



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Southwestern  
Region

# Proposed Action for Travel Management on the Jicarilla Ranger District and Additional Information



Jicarilla Ranger District  
Carson National Forest



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## **Purpose of this Document**

This proposed action and additional information is being distributed to interested and affected individuals, organizations, government agencies, and Native American tribes to fulfill the intent of the Forest Service's administrative responsibilities for notice, comment, and appeal of National Forest System projects (36 CFR 215). A 30-day comment period will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed action.

An environmental assessment (EA) is being prepared to analyze the effects of designating a motorized transportation system on the Jicarilla Ranger District, Carson National Forest. The site-specific analysis will be tiered to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Carson National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (hereby Carson Forest Plan) and complies with the Carson Forest Plan.

## **Background**

On November 9, 2005, the Forest Service published final travel management regulations for use of motor vehicles on National Forest System lands. The new regulations amended Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), parts 212, 251, 261, and removed part 295. These regulations together are referred to as the travel management rule (or rule) throughout this document.

The travel management rule “provides for a system of National Forest System (NFS) roads, NFS trails, and areas on NFS lands that are designated for motor vehicle use. After these roads, trails, and areas are designated, motor vehicle use, including the class of vehicle and time of year, not in accordance with these designations, is prohibited. Motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails and outside designated areas is prohibited by 36 CFR 261.13” (36 CFR 212.50 (a)). The designated roads, trails, and areas will be published on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM), which will be available free of charge to the public.

Exemptions from these designations include 1) aircraft, 2) watercraft, 3) over-snow vehicles, 4) limited administrative use by the Forest Service, 5) use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes, 6) law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit; and 7) motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulation (36 CFR 212.51).

In designating routes, the responsible official may include in the designation the limited use of motor vehicles within a specific distance of certain designated routes, and if appropriate, within a specified time period, solely for the purposes of dispersed camping or retrieval of a downed big game animal by an individual who has legally taken the animal (36 CFR 212.51(b)).

## **Analysis Area Description**

The Jicarilla Ranger District (district), which is approximately 145,517 acres in size, is in the San Juan Basin, about 50 miles east of Farmington and about 4 hours west of Taos, New Mexico (Figure1). Prior to the 1940s, grazing was the primary activity on the district. Today, natural gas production is the prevalent use of the district. For this reason, motorized use on the district is primarily to access well pads for gas operations, although the district is heavily used during the hunting season.

