



News Release

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE-FOREST SERVICE

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Forest Service issues decision for Juneau, Admiralty motorized vehicle use plan

Juneau, AK – The U.S. Forest Service has made a decision on the Juneau Ranger District (JRD) and Admiralty National Monument (ANM) Access Travel Management (ATM) Plan.

Juneau District Ranger Pete Griffin and Admiralty National Monument Ranger Marti Marshall this week issued a Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)—summarizing the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project, documenting the selection of Alternative 2, and explaining the basis for the decision.

The Selected Alternative designates roads and trails that are open to public motor vehicles. It also documents the closure of remaining routes and areas to motorized subsistence access under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

Griffin and Marshall said they chose the Selected Alternative because it meets the purpose and need for the project while being responsive to the public's interests and concerns as expressed in several public meetings and comments received on the project. It also implements the 2005 Travel Management Rule, and is consistent with the 2008 Forest Plan.

“We chose Alternative 2 because it provides for protection of resources while also providing substantial public access to most areas used by the public,” said Griffin.

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The decision makes one correction to the description of Alternative 2 in the EA. Where it states “About 9.4 miles of ML 1 road that are currently drivable and open to OHVs would be open to OHVs as a trail”; it should have stated “7.4 miles.”

The Selected Alternative also includes the following provisions:

- Leaves most roads open, but closes to all vehicles portions of one ML 1 road and one historic road at anadromous stream crossings to protect fisheries resources and wetlands
- Maintains and keeps open about 33 miles of road for highway vehicles; 28 miles of which will remain open for mixed use, including use by Off-Highway Vehicles
- Keeps closed nearly 13 miles of road

Although the decision does not change use or management of snowmobiles, it does keep open 5,600 acres to OHVs on some trails during specific snow/ice conditions that normally occur between December 15 and April 15. Those trails include the Lake Creek Trail to the intersection of Montana Creek Trail, and Montana Creek Trail north to Windfall Lake; areas directly adjacent to the Dan Moller Trail (the Dan Moller-McDonough Peak area) and Lake Creek/Montana Creek Trails (Spaulding Meadows-Windfall Lake area); and the west portion of Mendenhall Lake when thickness of the ice allows safe use. Additionally, the 54-acre 25-Mile Travel Management Area will be available for off-road use by OHVs.

This decision will result in publication of a Motorized Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) for JRD/ANM. Upon publication, 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. Snowmobiles are not part of this decision.

Full details are available at: http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/JRD-ANM_ATM_DN-FONSI_9-3-2009.pdf

This decision is subject to appeal by individuals or non-federal organizations which submitted written comments or otherwise expressed interest in this particular action during the comment period. The notice of appeal must be in writing, and be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 calendar days of publication of notice of this decision in the *Juneau Empire*, the newspaper of record for the Juneau Ranger District and Admiralty National Monument.

For more information, contact Project Leader Ed Grossman at 907-586-8800.

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