



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Clearwater National Forest

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File Code: 1950-3

Date: July 2, 2009

Dear Planning Participant:

Thank you for your earlier comments on and interest in the Clearwater National Forest Travel Planning effort. I have identified Alternative C as the Preferred Alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

It is important that any comments you provide are substantive and specific. We have reviewed all new route proposals that were submitted during the initial scoping for this project. Route proposals that met the screening criteria were incorporated into at least one of the alternatives. Other route proposals may be considered in the future in smaller-scale project analyses.

The DEIS is available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater/>. Copies of the DEIS are also available at Clearwater National Forest offices and many local libraries, including those at Orofino, Deary, Elk River, Grangeville, Kamiah, Kooskia, Lewiston, Moscow, Pierce, Potlatch, and Weippe in Idaho, as well as Superior and Missoula, Montana.

### How to Comment

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this project will be accepted for 45 calendar days following the printing of the legal notice in the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this project. Those wishing to comment should not rely on dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments should be submitted to the project Team Leader at the following address:

Kamiah Ranger Station  
Attn: Lois Foster, Travel Planning IDT Leader  
Rt. 2, Box 191  
Kamiah, ID 83536

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Microsoft Word (.doc) document to:

[comments-northern-clearwater@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-clearwater@fs.fed.us)

Email comments must include the commenter's name, and the words "Travel Planning" should appear in the subject line of the message.

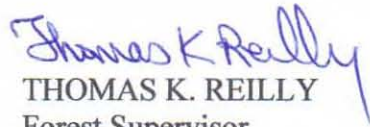


**Appeal Eligibility**

If you wish to comment, it is your responsibility to submit them by the close of the comment period. Those who provide comments during the comment period are eligible to appeal a decision on this project under 36 CFR 215.13, as published in the Federal Register regulations. If you have further concerns, please contact the Team Leader, Lois Foster, at 208-935-4258.

I appreciate your time and interest in the management of your National Forest.

Sincerely,

  
THOMAS K. REILLY  
Forest Supervisor

## **Overview**

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)**

The format for this document follows the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) recommended format (40 CFR 1502.10) and is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) discloses the direct, indirect and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed alternatives.

### **VOLUME 1**

**Summary:** The Summary stresses the major conclusions and briefly explains the issues to be resolved.

**Chapter 1: Purpose and Need for Action:** Chapter 1 describes the proposed action and the scope of the environmental analysis. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and prior planning documents used in this assessment. The proposed decision to be made is also described in this chapter.

**Chapter 2: Alternatives and Issues:** Chapter 2 describes alternatives that were developed to respond to the significant issues identified during scoping and public involvement processes. This chapter also summarizes the comparison of alternatives using the key issues. Alternatives to the proposed action were developed based on issues raised by the public and other agencies. Many comments from the public about the proposed action were received, and many issues were raised. The significant issues were those that were used to develop the alternatives analyzed in detail, including: the effects of increasing or decreasing levels of motorized use on recreation opportunities and Forest resources, and meeting Forest Plan goals and objectives for the protection of wildlife and fisheries habitat. Finally, this section provides a comparative summary of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.

**Chapter 3: Existing Conditions and Environmental Consequences:** Chapter 3 describes the existing condition of resources in the project area, providing a baseline for comparison of the alternatives. This chapter also discloses the potential direct, indirect, cumulative and irreversible and irretrievable environmental effects that would result from implementing the alternatives. This chapter is organized by the resources of concern, such as recreation opportunities, wildlife, and aquatics. The order in which the resource information is presented is alphabetic, and is not intended to indicate priority or emphasis. Within each section, the affected environment is described first, followed by

the effects of the alternatives, including a No Action Alternative that provides a baseline for the evaluation and comparison of the action alternatives.

**Chapter 4: Consultation and Coordination:** Chapter 4 lists the names of the individuals who prepared this DEIS. It also includes list of agencies, organizations, and persons that will receive a copy of the DEIS.