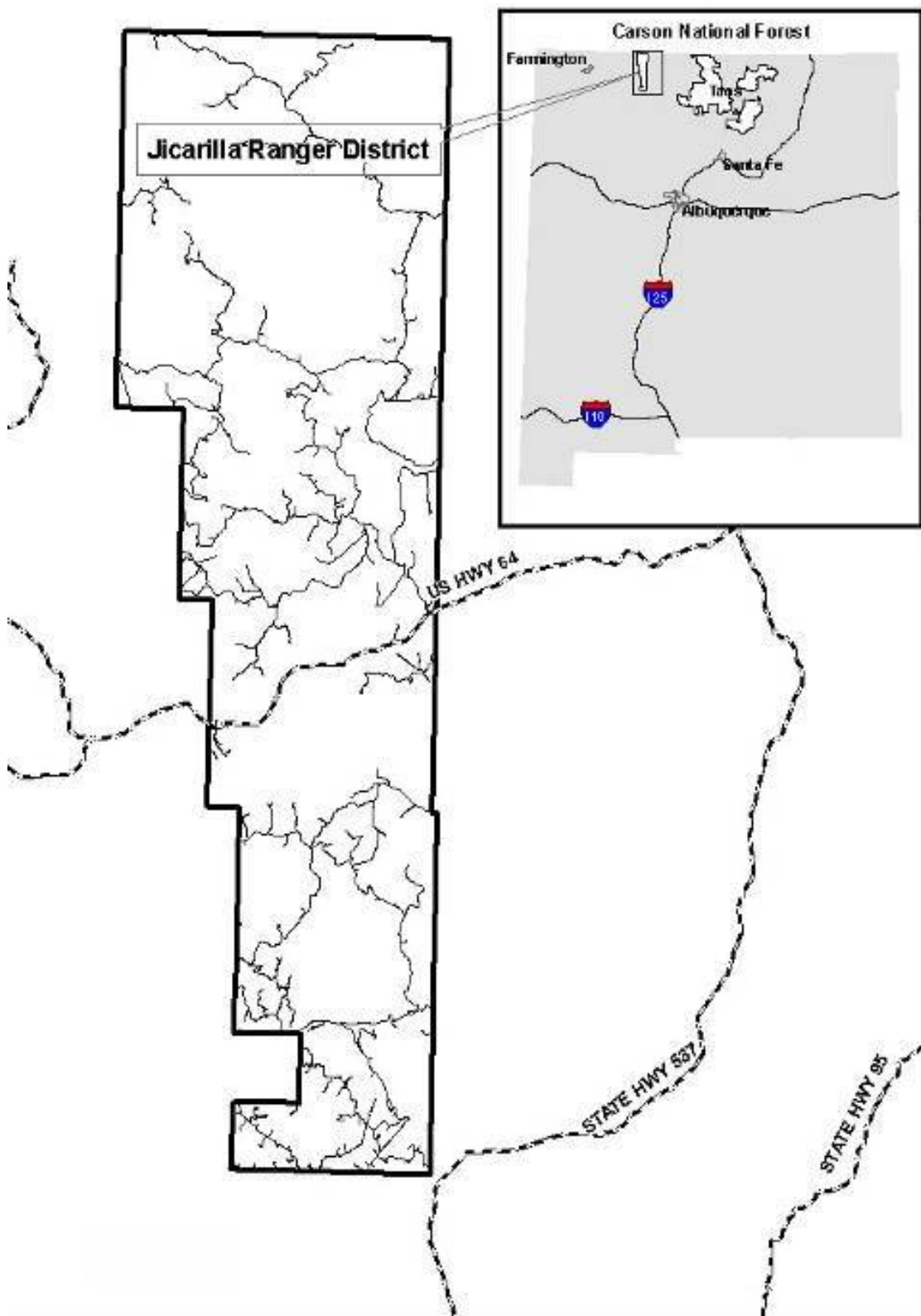


Figure 1. Project Vicinity

## Existing Transportation System

Carson Forest Plan Amendment #6 (June 1990) determined where motorized and non-motorized travel was permissible on the Carson National Forest (forest). This amendment designated the existing motorized routes on the Jicarilla Ranger District and restricted cross-country travel. Forest plan amendment #9 (February 1993) specifically addressed the southern portion (south of U.S. Highway 64) of the district. The amendment closed unneeded roads, identified roads to be open under a special use permit, and allowed the future consideration of open areas as opportunities arose.

Currently, 232 miles of roads are shown as open on the forest visitor's map and in the forest's transportation database. However, only 202 miles are actually open to the public. The current map does not reflect past decisions that have been made to decommission or gate roads. Forest plan amendment #9, which addressed motorized travel on the Jicarilla Ranger District, was signed and implemented in 1993. The amendment included use of a 300-foot corridor along roads designated as open to motorized use.<sup>1</sup>

The use of the 300-foot corridor compliments the New Mexico Habitat Protection Act (NM HPA). Under this Act, motorized wheeled cross-country travel to a campsite is permissible within 300 feet of a designated open motorized road or trail. This has allowed the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to assist the district in enforcing motorized use on the entire district.

The 202 miles of designated road are managed as a maintenance level 2, which means they are primarily managed for use by high clearance vehicles. Traffic by the public is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed (scattered locations), recreation or other specialized uses. Traffic management strategies have been to discourage passenger cars and to accept high clearance vehicles (FSH 7709.58, 12.3) (Carson 2008). There are no motorized trail miles (trails 50" and less and/or designated specifically for motorcycle or ATV) on the district.

## Purpose and Need for Action

Of the existing 232 miles of designated road, there is a need to remove 30 miles that has already been decommissioned or gated as a result of past decisions. Approximately 14 miles cross private lands and Jicarilla Apache Nation lands (Figure 2). These roads cross lands that are not open to the public without authorization. There is a need to remove these roads from the designated system to: (1) address the lack of an easement across private lands, and (2) discourage trespass on Jicarilla Apache Nation lands.

Currently, a 300-foot corridor exists on all designated open roads. These corridors are mostly used in the fall to access dispersed camping. Some routes pass through Mexican spotted owl (MSO) and Northern goshawk habitat. There is a need for retaining the opportunity to access established dispersed camping sites with motorized vehicles, while minimizing disturbance to MSO protected activity centers (PAC) and goshawk post-fledging family areas (PFA).

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<sup>1</sup> For clarification, the corridor extends 300 feet from either side of a road's edge.

Forest plan language needs to be consistent with the rule. While motorized use is currently limited to designated open roads, forest plan amendment #9 allows for future open motorized areas. General cross-country motorized use needs to be prohibited, except for motorized uses approved through written authorization issued under Federal law or regulation by the authorized officer. Another option is to identify areas where motorized use could occur throughout the unit.

## Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to remove approximately 30 miles of road (and its associated 300 foot corridor) from the transportation database that has been previously gated or decommissioned. Approximately 14 miles of existing open road would be closed to the public. The 14 miles of closed road includes portions of Forest Road 300A, 302, 303, 304, 305, 310D, 310D2, 309F, 310J and 310J2.

The proposed action would remove the miles of 300 foot corridor associated with the 30 miles that have been previously gated or decommissioned, remove 12 of the 14 miles of corridor that would be closed (see above) and would remove approximately 4 miles of existing corridor that occurs within portions of Mexican spotted owl and Northern goshawk habitat. The total miles of 300 foot corridor to be removed would be 46 miles. The proposed action would also amend the Carson Forest Plan to include the following management direction for the Jicarilla Ranger District:

All motorized vehicle use is limited to designated open roads and motorized trails. Vehicles may park on the side of the designated road when it is safe to do so without causing damage to national forest system resources or facilities, unless prohibited by State laws, traffic sign, or by order (36 CFR 261.54).

