



File Code: 1950/2300

Date:

Dear Interested Public:

The Ashland Ranger District Travel Management Planning Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is available for review and comment. The DEIS discloses the effects of a range of motorized travel management alternatives for the Ashland Ranger District of the Custer National Forest. The purpose of this project is to designate routes for public motorized use. Motorized off-route travel would continue to be prohibited, except where designated for access to dispersed vehicle camping. For each system road and trail, the type of use and season of use to be designated is identified. Over-snow vehicle use is not part of the decision to be made.

In response to agency and public issues, three alternatives were analyzed in detail. The No Action Alternative is based on designation of the current National Forest System (system) roads; non-system routes are not a part of the No Action Alternative. Alternative A includes designation of the majority of the existing system and non-system routes on the District (the existing condition) and would designate a combination of mixed motorized use roads and motorized trails to provide opportunities for operating unlicensed motor vehicles. Alternative B avoids designation of routes for uses where there are known resource concerns or routes that parallel adjacent routes, and would also designate a combination of mixed motorized use roads and motorized trails to provide opportunities for operating unlicensed motor vehicles.

The DEIS will be available on the internet on or about September 26, 2008 at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/custer>. To request a paper or CD copy of the DEIS or for additional information contact Doug Epperly by phone at 406-657-6205 x225, or by mail at 1310 Main Street, Billings, MT 59105.

The Forest Service will host three open houses to answer questions about the DEIS. The meetings will be held on the following date and locations:

October 27, 2008	Ashland School, Ashland, MT	6:00 pm
October 28, 2008	Isabell's Community Learning Center Colstrip, MT	6:00 pm
October 29, 2008	Billings Parmley Library, Billings, MT	6:00 pm

Comments on this DEIS are requested from you and other reviewers. As the Responsible Official, I will consider all public comments before making a decision. Comments must be specific to the proposed activities and area being analyzed, with rationale supporting your comment. They should include: (1) name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) title of the document on which the comment is being submitted; (3)



specific facts and supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider; and (4) signatures. In order to retain your administrative appeal rights, you must provide timely, written, oral, or electronic comments during this 45-day comment period.

Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, faxed, or otherwise submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the 45th calendar day following publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. Hand delivered comments must be time and date imprinted at the Custer National Forest Supervisors Office by the close of business on the 45th calendar day following publication of the NOA in the Federal Register.

Send Written Comments To: Steve E. Williams, Forest Supervisor
Attn. Doug Epperly, Project Coordinator
Custer National Forest
1310 Main Street
Billings, MT 59105

Oral comments must be provided at the Supervisors Office during normal business hours (Monday –Friday, 800 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) via telephone (406)-657-6205 x225) or in person, or if during non-business hours, must be at an official agency function which is designed to elicit public comment.

Electronic comments may be submitted to: comments-northern-custer-ashland@fs.fed.us. Please enter “Ashland Travel Management” on the subject line of your electronic message. Acceptable formats are MS Word, Word Perfect or RTF. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender’s responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

Your comments, including your name and address, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered regarding this project. However, those who submit anonymous comments may not have standing to appeal the decision for this project. If you need more information on submitting comments anonymously, please contact us or refer to 36 CFR 215.

Sincerely,



STEVE E. WILLIAMS
Forest Supervisor