorized use or effects on forest resources in this area.
1278	2 & 4	This proposal would create an alternate route from the Coeur d'Alene River to John Peak that would minimize ATV operator exposure to mixed use traffic on the Rd 413. This route is located between Rd 413, 2358 and Rd 1604 (open to all motorized use seasonally) in the same stream drainage. Adding this route is not expected to result in a noticeable change in motorized use or in effects to forest resources in this area.
1300	5	This proposal would provide four-wheel drive vehicle operators with primitive road opportunities while maintaining the route at the lowest possible level needed for public safety. Due to the previous designation of Trail 133 and Stateline Trail 7 as open to motorcycle use, this change is not expected to result in a noticeable change in motorized use or in effects to forest resources in this area.
1313	1	Bear Creek Trail 323 is not maintainable as a motorized route due to steepness; the trail is trenched and resulting in environmental damage. As a non-motorized trail, this proposal contributes toward providing nonmotorized opportunities near the Magee Historic Site and rental cabin.
1314	3	This proposal provides a nonmotorized trail opportunity that contributes toward meeting wildlife security goals in an area where elk habitat security was not meeting Forest Plan standards.
1315	5	Experimental Draw is a dead-end ATV trail. This proposal would provide a non-motorized use opportunity near Wallace and contribute toward maintenance of wildlife security in the Elk Habitat Unit for the Placer Creek drainage.
1316	2	These were "concept" ATV trails in the Iron Honey EIS area (Road 1560 series). They are generally dead end routes, most are not drivable without brushing and would require work to stabilize culvert crossings. No public has approached the FS to develop these and this allows other public proposals for new motorized routes to move forward.
1317	3	These are "concept" ATV trail and seasonal use roads. Some brushing would be required to make them suitable for passenger vehicle use and may require work to stabilize culvert crossings. No public has approached the FS to develop these and this allows other public proposals for new motorized routes to move forward.

*How to
Comment
During Scoping*

To ensure that there is ample time to review the proposal information and maps and to discuss any concerns, this scoping period will last 60 days. Maps and all supporting information to the proposed action will be available at The Fernan Forest Service Office (2502 East Sherman Ave. in Coeur d'Alene) and the Silver Valley Forest Service Office (173 Commerce Dr. in Smelterville, ID), during business hours (7:30am to 4:00pm, Mon-Fri). The maps and supporting documentation will also be available on the IPNF web page www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/. To help you understand the proposed changes and to answer any questions you may have, we will hold at least two meetings with the public:

**Tuesday, April 10
6 to 8 p.m.**

Canyon Elementary
E 27491 School House Loop
Cataldo, Idaho

**Thursday, April 12
6 to 8 p.m.**

IPNF Supervisor's Office
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

We encourage you to let us know your comments on the Proposed Action. Your comments will be most meaningful if they are specific to the proposed action, or to particular routes of concern. Your written comments can best be used if they are received no later than **May 21, 2007**. Please mail or hand-deliver written comments to:

Travel Plan Team
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District - Fernan Office
2502 East Sherman Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Office hours are Monday through Friday, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Written comments may be faxed to the Fernan Office at (208) 769-3062. Comments may be emailed to cdatravelplan@fs.fed.us, or can be submitted electronically (in MSWord or RTF format) to: comments-northern-idpanhandle-coeur-dalene@fs.fed.us.

Schedule

- **March 2007:** Scoping letter out for 60-day public review and comment
- **April 10 and 12, 2007:** Public Meetings in the Silver Valley and Coeur d'Alene
- **May 15, 2007:** Public comments due
- **June 2007:** Environmental Assessment out for 45-day public review
- **August 2007:** Issue Decision
- **September 2007:** Motor Vehicle Use Map made available to the public; Implementation begins.

Availability of Comments Received During Scoping

Comments received during scoping, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for inspection by the public. Anyone can request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record if they can show how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets.

Effects Analysis

Over the next few months, the project team will document potential effects of the proposed action. The environmental analysis process will follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An environmental assessment will be prepared to document existing conditions and environmental effects, and determine the significance of effects. Issues already addressed in the development of the Proposed Action are:

Public health and safety.

Disturbance effects on wildlife.

Impacts to aquatic resources (water quality/quantity, fisheries).

Effects to Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Effects on recreation experiences.

Costs to manage and maintain designated travel routes.

The assessment should be ready in early summer, 2007, and will include analysis of a No-Action alternative (representing the 1998 travel status), the Proposed Action alternative described in this scoping document, and any other alternatives that may arise from issues brought forward during scoping that may have not been addressed in the development of the proposed action. Once the Environmental Assessment is distributed, we will provide another opportunity for public review.

Issuing a Decision and a Motor Vehicle use Map

By late summer 2007, we should be ready to issue a decision notice documenting the details of the new Travel Plan, and issue the motorized vehicle use map. The motorized vehicle use map will be free to the public, displaying roads and trails designated for motor vehicle use on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District. The motor vehicle use map will not display nonmotorized routes, since the purpose of the 2005 Travel Management Rule is to provide better and more consistent management of motor vehicle use on National Forests and National Grasslands. The motor vehicle use map does not replace visitor maps or other maps intended to convey visitor information.

All public travel planning documents will be posted on the internet at
www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/.

Implementation

Under the new travel management rule, motor vehicle use maps are the principal enforcement tool for motor vehicle regulations. We will continue to use signs to provide information and inform users. However, we have found that posting routes as open or closed to particular uses has not always been effective. It is the responsibility of forest users to get motor vehicle use maps from Forest Service offices or websites and to ensure they are traveling on routes designated for their particular motor vehicle use.

Forest Service law enforcement personnel and Forest Protection Officers play a critical role in ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, protecting public safety and National Forest resources. We also maintain cooperative relationships with State and County law enforcement agencies that provide mutual support across jurisdictional boundaries. Educational and cooperative relationships with users will support enforcement efforts by promoting compliance.

Monitoring and Revision

Designation of roads, trails and areas for motor vehicle use are subject to change. Unforeseen environmental impacts, changes in public demand, route construction, and monitoring may lead to consideration of revised designations. After their initial publication, motor vehicle use maps will be re-published annually. Monitoring will help provide the information needed to determine what, if any, revisions are needed each year. Changes will be addressed on a site-specific basis under NEPA, with the involvement of the public.

For More Information

For more information about this proposal or the process we are using, please contact Deputy District Ranger Linda McFadden (208-783-2101) or Project Team Leader Rob Davies (208-769-3067). All public travel planning documents will be posted on the internet at www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/cda/travelplan/.

Our goal is clear – Working together, we can serve the public by addressing the growing demand for recreation while protecting the environment and assuring that our national forests provide clean air, clean water, and abundant wildlife for future generations.