



Notice of Proposed Action

Martis Travel Management Plan

United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Carson Ranger District, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Washoe County, Nevada, and Nevada and Placer Counties,
California**

Forest
Service

September, 2006

COMMENTS WELCOME

The Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest welcomes your comments on its proposal to improve travel management in the Martis area. (See Map). The proposal includes designating roads and trails for motorized use, closing some roads to motorized use, and establishing a motorized trailhead.

BACKGROUND / PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The Martis area encompasses about 54,000 acres south and east of the Truckee River/Interstate 80 corridor west of Reno. The eastern boundary is the crest of the Carson Range and the area extends south to Mt. Rose. The area includes a portion of the Mt. Rose Wilderness. Primary watersheds within the area are Gray Creek, Bronco Creek and Deep Creek.

The purpose of this project is to provide access and an efficient road system needed for both public and administrative motorized vehicle purposes. The Martis area currently has poor access and is lightly used in comparison to nearby forest areas. Access from Garson Road near Boomtown is gated on private land. Hunter Lake Road requires a 4WD vehicle and the Bronco Creek Road also crosses private land. Over the next ten years thousands of new homes will be built in the Verdi and Martis Valley areas. The demand for use in the adjacent National Forest lands will increase dramatically. The Carson Ranger District needs to be proactive in planning for access and well-defined motorized recreation use.

The Forest Service worked cooperatively with the City of Reno and Washoe County to analyze the issues in the Martis area and to make a series of recommendations that helps set the stage for future management decisions for this area. These recommendations were published in the Martis/Interstate 80 Corridor Landscape Assessment and Strategy developed by the Carson Ranger District. The Martis Landscape Analysis is posted on the forest website, www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf, under Projects and Plans. A copy is also available from the forest on request. One of the primary recommendations from the strategy included developing a road system that is usable by a variety of motorized user groups, provides strategic access for firefighters and is designed to protect natural and cultural resources.

THE PROPOSED ACTION

- Motorized Access

The proposed travel plan would allow access from Garson Road and the Hunter Lake Road. The Carson RD would work with the City of Reno to establish legal access from Garson Road. Currently, there is also access to the area from Bronco Creek, Murphy Meadow, Fuller Lake/Quilici, and Hunter Creek. These access points require travel through private land or have safety problems and aren't suitable for public use. Access from Levintina Canyon would be designated for non-motorized use only.

- Motorized Trailhead

Establish a motorized trailhead at the National Forest boundary on Garson Road. The site would be approximately two acres with room for horse and ATV trailers and 20-30 parking spaces. The trailhead would be surfaced and have toilet facilities and an information kiosk. A gate will be installed just past the trailhead to close the road during late fall, winter and early spring when the roads are wet and motorized travel would cause damage.

- Motorized Travel

Under the proposed action the Carson Ranger District Travel Management Plan for the Martis area would be updated by authorizing a system of motorized routes. The primary road system would be Garson Road (Forest road 392) south to Bronco Creek, and the Hunter Lake Road, (Forest road 462), which connects with the Garson Road at Big Meadow. A return loop would be designated from Bronco Creek back to Garson Road. The road from Bronco Creek south to Gray Creek would remain open to provide a view point for the public. However, approximately five miles of Bronco Creek Road, between the National Forest boundary and the proposed loop road, would be closed for public use and open for Forest Service administrative use and access to the Floriston water tank.

The Fuller Lake spur would also remain open. Approximately 300 feet of the Hunter Lake Road on the south end of Big Meadow will be rerouted to restore meadow habitat. Additional reroutes may be implemented in areas where roads are causing resource damage in rare plant habitat. Approximately 38 miles of road, including the

Hunter Lake Road, would be authorized for motorized use. All roads would be maintained for use by high clearance vehicles.

Roads at the north end of the project area, accessed from Garson Road, Levintina Canyon and Hunter Creek, along with several spur roads would be closed to motorized use. The roads at Murphy Meadows would also be closed to motorized use. Approximately 18 miles of road would be closed.

- **Signing and Patrolling**

To help keep recreational users on the main routes, all roads would be well signed and maintained to specific standards. The area would be patrolled by Forest Service personnel to enforce closures. Volunteers would be solicited from motorized recreation communities to help with monitoring, enforcement, and public education efforts.

COMMENT PROCESS

The Forest Service encourages your 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 comments on this proposed action and must sign the comments or otherwise verify their identity. 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 Sally Champion, 1536 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89703; phone (775) 882-2766 fax (775) 884-8199.