



DECISION MEMO

New Mexico Trials Association Motorcycle Trials Competition and Camping

**USDA FOREST SERVICE
JEMEZ RANGER DISTRICT
SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST
T19N, R2E, Sections 23 and 24
SANDOVAL COUNTY, NM**

Decision & Location: I have decided to approve the authorization for a special use permit for the New Mexico Trials Association Motorcycle Trials Competition and Camping. The project includes trials motorcycle riding and camping on approximately 25 acres on the east end of Lake Fork Canyon between October 4 and October 6, 2009.

Description of Project: The special use permit will authorize approximately 60 to 80 competitors and 20 to 30 spectators to participate in a trials motorcycle competition and camping in Lake Fork Canyon, adjacent to Forest Road 376, within the Jemez National Recreation Area. This event will occur on a defined area of approximately 25 acres, within the 136-acre analysis area.

This project is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement under FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31. 2- Category 8. Approval, modification, or continuation of minor, short-term (one-year or less) special uses of National Forest System lands. However, this categorically excluded activity is subject to notice, comment, and appeal under the 36 CFR 215 rules: the issuance or re-issuance of special use permits for OHV activities conducted on areas, trails, or roads that are not designated for such activities.

Categorical Exclusion Compliance:

Scoping and Issues: Agency resource specialists were consulted and a scoping letter inviting interested parties to be involved in this project was sent to 41 individuals and organizations on March 17, 2009. This included state, local, and tribal governments, environmental organizations, and interested parties. A legal notice was published on March 22, 2009 in the Albuquerque Journal. This notice gave the public the information necessary to comment on the proposed action. Several letters and e-mails were received during the comment period.

There were several issues raised during the scoping/comment period. These issues were all considered and in some instances were used to help craft additional requirements and specifications written into this decision. For more information on these issues and for Forest Service responses to these comments and concerns, please contact the Jemez Ranger District office for the 'Response to Comment' document.

Guidelines in the Handbook (FSH 1909.15 Chapter 30, Section 31) require that the following resource conditions be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action warrant further analysis:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds



- Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas
- Inventoried roadless areas
- Research natural areas
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites, archeological sites, or historic properties or areas”

Specialists at the Jemez Ranger District analyzed the proposed action with respect to each of the above ‘extraordinary circumstances.’ The action does not involve adverse effects to any extraordinary circumstances.

The project is located within the Jemez National Recreation Area (JNRA). Based on the JNRA Management Plan, it was determined that the proposed activity is an acceptable recreational use of the Lake Fork Unit in the JNRA.

The proposed project is entirely within the Jemez National Recreation Area. The Management Plan for the Jemez National Recreation Area does not specifically speak to special use permit authorizations or OHV events; however, page 12 of the Plan states, “Provide road access for traditional uses, dispersed recreation, permittee and administrative uses.” Additionally, on Page 8 of the Plan designated areas for motorized uses are specifically discussed as an acceptable use in the Lake Fork Unit of the JNRA. The project is consistent with the management direction specific to these areas and Forest Plan forest-wide and management area goals, direction, and standards and guidelines.

Biological and heritage resource clearance are in the project file.

This decision is based on the best available science and is consistent with the Santa Fe National Forest Plan, as amended.

Project Specifications and Design Criteria: To avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts of the project, the decision to authorize the special use permit for this project includes the following requirements:

- All refuse will be carried out. No trash or food waste will be buried or burned.
- No campsites will be set within 150 feet of a stream or waterway.
- When campsite is dismantled, the area is to be left clean.
- Low impact camping techniques as outlined in the “Leave No Trace Land Ethics” brochure shall be observed.
- Portable toilets should be located at least 100 feet away from streams.
- One portable toilet for every 35 people who attend or participate in the event is to be made available on site.
- No off-road or off trail use is authorized. All bikes are to be kept on Forest Service roads, and within approved trials areas or trails, eliminating the potential for cross-country bike traffic.
 - Approved trials areas and trails will be flagged prior to the event and subject to Forest Service modification if determined necessary at any time during the event.



- Any observable erosion or channelization observed by Forest Service personnel on existing roads/trails or trials areas shall be water-barred upon Forest Service request.
- If gasoline or other flammable, combustible, or other petroleum-based products are being stored onsite, a 30-gallon or spill kit of greater or equivalent size must be kept onsite at all times during the event for potential use.
- All containers with flammable, combustible or other petroleum-based products must be stored only in approved containers and at least 150 feet from all running water at all times.

Appeals and Implementation:

A legal notice was published for this project in the Albuquerque Journal on March 22, 2009. Thus, the comment period overlapped with scoping. Comments received within 30 calendar days from publication of the legal notice would be eligible for appeal. This decision is subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 215.11 (published on June 4, 2003). Implementation of this decision may begin on the 5th day following the 45-day appeal-filing period that begins after the publication of a legal notice for the decision in the Albuquerque Journal on May 18, 2009.

Contact: For more information, please contact Mike Dechter, Jemez Ranger District Office, P.O. Box 150, Jemez Springs, NM 87025. (575) 829-3535.

Linda Riddle
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Jemez District Ranger

5/14/09
Date