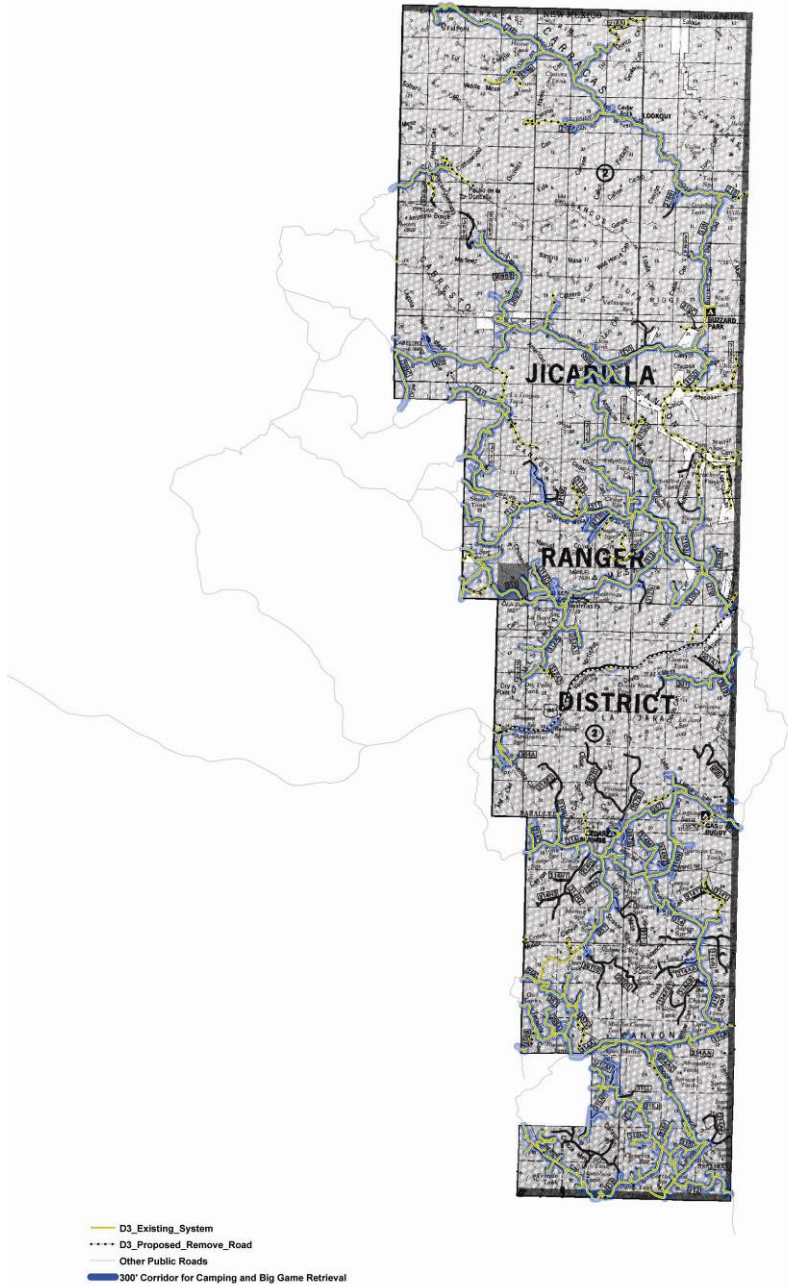
General cross-country motorized use is prohibited except motorized uses approved through written authorization issued under Federal law or regulation by the authorized officer.

**Table 1. Proposed Action for the Jicarilla Ranger District**

|   | <b>Proposed Changes to Designated System</b> | <b>Existing Designated System</b> | <b>Resulting Designated System</b> |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Miles of roads designated for motor vehicle use                               | Close 14<br>Remove 30<br>from database       | 232                               | 188                                |
| Miles of road with 300-foot corridor designated for motor vehicle use for the | Remove 46 <sup>2</sup>                       | 232                               | 186                                |

<sup>2</sup> Miles of corridor removal include (1) 4 miles that pass through Northern goshawk or Mexican spotted owl habitat, (2) 12 miles of road to be closed, and (3) 30 of the currently decommissioned or gated roads.

|   | <b>Proposed Changes to Designated System</b> | <b>Existing Designated System</b> | <b>Resulting Designated System</b> |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| purpose of dispersed camping and big game retrieval |  |                                   |                                    |



**Figure 2. Jicarilla Ranger District Transportation System Proposed Action**

## Decision Framework

The forest supervisor of the Carson National Forest is the official responsible for reviewing the proposed action, alternatives to the proposed action, and the environmental consequences. The analysis is both a project level analysis (36 CFR 228.102) and a programmatic-level forest plan analysis (36 CFR 219.14 (2008)). Given the purpose and need for action, the forest supervisor will decide: (1) whether to change the existing designated road system, (2) whether to change portions of the 300-foot corridor for the purposes of accessing dispersed camping and big game retrieval, and (3) whether to change travel management direction in the Carson Forest Plan through a forest plan amendment, specific to travel management. The forest supervisor's decision space is constrained by the provisions found in the 2005 travel management regulations (36 CFR 212, sections 212, 251, 261) as any designation must be consistent with the rule. However, as resource conditions and public need changes, travel management decisions can be annually re-evaluated.

