

# Travel Plan 2006

Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District

Idaho Panhandle National Forests



# Why Are We Here?

- Outdoor recreation is central to why many of us live in North Idaho.
- Motorized recreation is recognized as a legitimate use - in the right place.
- Route designations will involve working with local communities.



# What's Ahead



- Purpose of the Travel Plan Project
- Key Steps in the Process
- Anticipated Timeline

# Purpose of the Travel Plan Project

- Bring the current travel plan into compliance with laws, regulations and other management direction
- Designate a sustainable route system for public access and recreation travel on the District
- Identify types of use and restrictions associated with each designated motorized route

# Key Steps in the Process

1. Review existing travel management direction.
2. Assemble resource and social data.
3. Use travel analysis to identify proposals for change.
4. Environmental analysis and decision-making.
5. Publish a motor vehicle use map.
6. Implement, monitor and revise.

## Key Steps in the Process...

# Step 1 – Review Existing Travel Management Direction

- IPNF Proposed Land Management Plan
- 2005 Travel Management Rule issued by the Forest Service, directing that Travel Management Plans be developed within the next four years.
- 2005 court ruling by a federal judge, directing that the District's 2001-2003 Travel Plan be remanded for further action consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and all other applicable laws and regulations within three years.

# What's the Relationship to the Land Management Plan?

- The Land Management Plan 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 do not typically include site-specific decisions.
- Travel Plans reflect project-level decisions. They implement road use designations and must be consistent with the Land Management Plan.

## 2005 Travel Management Rule

- Designate roads, trails and areas open to motor vehicle use by vehicle class and, if appropriate, by time of year.
- Display designated roads, trails and areas on a motor vehicle use map.
- Until designation is complete, the current rules and policies remain in place.

## Step 2 - Assemble Resource & Social Data

- Identify roads and trails for consideration
- Identify natural resource conditions
- Identify user demand and social and economic interactions
- Accomplish through **collaboration** with the public

Step 2...Assemble Resource and Social Data

# Collaborate: To Work Together

## Keys to Collaboration

- Use common conversational courtesy.
- Humor is welcome and important.
- All ideas and points of view have value.
- Attack problems instead of each other.
- Focus on interests, not positions.
- Have a realistic timeline for completion.
- Honesty builds trust.

# Step 3 – Use Travel Analysis to Propose Changes

- Begins with the baseline system of roads and trails as a starting point
- Results in a set of proposed changes to the transportation system (the Proposed Action)
- Will be done through collaboration with a variety of user groups, environmental organizations, other agencies, interested individuals and the general public

### Step 3...Use Travel Analysis to Propose Changes

The objective of Travel Analysis is to provide both recreation experiences and access.

Roads and trails that meet users' needs while protecting natural and cultural resources, as well as protecting public safety while minimizing resource damage, facility deterioration, and law enforcement issues.

Step 3...Use Travel Analysis to Propose Changes

## User-created Routes

Some user-created routes may be appropriate for inclusion in the transportation system. Public involvement and site-specific environmental analysis is required; therefore these will not be considered under this Travel Plan project, but may be considered under separate proposals.

Step 3...Use Travel Analysis to Propose Changes

## Factors to Consider When Proposing Changes

- Recreation experience
- Environmental issues
- Operational issues

## Recreational Experience

- Types of use
- Vehicle classes
- Safety (including difficulty level)
- Ability to link routes, attractions and facilities

## Environmental Issues

- Soil, water, vegetation, wildlife and cultural resources
- Other past, present and future actions which may contribute to cumulative impacts from motorized use
- Relationship between motor vehicle use and other national forest uses

## Operational Issues

- Speed, volume, type and distribution of traffic
- Support from user groups, volunteers and other cooperators
- Support from state, county, or other government agencies
- Access for emergency, maintenance and enforcement
- Ability to fund maintenance, operation and enforcement of the system

## Step 4 - Environmental Analysis & Decision-making

- Process follows the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Level of environmental documentation depends on scale, scope and nature of the proposed changes, and the site-specific issues involved.
- We will complete an environmental assessment to determine the significance of impacts.
- Includes analysis of No-Action Alternative, Proposed Action Alternative, and any other reasonable alternatives proposed.

Step 3...Use Travel Analysis to Propose Changes

## No-Action Alternative

The existing direction is normally the basis for the No-Action Alternative.

In our case (due to the court ruling), the No-Action Alternative represents what existed in 1998.

Step 3...Use Travel Analysis to Propose Changes

## Proposed Action Alternative

We need your help over the next several weeks to design the Proposed Action.

Our starting point for a proposed action is the current transportation system (roads and trails managed for motor vehicle use) and any restrictions or prohibitions on motor vehicle use.

In our case, this is the 2001 Travel Plan with the 2003 Amendment and any changes made under NEPA since then (for example, Road 625).

# Effects Considerations

- natural and cultural resources
- public safety
- recreational opportunities
- access needs
- conflicts among uses
- maintenance and administration

## Step 5 – Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map

- Displays only roads and trails designated for motor vehicle use.
- The principal enforcement tool for motor vehicle regulations.
- Available free to the public.
- Updated annually.
- Does not replace visitor maps or other maps intended to convey visitor information.

## Step 6 – Implement, monitor and revise

Implementation of travel management decisions requires effective public education and enforcement.

Monitoring will help provide the information needed to determine what, if any, revisions are needed each year.

# Implement

- Educate visitors on travel regulations and designations
- Install signs
- Maintain designated roads and trails
- Establish cooperative and volunteer agreements for sustainable maintenance and funding

# Monitor

- Project implementation monitoring to assure compliance with the Land Management Plan and project decisions.
- Effectiveness monitoring to assure management actions are achieving desired outcomes.
- Program monitoring to track and evaluate ecological, social and economic trends.
- Validation monitoring to verify assumptions and models used in project implementation.
- A monitoring plan must emphasize realistic, cost-effective commitments that we can meet.

## Revise

- Monitoring information will be used to re-evaluate decisions and change them when necessary
- Changes will be addressed on a site-specific basis under NEPA
- Motor vehicle use maps will be republished annually to reflect changes in designations.

# Timeline

- **April – June 2006:** Work with the public to identify current conditions and develop a proposed action
- **July – August 2006:** Present the proposed action to the general public for review and comment (60 days)
- **September - December 2006:** Analyze and document potential effects of the No-Action alternative, Proposed Action Alternative, and other proposed alternatives
- **January – March 2007:** Present documented findings to the public for their review and comment (90 days)
- **April – May 2007:** Make a decision on travel management and prepare a Decision Notice for the public's review.

# Our Goal is Clear

Working together, we can address the growing demand for motorized recreation while protecting the environment and assuring that our national forests provide clean air, clean water and abundant wildlife for future generations.

