

News Release

USDA Forest Service
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: June 16, 2008

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Bridger-Teton National Forest Seek Public Review on Off-Highway Vehicle Proposal

Jackson, Wyo. –The Bridger-Teton National Forest is currently requesting public review and comment on a project to designate roads and motorized trails in certain areas of the Forest where motorized use is currently not restricted. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is now available for review and public comment is being accepted until August 4, 2008.

On the Bridger-Teton National Forest, there are 255,830 acres that currently allow unrestricted summer motorized travel. These areas are located on the Buffalo/Togwotee, Gros Ventre/Shadow Mountain, Phillips Ridge, Snake River Range/Munger Mountain, and Hoback Basin/Granite Creek areas. Winter snowmobile use is not addressed in this project.

Currently, summer motorized use within the unrestricted portions of the Forest is not being managed in a manner consistent with travel management regulations and Forest Plan direction or in manner consistent with resource protection, public safety, and enjoyment by all Forest users. Specific project objectives are to (1) Designate roads and motorized trails to meet essential public needs, improve the quality of the system, and reduce conflicts, (2) Reduce resource impacts, and (3) Improve the ability to maintain routes and enforce travel regulations. All routes proposed for designation exist on the ground although not all are currently part of the Forest transportation system; no construction of new routes is proposed.

This project will result in a summer motor vehicle use map by March 2009. Once the motor vehicle use map is published, summer motorized will be allowed only on designated routes. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) provides information on the history of motor vehicle travel within the area, identifies seven significant issues relative to a proposed action released in January 2007, and compares the effects of implementing five alternative motorized route systems. The No Action alternative would allow unrestricted motorized travel to continue. This alternative serves as a baseline for comparing the effects of other alternatives. The four action alternatives vary in terms of the mileage of designated motorized routes, the number of routes with seasonal restrictions, and the classification of vehicle routes (e.g. full-size vehicle road, 50" or less trail, or motorcycle trail). The mileage of designated motorized routes varies from 388 miles of road and 33 miles of motorized trail in Alternative B to 445 miles of road and

102 miles of motorized trail in Alternative E. Alternatives C and D have the most miles of designated routes affected by seasonal restrictions with Alternative C having the most miles of routes that would only be available for motorized use during the summer (July 1st until September 9th). Alternative D is the initial preferred alternative.

A summary of the Draft EIS and the full document are available via a link called “North Zone Travel Plan Revision” on the Bridger-Teton National Forest website: www.fs.fed.us/r4/btnf . Hard copies of the Draft EIS are available to view at the Forest Service Supervisor’s Office, the Buffalo, Jackson, and Big Piney Ranger Districts, and at the Teton County Library. Large maps of the five alternatives are also available for viewing at the Forest Service office in Jackson, located at 340 North Cache anytime between 8 am and 4:30 pm.

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