## Public Involvement

Public involvement began in July 2006 with a public meeting held in Farmington, New Mexico. The meeting was attended by 17 individuals and agencies. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish commented on September 27, 2006. On January 31, 2007 letters were sent to the forest's 282 grazing permittees and to all forest outfitter and guide permit holders advising them that public input was being sought prior to beginning an environmental analysis. On February 21, 2007, letters were sent to approximately 38 interested parties and to 263 people who had received fuelwood permits during the 2006 season. All letters sent to the public were posted on the Carson National Forest's website.<sup>3</sup> A public meeting was held in Bloomfield, New Mexico on March 19, 2007 and eight people attended. A forest-wide open house (with the Jicarilla District present) was held in Taos, New Mexico on March 29, 2007. Approximately 150 people attended the open house. The district also included discussions on the travel management process during their 2007 and 2008 annual meetings with grazing permittees. Most recently, the travel management process was presented in January 2009 at the annual Northern New Mexico Livestock Association meeting. Pre-scoping efforts generated approximately ten responses specific to the district.

The proposed action was developed by considering the comments received from forest users over the past few years, during open houses and through direct contacts with government officials, agencies, and Tribal officials. Public comment was used in developing the Travel Analysis Report (TAP). The TAP has been posted on the forest's website since September, 2008. The proposed action has been listed in the quarterly Carson National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions since January of 2009.

## Scoping

On January 30, 2009, a forest-wide scoping period commenced and the comment period was extended to March 21, 2009. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish scheduled meetings with the Supervisor's Office to review maps. Forest-wide, approximately 770 written comments were received. Many of these comments were a form letter. Of the 770 letters, two letters were specific to the Jicarilla Ranger District. Since the form letter included wildlife concerns, it also

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson/recreation/travel\\_mgmt](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/carson/recreation/travel_mgmt)

was specific to the district. Verbal comments in addition to written comments were used to refine the proposed action.

## **Summary of Comments and Issues and How They Are Addressed**

Comments from both pre-scoping (2006 to 2008) and scoping efforts (2009) were reviewed for issues (unresolved conflicts with the proposed action). Regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) define scoping as “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action” (40 CFR 1501.7). NEPA regulations also say to “[i]dentify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review . . .” (Sec. 1501.7(a) (3)). Among the topics raised during scoping, the Forest Service identified the following issues:

**Issue #1: The proposed transportation system may be too expensive for the Forest Service to maintain.** Some people are concerned the Forest Service does not have enough funding to maintain the proposed transportation system, while adequately protecting resources. Without enough funding to adequately maintain the proposed transportation system, public safety may be at risk and natural resources may be harmed. The proposed transportation system on the Jicarilla Ranger District should be the minimum system described in the TAP, which is a total of 232 miles.

**Response:** The proposed transportation system is less than the minimum system identified in the TAP (171 miles); therefore, the proposed action addresses this issue. The analysis will identify if the proposed transportation system can be maintained. The analysis will also discuss how maintenance affects public safety and risk. The environmental analysis will use miles of road maintained annually and the cost as the quantitative indicator for this issue. Effects to public safety and natural resources will be qualitative.

**Issue #2: The proposed transportation system may negatively affect wildlife and their habitat.** Roads can create habitat loss and fragmentation, interrupt travel patterns, and cause functional habitat loss for some wildlife species. Motorized recreation can cause disturbance to species and damage to vegetation. Roads through Northern goshawk post-fledging nesting areas (PFAs) and Mexican spotted owl protected activity areas (PACs) should be removed from the open transportation system to minimize potential negative impacts. The effects of the transportation system to federally listed threatened and endangered species, Forest Service sensitive species, and other non-listed terrestrial, aquatic, and avian wildlife and habitat should also be analyzed.

**Response:** The wildlife effects analysis will discuss how the change in the transportation system affects habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, functional habitat loss, and the potential for disturbance. Removing roads through Mexican spotted owl PACs and Northern goshawk PFAs was considered but eliminated from further analysis (see alternatives considered but eliminated). The proposed action has been slightly modified to remove approximately four miles of 300-foot corridor that occur within goshawk PFAs. No roads (roads open to the general public) occur within owl PACs. The proposed action addresses this issue. The environmental analysis will use the number of affected Mexican spotted owl breeding pairs and the number of affected Northern goshawk pairs as indicators for the proposed action’s effects on federally listed and Forest Service sensitive species, respectively. In addition, the change in the number of acres of available or

suitable habitat, the number of acres or miles of habitat affected by the net change in miles of open road, the potential for disturbance based on the change in miles of open road, and net change in percentage of sediment (indicator in terms of roads for assessing effects to properly functioning aquatic habitat) will be analyzed to address the proposed action's effects on wildlife and their habitat.

**Issue #3: The proposed transportation system may negatively affect special designations, such as wilderness, inventoried roadless areas, and wild and scenic river designations.**

Special designations on the Carson National Forest include congressionally designated wilderness, inventoried roadless areas, rivers eligible for wild and scenic river designation, and national scenic and historic trails. Five special areas on the Jicarilla Ranger District – Bancos Canyon, La Jara Canyon, Valencia Canyon, Fierro Mesa and Canyon, and Vaqueros Canyon – were recently identified in an amendment to the Carson forest plan (March 2009) and are to be managed for their resource values.

Comments suggested motorized use is generally not compatible with management requirements for areas with special designations and should be kept to a minimum for public enjoyment and resource protection. Motorized use near these areas may negatively impact the opportunities for non-motorized, quiet recreation. Bancos Canyon, La Jara Canyon, Valencia Canyon, Fierro Mesa and Vaqueros Canyon should be closed to motorized vehicle use because these areas are eligible for wild and scenic river designation. The proposed transportation system may also negatively affect the resources values for which the special areas are to be managed.

