



Notice of Proposed Action

Peavine Mountain Travel Management Plan

United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Carson Ranger District, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Washoe County, Nevada**

Forest
Service

September, 2005

COMMENTS WELCOME

The Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest welcomes your comments on its proposal to improve travel management on Peavine Mountain (See Maps). The proposal includes designating roads and trails for motorized and nonmotorized uses and closing the area to cross country travel by vehicles.

BACKGROUND / PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

Peavine Mountain is situated along the northwest flanks of the City of Reno; tucked within a triangle bordered between the California-Nevada State line to the west, Highway 80 to the south and Highway 395 to the northeast. The 42,000-acre analysis area is made up of National Forest System lands (18,000 acres) and includes other public lands and private lands within the City of Reno and Washoe County (24,000 acres). Peavine Mountain is a deeply valued component of the Reno and Washoe County landscape and a popular destination for locals. It is also reeling from the effects of being in the midst of a rapidly growing community. As a June 13, 2002 editorial in the Reno Gazette Journal states, the area is *“getting a good look at the future as new and old collide on the slopes of Peavine Peak. It’s a classic example of the conflicts that arise as city butts up against country – as peace, quiet and safety meet freedom and open space”*.

The Forest Service, in cooperation with the City of Reno and Washoe County, teamed up to analyze the issues on Peavine Mountain and to make a series of recommendations that helps

set the stage for future management decisions. The recommendations are intended to provide quality recreation experiences for all types of recreation, motorized and nonmotorized. These recommendations were published in the Peavine Mountain Roads and Recreation Strategy developed by the Carson Ranger District in coordination with the City of Reno and Washoe County. Several of the recommendations dealt with travel management.

Most of the roads on Peavine are user created, stemming from mineral exploration, past grazing operations or various recreation activities. Roads typically follow steep ridgelines or drainage bottoms. Many road segments are unsafe. Some are experiencing severe erosion and are readily visible from miles away. Some are causing damage to meadows, riparian areas and cultural sites. Sometimes multiple roads access the same location. Other roads, such as old mineral exploration roads, dead-end on mountainsides.

The Strategy recommended developing a road system that best meets people's needs and is safe, environmentally sound, and affordable. The proposed road system should include better strategic access for fires suppression vehicles, preserve jeep and OHV routes as well as provide for easier recreation travel routes while better protecting the environment. These roads should be signed and maintained. Some segments of the proposed road system should be partially relocated or reconstructed to meet use and maintenance standards.

The Strategy also discussed nonmotorized routes. Peavine Mountain is a favorite area for mountain bikers. Mountain bike use is heavy, yet there is no established trail system. Numerous social trails have been pioneered in over the years as a result. Many single-track trails have scarred the hillside with a maze of routes to the same locations. Some users have expressed concern over this unplanned approach to trail construction. In some cases, trails that were built a few years ago have become too rocky. The finer soils have since eroded away leaving only bedrock material. Individuals built these trails without approval from the Forest Service. Many mountain bikers, including mountain bike clubs have expressed an interest in developing well-designed bike routes and creating additional interconnecting routes around the mountain. The Strategy recommended developing a non-motorized trail system. User groups, and city and county agencies should be included to ensure a well developed trail system that compliments county and city recreation plans.

These recommendations formed the basis for the proposed action. Other recommendations in the Strategy have already been implemented, including the closure of the 7th St. Pit, creation of the Keystone nonmotorized recreation area, and the development of new motorized and nonmotorized trailheads. The Strategy, as a whole, is intended to enhance recreation experiences for all types of users, protect the environment, and meet the needs of the neighborhoods surrounding Peavine Mountain.

THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action includes these provisions:

- Road/Trail System
 - Update the Carson Ranger District Travel Management Plan for the Peavine Mountain by designating a system of motorized and nonmotorized routes to better

meet user needs and protect the environment. Designate 46 miles of roads open to the public, 3 miles of administrative roads, 36 miles of motorized two track trails, 8 miles of motorized single track trails, 22 miles of nonmotorized trails (Map). About 75 miles of roads and other routes would be closed to motor vehicle use and rehabilitated as needed. Cross country motor vehicle use off of designated motorized routes would be prohibited.

- **Motorized Travel**

Roads would be maintained for use by high clearance vehicles. Motorized two track trails would be maintained at a lower standard. They are generally steeper and rougher than roads and would be most suitable for off highway and all terrain vehicles. Motorized single track trails are open to motorcycles and other vehicles less than 40 inches wide.

- **Nonmotorized Travel**

Nonmotorized trails would be open to hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and other nonmotorized users and closed to motorized use. Cross country travel by nonmotorized mechanized vehicles such as mountain bikes would be prohibited. Nonmotorized travel would be allowed on all designated routes.

- **Signing and Patrolling**

Designated routes would be mapped and signed. The area would be patrolled by Forest Service personnel to enforce closures. Volunteers would be solicited from both motorized and nonmotorized recreation communities to help with monitoring, enforcement, and public education efforts.

- **Exceptions for Off Road Use**

Motorized uses off designated routes that require a permit (such as fuelwood cutting) would be authorized on a case by case basis. Motorized uses that do not require a permit – temporary camping and game retrieval only – would be allowed within 100 feet of designated routes so long as it does not result in resource damage.

COMMENT PROCESS

The Forest Service encourages your substantive comments on this proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the responsible official should consider in reaching a decision (36 CFR 215.6(a)(3)).

Your comments will help us prepare an environmental assessment on the proposed action. The assessment will be used to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact. If there is no potential for significant impacts, that finding along with the environmental assessment and a decision notice will be released for public information. A 45-day appeal period will be provided after release of the environmental assessment, finding of no significant impact, and decision notice. If the environmental assessment concludes that there is the potential for significant impacts then an environmental impact statement would be prepared.

To maintain eligibility for appeal, each individual or, for an organization, an authorized representative, must submit substantive comments on this proposed action and must sign the comments or otherwise verify their identity. Substantive comments are those within the scope of, are specific to, and have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons that the Responsible Officials should consider in reaching a decision.

Please send your comments to the Responsible Official for this project, who is Gary Schiff, Carson District Ranger, 1536 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89703; phone (775) 882-2766 fax (775) 884-8199; or you may hand-deliver your comments to the above address during normal business hours from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Email comments may be sent to comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-carson@fs.fed.us. The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the Reno Gazette Journal.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection and will be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Additional information on the proposed action may be obtained by contacting Larry Randall or David Loomis, 1536 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89703; phone (775) 882-2766 fax (775) 884-8199.