



# News Release



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE-FOREST SERVICE**

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## **Forest Service seeks comments for Juneau, Admiralty motorized vehicle plan**

**Juneau, AK** – The U.S. Forest Service is seeking additional comments on its proposed management plan for motorized vehicle access on the Juneau Ranger District (JRD) and Admiralty National Monument (ANM), both within the Tongass National Forest.

The Forest Service is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the districts' Access and Travel Management (ATM) project. A decision on the project will determine how road systems on the districts will be managed to meet public needs, safety and resource concerns, and Forest Plan objectives. A Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) will then be published identifying which roads and trails are open to motorized use.

The EA will describe and analyze two alternatives for motorized vehicle road, trail, and off-road access on the districts. Under the No Action Alternative, motorized vehicle access on the districts would be unchanged.

The second alternative is the Proposed Action, supported by the majority of public participants so far, who indicate they want roads currently open to remain open.

The Proposed Action would:

- Designate the same road access as the No Action Alternative
- Maintain about 33 miles of road open to high-clearance vehicles, 28 miles of which would remain open for both highway and Off-Highway Vehicle use
- Close nearly 13 miles of road to highway vehicles
- Keep open to OHVs as trail more than 9 miles of road that is closed to highway vehicles but currently drivable and open to OHVs
- Close to vehicles all roads currently used as foot trails or placed in storage by removing culverts and bridges to protect other resources

Tongass National Forest, Juneau Ranger District  
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- Close to OHV use the far 1.7 miles of Forest Road 8554 in the Couverden area, where two bridges are currently missing, including one at an anadromous stream crossing where protection of the streambed and fisheries resources is needed.
- Leave Forest Road 8442 (25-Mile Road) beyond the rock pit open to OHV use as a motorized trail, and designate the area of the clearcut adjacent to the road as an off-road area (54 acres)
- Leave a Taku River road (south of the lodge) open as a motorized trail to OHV use, but closed at the anadromous stream crossing to protect the stream and the extensive wetlands beyond.

Although the decision would not change use or management of snowmobiles, the Proposed Action would open 5,600 acres to OHVs on the following trails during specific snow/ice conditions that normally occur between December 15 and April 15:

- Dan Moller Trail, including a portion of the Treadwell Ditch Trail and the Blueberry Hills subdivision access trail and snowmobile trail parking lot
- Lake Creek/Montana Creek Trails, the west portion of the Mendenhall Lake, as well as the signed areas surrounding the Dan Moller and Lake Creek/Montana Creek Trails

Upon publication of the MVUM, the use of motorized vehicles would be allowed only in those areas designated as open to such vehicles. District areas not displayed as open roads or OHV trails on the map will be closed to all forms of motorized surface access including motorized subsistence access under ANILCA Section 811(b). Snowmobiles are not part of this decision and will be permitted off designated roads and trails when used over snow and in accordance with ANILCA section 1110 (a) and 811 (b).

The Districts are currently providing an additional opportunity for individuals and organizations to comment on the Proposed Action before the EA and decision are prepared. Comments must be received within 30 calendar days following publication of the notice of availability of this EA in the *Juneau Empire*, the newspaper of record for this project. That date was Monday, July 27, 2009.

Submit written comments by mail to the Juneau RD/Admiralty NM, 8510 Mendenhall Loop Rd., Juneau, AK 99801; by fax to 907-586-8808; in person at the Juneau Ranger District office; or by email at [comments-alaska-tongass-juneau@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-alaska-tongass-juneau@fs.fed.us) (please put "Juneau-Admiralty ATM" in the subject line).

Maps of the existing condition and Proposed Action are available from the Juneau Ranger District. For more information, contact District Ranger Pete Griffin or Project Leader Ed Grossman at 907-586-8800.