**Response:** With the exception of the rivers that are eligible for wild and scenic river evaluation and the special areas, there are no other existing or proposed special designations on the Jicarilla Ranger District. Intermittent channels within Bancos, Vaqueros, La Jara, Valencia and Fierro canyons were inventoried as eligible for designation in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The proposed action does not include changes to the designated road system in these areas. Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, existing rights cannot be abrogated in order to implement protections or maintain eligibility (Carson 2009).<sup>4</sup> The indicator used to assess impacts of the proposed action to eligible wild and scenic river segments and special areas is the net change in miles of open road relative to outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) for eligible rivers and resource values for special areas. Whether the public transportation system (versus the access used for oil and gas lease operations) would affect ORVs in terms of eligibility will be displayed. Net change in opportunities for non-motorized (quiet) recreation will be used to assess impacts to the quality of recreational experiences.

## Alternatives

This section describes and compares the alternatives that have been considered for travel management on the Jicarilla Ranger District.

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted, the Forest Service cannot deny access to valid existing leases; therefore, roads only accessing gas development facilities and not open to the public are not included in the proposed action or the “designated road system”.

## **Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study**

Federal agencies are required by the NEPA to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). Public comments received in response to the proposed action provided suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. Most suggestions can be addressed in the environmental consequences analysis. However, two suggested alternatives did not meet the purpose and need or were eliminated due to a lack of information. The reasons for dismissing the alternatives are summarized below.

### **An Alternative That Removes 300-foot Corridors on Forest Roads 310, 311, 312 and 357**

The suggested alternative was to remove all corridors along FR 310, FR 311, FR 312, and FR 357 to protect heritage resources. This alternative was considered, but eliminated for public safety reasons. The option of only allowing parking adjacent to open roads would be unsafe, due to the volume of vehicles that support oil and gas operations. Traffic counts monitored on primary route FR 310 from 2003 to 2005 indicate the road may receive up to 300 vehicles per day to either reach oil and gas leases or for access to hunting in the fall. If heritage surveys indicate that areas within the corridor would be damaged from motorized use, the section of corridor is likely to be removed from the open system and would not be displayed as open on the motor vehicle use map.

### **An Alternative That Would Close Forest Road 310, 311, 312, and 357 within Northern Goshawk Post-Fledgling Areas and Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers**

Forest Roads 310, 311, and 312 are main roads that provide access to the northern portion (north of U.S. Highway 64) of the district. Forest Road 357 is the main road that provides access to the southern portion of the district. This alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis, because closing these roads would severely restrict public access to the national forest originating from U.S. Highway 64. Closing the roads to public access would not change the amount, timing, and intensity of motorized vehicle use to access to oil and gas facilities. It would only restrict the recreating public who are primarily fall hunters. Hunters account for an estimated 15,900 recreational visitor days (RVDs) per year on the district (one recreational visitor day represents one visitor for a 12-hour stay). The effects of the proposed (public) transportation system to federally listed threatened and endangered species and Forest Service sensitive species will be analyzed.

### **An Alternative That Creates an Off-Road Vehicle System to Provide Additional Motorized Opportunities**

Comments received since 2006 (when the first round of open houses were held) were reviewed. Comments received from public involvement efforts in 2007 requested the district develop a motorized off-road vehicle system. General vicinities both north and south of U.S. Highway 64 were included. Creating an off-road vehicle system was considered, but eliminated from detail analysis. A more comprehensive planning process will be needed to address how to safely integrate recreational motorized use with oil and gas operations and existing wildlife habitat seasonal closures. A motorized recreation use plan will need to address off-road vehicle use co-mingled and mitigated to manage public safety, wildlife habitat security, and user conflict. Input and coordination with other agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will also be important when considering how the district links to other land management agencies with

more land base. While this analysis may occur in the future, it cannot be adequately addressed in this travel management process. This is consistent with the travel management rule which recognizes that the designation of roads and trails for motor vehicle use is not permanent. Unforeseen environmental impacts, changes in public demand, and monitoring conducted under 36 CFR 212.57 of the travel management rule may lead a responsible official to revise designations under 36 CFR 212.54 of the rule.

### **An Alternative That Uses the Minimum System Described in the Travel Analysis Process (TAP)**

The existing transportation system reflects the access needed for oil and gas leases. In reviewing the TAP for the Jicarilla Ranger District, the transportation system proposed as being open for the public encompasses the minimum system. This alternative has been eliminated from detailed study, since the TAP (232 miles) has a greater number of miles than what is proposed. For additional rationale see Summary of Comments and Issues.

### **Alternatives Considered in Detail**

Alternatives are used to evaluate different ways to resolve significant issues brought forth by the public during scoping (see previous section) and to satisfy the purpose and need for action. For this analysis, the effects of two alternatives will be analyzed in detail – the proposed action and the no action. The purpose and need for the proposed action, along with important issues serve as the objectives and framework around which alternatives are developed. In this analysis, the five issues (see pp. 5-7) identified at the end of the purpose and need section can be addressed by analyzing the effects in the minimally modified proposed action.

