



File Code: 1950

Date: May 6, 2009

To Our Travel Planning Partners,

I am pleased to announce that the collaborative efforts of the past three years have culminated in a completed Travel Plan for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. I want to thank all of you that participated in meetings and submitted comments, and those that went the extra length to submit proposals for specific routes. After considering public comment, the analysis provided in the environmental assessment (EA) and project file, and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), it was determined that the Proposed Action, with minor corrections and clarifications, is the most effective at meeting the stated purpose and need for the Travel Plan. The new Travel Plan designates a sustainable route system for public access and recreation travel on the District; brings the current travel plan into compliance with laws, regulations and other management direction; provides a diversity of motorized use opportunities with consideration for nonmotorized uses and the needs of forest resources such as water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and rare plants; and identifies the types of use and restrictions associated with each designated motorized route.

Copies of the Travel Plan Project Decision Notice (DN) and FONSI have been mailed to members of the public who provided comments or otherwise expressed interest in the project. The documents are being provided on compact disk (CD), which allows the reader to view and "zoom in" on the set of five maps that depict the Selected Alternative. For the convenience of our interested public and in an effort to conserve paper and reduce publication costs, documents and maps related to this project are available to the public on our Forest's internet web page: (www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/eco/manage/nepa). My staff and I are also available to meet with individuals or groups to further explain the Travel Plan decision and its implementation, and address questions. To schedule a presentation or a meeting, please contact Project Team Leader Don Garringer by telephone at 208-664-2318.

Publication of the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), the first step in implementing the Travel Plan, should occur this fall. The MVUM will display those roads and trails designated for motorized use on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District (specifying vehicle class and, where appropriate, seasons of use) based on the Selected Alternative map set. Free to the public, the MVUM will be the principal education and enforcement tool for motor vehicle regulations. It will be 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. Later this summer we plan to host a couple public meetings to introduce the MVUM. Dates and times will be announced through local media and the Forests' web page noted above.



The designations provided on the MVUM are not permanent. If changes in designation warrant, the MVUM will be re-published. Monitoring and public feedback will help provide the information needed to determine what, if any, revisions are needed. In most case, changes will be addressed on a site-specific basis and would not trigger reconsideration of decisions about the whole system of designated routes. As an example, we are currently assessing opportunities to resolve trail condition concerns on a portion of Chilco Mountain Trail 14. This may lead to a site-specific proposal and analysis with further public involvement.

I am the Responsible Official for this project. Again, for more information regarding the decision or to obtain a printed copy of the Decision Notice, please contact Project Team Leader Don Garringer, (208) 664-2318.

Sincerely,



RANDALL G. SWICK
District Ranger

Enclosure