**Chapter 5: Glossary and Literature Cited:** Chapter 5 includes a detailed glossary, including acronyms commonly used throughout the DEIS, and a list of the references that were used in preparation of the DEIS. Additional information may be found in the project planning record, located at the Forest Supervisor's Office for the Clearwater National Forest in Orofino, Idaho, or on the web at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater/>.

## **VOLUMES 2 AND 3**

Volumes 2 and 3 of the DEIS are the Appendices, which contain detailed information that supports the environmental analysis presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Because of their size, the Appendices for the Travel Planning DEIS were divided into two volumes, resulting in a total of 3 volumes for the DEIS and Appendices.

Volume 1 includes the Overview, Summary, and Chapters 1 through 5. Volume 2 includes Appendices A, C, D, E, and Appendix B, Reports 101 through 404. Volume 3 includes Appendix B, Reports 501 through 802, and Noxious Weeds Tables:

- **Volume 2, Appendix A:** Maps.
- **Volumes 2 and 3, Appendix B:** Detailed Alternative Descriptions, Including Motorized Use Designations for Roads and Trails by Alternative. Reports 101 through 404 are included in Volume 2. Reports 501 through 802 and Noxious Weeds Tables are in Volume 3.
- **Volume 2, Appendix C:** Cumulative Effects; Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions
- **Volume 2, Appendix D:** Proposed Forest Plan Amendments
- **Volume 2, Appendix E:** Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

## Summary

The Clearwater National Forest is proposing to designate the routes and areas that would be available for motor vehicle use by type of vehicle and time of year. The project area boundary is the Clearwater National Forest administrative boundary. The analysis area includes portions of Idaho, Clearwater, Latah, and Shoshone Counties in the state of Idaho. This action must be taken to comply with the *Travel Management: Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use: Final Rule (USDA Forest Service, November 2005)*, referred to in this document as the Travel Management Rule.

The Travel Management Rule requires each National Forest to conduct a local NEPA analysis designating those roads, trails, and areas where motorized travel will be permitted, and to display them on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). Currently, the management of roads and trails on the Clearwater National Forest does not meet the intent of the Travel Management Rule. Except for a few Management Areas where motorized use is not consistent with direction in the 1987 Clearwater Forest Plan and the Palouse Ranger District, cross-country motorized travel is allowed on most of the 1,827,380 acres within the Clearwater National Forest boundary, even though much of that area is actually too steep or has too much vegetation to accommodate motorized use. Also, roads and trails are currently open to motorized use unless designated closed.

All of the action alternatives analyzed in this DEIS would comply with the Travel Management Rule by allowing motorized travel only on routes that are designated as open to motorized use. This DEIS also analyzes winter motorized uses. No new road or trail construction is proposed.

This document evaluates the following alternatives:

- **Alternative A:** “No Action.” There would be no change from the existing condition.
- **Alternative B:** “Minimal Travel Management Rule Implementation.” Only the actions necessary to meet the basic requirements of the Travel Management Rule would be taken. Management Area (MA) B2, Recommended Wilderness, would remain open to over-snow vehicle use.
- **Alternative C:** “Motorcycle Loop Trails and Wildlife Habitat.” Alternative C is the Preferred Alternative. It would respond to public comments about providing motorized single-track and loop trail opportunities, while moving wildlife and recommended wilderness resource conditions toward the goals and objectives described in the Forest Plan. Over-snow motorized vehicle use would be restricted yearlong in MA B2 and on Fish Lake Trail 429.
- **Alternative D:** “Wildlife and Recommended Wilderness Emphasis.” This alternative would emphasize Forest Plan goals and objectives for protecting wildlife habitat and recommended wilderness characteristics. Over-snow

motorized vehicle use would be restricted yearlong in MA B2 and on Fish Lake Trail 429.

The Clearwater National Forest intends to publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map early in 2010.