One alternative, the proposed action with minor changes, addresses the issues raised. Forest Service NEPA regulations at 36 CFR 220.7(b)(2)(ii) state,

“The EA may document consideration of a no-action alternative through the effects analysis by contrasting the impacts of the proposed action and any alternatives(s) with the current condition and expected future condition if the proposed action were not implemented.”

The EA for Travel Management on the Jicarilla Ranger District will not include a separate analysis of the no action alternative. Instead, impacts of the proposed changes to the transportation system will be contrasted with the current transportation system and the expected future conditions, if the proposed changes are not implemented.

### **Alternative 1 – Proposed Action**

Alternative 1 is the proposed action described in the first part of this document (pp. 4-5).

### **Summary of Environmental Effects for Alternative 1**

The interdisciplinary team for the NEPA analysis is currently completing the effects analyses for alternative 1. The impacts of the changes to the transportation system proposed in alternative 1 will be contrasted with the current transportation system and the expected future conditions, if the proposed changes are not implemented. Table 3 provides a summary of effects. A more detailed discussion will be included in the EA. Minor changes to effects displayed in table 3 may be anticipated when the EA is completed.

**Table 2. Draft environmental effects from the proposed changes (alternative 1) to the Jicarilla Ranger District designated transportation system**

| <b>What</b>   | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b>  |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Wilderness/Roadless</b>  |                     |                            |   |
| <b>Issue: The proposed transportation system may negatively affect special designations such as wilderness inventoried roadless areas and wild and scenic river designations.</b> |                     |                            |   |
| Loss of wilderness characteristics  | Existing condition  | No Effect                  | There are no wilderness areas on the district   |
|   | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| Loss of Inventoried Roadless Area Characteristics   | Existing condition  | No Effect                  | There are no Inventoried Roadless Areas on district.  |
|   | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| Wild and Scenic River designation   | Existing condition  | No Effect                  | No new roads or motorized trails are located in streams proposed for designation.   |
|   | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| <b>Wildlife</b>   |                     |                            |   |
| <b>Issue: The proposed transportation system may negatively affect wildlife and their habitat.</b>  |                     |                            |   |
| <b>Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive species</b>   |                     |                            |   |
| Black-footed ferret ( <i>Mustela nigripes</i> )   | Existing Condition  | No effect                  | No prairie dog towns over 200 acres in size exist in the analysis area.   |
|   | Proposed            | No effect                  |   |
| Southwestern willow flycatcher (SWWF) ( <i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i> )   | Existing Condition  | No effect                  | There is no SWWF habitat on the district.   |
|   | Proposed            | No effect                  |   |
| Mexican spotted owl ( <i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i> )  | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Habitat is present, however the proposal would not remove their habitat component and would reduce the risk of motorized vehicles damaging habitat. |
|   | Proposed            | Beneficial effect          |   |
| Interior least tern ( <i>Sterna antillarum</i> )  | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The forest is not within the range of this species.   |
|   | Proposed            |                            |   |
|   |                     |                            |   |

| <b>What</b>  | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b>   |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Rio Grande silvery minnow<br><i>(Hybognathus amarus)</i>                       | Existing Condition  | No effect                  | The forest is not within the range of this species.  |
|  | Proposed            |                            |  |
| <b>Forest Service Sensitive Species</b>  |                     |                            |  |
| Bald eagle<br><i>(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)</i>                                | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The district is only used for winter roosting habitat. The propose changes would not affect that use.  |
|  | Proposed            |                            |  |
| Northern goshawk<br><i>(Accipiter gentiles)</i><br>(Post fledging areas [PFA]) | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Some PFA's are currently crossed .by existing roads and corridors  |
|  | Proposed            | Beneficial effect          | Corridors that occur in PFA's would be eliminated. Motorized travel would be restricted to the road.   |
| Peregrine falcon<br><i>(Falco peregrinus)</i>                                  | Existing Condition  | No effect                  | Habitat is present, however the proposal would not remove their habitat component (cliff habitat for nesting) and no motorized corridors are proposed near nest sites. |
|  | Proposed            | No effect                  |  |
| Burrowing owl<br><i>(Athene cumicularia hypugaea)</i>                          | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Habitat is present, however the proposal would not remove their habitat component and would reduce the risk of motorized vehicles damaging habitat.                    |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |  |
| Gray vireo<br><i>(Vireo vicinior)</i>  | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Habitat is present, however the proposal would not remove their habitat component (pinon-juniper trees)  |
|  | Proposed            |                            |  |

| <b>What</b>  | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b>   |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Spotted bat<br>( <i>Euderma maculatum</i> )                                      | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The proposed changes to the road system would not affect roosting and foraging habitats.   |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |  |
| Pale Townsend's big-eared bat<br>( <i>Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens</i> )   | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The proposed changes to the road system would not affect roosting and foraging habitats.   |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |  |
| Bluehead sucker<br>( <i>Catostomus discobolus discobolus</i> )                   | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Due to the lack of perennial water, there are no fish residing in the district. The proposed changes would not affect sediment delivery into the San Juan River. |
|  | Proposed            |                            |  |
| Flannelmouth sucker<br>( <i>Catostomus latipinnis</i> )                          | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Due to the lack of perennial water, there are no fish residing in the district. The proposed changes would not affect sediment delivery into the San Juan River. |
|  | Proposed            |                            |  |
| Roundtail chub<br>( <i>Gila robusta</i> )  | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Due to the lack of perennial water, there are no fish residing in the district. The proposed changes would not affect sediment delivery into the San Juan River. |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |  |
| Pagosa milk-vetch<br>( <i>Astragalus missouriensis</i> var. <i>humistratus</i> ) | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | There are no proposed changes in the area where this plant is located on the district.   |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |  |
| Gunnison's prairie dog<br><i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i>                               | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Habitat is present, however the proposal would not remove their habitat component and  |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |  |

| What   | Alternatives       | Anticipated effects | Reasoning   |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---|
|  |                    |                     | would reduce the risk of motorized vehicles damaging habitat.                               |
| <b>MIS species</b>   |                    |                     |   |
| Brewer's Sparrow<br>( <i>Spizella breweri</i> )                    | Existing Condition | No Effect           | The proposed changes would not affect the sagebrush component.                              |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |
| Plain (Juniper) Titmouse<br>( <i>Baeolophus ridgwayi</i> )         | Existing Condition | No Effect           | The proposed changes, would not affect piñon-juniper canopies.                              |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |
| Abert's Squirrel<br>( <i>Sciurus aberti</i> )                      | Existing Condition | No Effect           | The proposed changes would not affect interlocking canopies in ponderosa pine.              |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |
| Hairy Woodpecker<br>( <i>Picoides villosus</i> )                   | Existing Condition | No Effect           | The proposed changes would not affect the number of snags in the project area.              |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |
| Red Squirrel<br>( <i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i> )                 | Existing Condition | No Effect           | The proposed changes would not affect the mixed-conifer in the project area.                |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |
| Wild Turkey<br>( <i>Meleagris gallopavo</i> )                      | Existing Condition | No Effect           | The proposed changes would not affect old growth in ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer trees. |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |
| White-tailed Ptarmigan ( <i>Lagopus leucurus</i> )                 | Existing Condition | Not Applicable      | White-tailed ptarmigan habitat is not found on the this district.                           |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |
| Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep ( <i>Ovis canadensis canadensis</i> ) | Existing Condition | No Effect           | Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep habitat is not found on this district.                         |
|  | Proposed           |                     |   |

| <b>What</b>   | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b>                         | <b>Reasoning</b>  |
|---|---------------------|--|---|
| Rocky Mountain Elk  | Existing Conditions | No Change  | The removal of corridor and closing of 14 miles of road would slightly improve winter habitat.  |
|   | Proposed            | No change to forest populations and habitat trends |   |
| Aquatic Macro Invertebrates   |                     | Not Applicable                                     | Aquatic macro-invertebrates habitat is not found on the district.   |
| Resident Trout  | Existing Condition  | Not Applicable                                     | Resident trout habitat is not found on the district.  |
|   | Proposed            | Not Applicable                                     |   |
| <b>Migratory Birds</b>  |                     |  |   |
| Migratory Birds (loggerhead shrike, sage thrasher, Bendire's thrasher, sage sparrow, ferruginous hawk, gray flycatcher, gray vireo, MacGillivray's warbler, green-tailed towhee Bendire's thrasher and black-throated bray warbler, pinon jay). The Greater pewee, olive warbler, Gunnison sage grouse, Lucifer hummingbird, black-chinned sparrow are not found on forest. They migrate through but there is no habitat on the district. | Existing Condition  | No Effect  | The habitat components for these species would not be removed or affected. Roads would continue to be open to industry and for access to private land. The removal of the 300' corridors would have limited benefits to migratory bird by reducing noise disturbance. |
|   | Proposed            | Positive Effect                                    |   |
| <b>Roads/Trails</b>   |                     |  |   |
| <b>Issue: The proposed transportation system may be too expensive for the Forest Service to maintain</b>  |                     |  |   |
| Area closed to cross country travel by NM Habitat Protection Act  | Existing Condition  | No Effect  | Travel is currently limited to designated roads and 300 foot  |
|   | Proposed            | No Effect  |   |

| <b>What</b>                       | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--|
| (HPA)                             |                     |                            | corridor along the designated roads (185 miles) as per HPA. The proposed action reduces existing corridors by 12 miles for enhanced wildlife habitat protection.   |
| Area open to cross country travel | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | No areas would be open to cross county travel.   |
|                                   | Proposed            | No Effect                  |  |
| Miles of 300 foot corridor        | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The proposal reduces corridors by 12 miles (4 miles within MSO PACS).  |
|                                   | Proposed            | Minimal Effect             |  |
| Miles of road with no corridor    | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The proposal adds 4 miles of roads that would have no corridors within MSO PACS.   |
|                                   | Proposed            | Minimal Effect             |  |
| Miles of open road system         | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The proposal reduces open roads by 14 miles.   |
|                                   | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |  |
| <b>Implementation</b>             |                     |                            |  |
| Law Enforcement                   | Existing Condition  | No effect                  | Clearly signing roads and trails open to motorized use would improve compliance with closures. It would facilitate law enforcement. Speculating on any additional resources for law enforcement is beyond the scope of this project. |
|                                   | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |  |
| Signage                           | Existing Condition  | No effect                  | Current signage is not adequate to fully inform the public on which roads and trails are open to motorized   |
|                                   | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |  |

| <b>What</b>   | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b>  |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|---|
|   |                     |                            | vehicle use Signage is planned for roads and trails open to motorized use. Those road and trails that are to be closed to motorized use would be signed..   |
| Visitor Information   | Existing Condition  | No effect                  | Map production is standardized nationwide. Individuals traveling to different forests would be able to interpret the maps for the differing forests. Motor vehicle use maps would be provided for free. |
|   | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| <b>Social/Economics</b>   |                     |                            |   |
| <b>Issue: Access to forest products, recreational opportunities</b> |                     |                            |   |
| Safety  | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | There would be no change from the current condition.  |
|   | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| Access to forest products   | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Permits are required for forest products such as fuelwood, vigas, plant collection. This would continue.  |
|   | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| Access to dispersed camping spots                                   | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The proposed reduces motorized access to dispersed campsites on 4 miles of road where there would be no corridor. Visitors could still park adjacent to the road and walk to a camping area.            |
|   | Proposed            | Minimal Effect             |   |
| Access to motorized recreational opportunities                      | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Motorized vehicle use would continue on FS designated roads and corridors. Some miles   |
|   | Proposed            | Minimal Effect             |   |

| <b>What</b>  | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b>  |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|---|
|  |                     |                            | would be removed due to private land issues.  |
| Economic changes to local communities  | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Economic models and measurements occur at county level. The communities in the analysis area are not distinguishable from the county level data. Existing opportunities would be continued. |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| Big game motorized retrieval   | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The proposal would remove 4 miles of corridor and those miles of road where there are private land issues.  |
|  | Proposed            | Minimal Effect             |   |
| <b>Heritage Resources</b>  |                     |                            |   |
| Ruins with standing walls, historic buildings; lithic scatters, teepee rings | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Specific locations may be closed/rerouted over time.  |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  | Resources would be protected by eliminated road access as needed once surveys are complete.   |
| <b>Watershed/Soils</b>   |                     |                            |   |
| Stream miles in 300-ft corridor(each side of road total 600 feet)            | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Current conditions of 67.6 miles is reduced by .4 miles in the proposal   |
|  | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |   |
| Road miles within 200 ft of stream   | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | No change from the current condition of 46 miles.   |
|  | Proposed            | No Effect                  |   |
| Stream Crossings   | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The current number of stream crossings (174) is reduced under the proposal to 155.  |
|  | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |   |
| Sedimentation  | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | The current condition   |

| <b>What</b>                            | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b>  |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|---|
| (tons per year)                        | Proposed            | No Effect                  | of 10,560 ton produced annually does not change under the proposal. Road segments would continue to be used by oil and gas industry to access well pads.  |
| Erosion Hazard                         | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | There would be a slight decrease in the potential surface soil erosion caused by removal or damage to vegetation and surface groundcover, surface soil displacement, and concentration of water flow resulting from off road vehicle use.   |
| Moderate                               | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |   |
| Severe                                 |                     |                            |   |
| ORV Limitation                         | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | Slight decrease in potential soil damage from compaction, rutting, and surface soil displacement of soils resulting from off road vehicle use. Moderate limitation defines risk of impairment to soil productivity by ORV use. Severe limitation defines certain impairment of soil productivity. |
| Moderate                               | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |   |
| Severe                                 |                     |                            |   |
| <b>Air</b>                             |                     |                            |   |
| Air quality improvement(fugitive dust) | Existing Condition  | No Effect                  | No change from current conditions other than reduction of 14 miles of road The proposed action would have a minor effect on the production of fugitive dust from motorized use by the   |
|  | Proposed            | Positive Effect            |   |

| <b>What</b> | <b>Alternatives</b> | <b>Anticipated effects</b> | <b>Reasoning</b> |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
|             |                     |                            | public.          |

## Rationale for a Non-Significant Forest Plan Amendment

In order to be consistent with travel management rule direction, the Carson Forest Plan must be amended. The National Forest Management Act (NFMA, (16 U.S.C. 1604 (f) (4))) requires forest land and resource management plans

*...be amended in a manner whatsoever after final adoption and after public notice and if such plan amendment would result in a significant change in such plan, in accordance with subsections (e) and (f) of section 6 and public involvement comparable to that required by subsection (d) of this section.*

The regulations guide development, revision, and amendment of land management plans. The 2008 planning regulations (36 CFR 219.14 (b)(2)) allow use of the planning regulation provisions in effect before November 9, 2000, which were promulgated in 1982. When a decision is made, the responsible official has elected to amend the Carson Forest Plan using the 1982 planning regulations. On amending a forest plan, the 1982 planning regulations state,

*If the change resulting from the amendment is determined not to be significant for the purposes of the planning process, the Forest Supervisor may implement the amendment following appropriate public notification and satisfactory completion of NEPA procedures (36 CFR 219.10(f)(1982)).*

A plan amendment for the Jicarilla Travel Management decision would not be significant. The change is aimed at using language and terminology that is consistent with the travel management rule (2005). The amendment would not be significant because it: (1) would not make any changes to standards and guidelines for the rest of the Carson National Forest; (2) would not alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management on the Carson National Forest; (3) it would not increase any one type of output that would trigger an increase or decrease in another; (4) the amendment does not include a demand for goods and services not discussed in the forest plan, and; (5) the amendment would not forego opportunity to achieve a forest output in later years.