



**HUMBOLDT – TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST  
USDA FOREST SERVICE  
Travel Management Planning Update  
for the  
Mountain City, Jarbidge, and Ruby Mountains' Ranger  
Districts  
Northeast Nevada, February 24, 2009**

This newsletter provides additional information regarding the Forest Service's travel management planning. If you missed our February 14 ad regarding this topic, please log on to our website at [www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/projects](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/projects).

**Update:** Mountain City District Ranger Tom Montoya and Jarbidge and Ruby Mountains District Ranger Gar Abbas spoke about the status of Travel Management planning in Elko County at last Thursday's Commission meeting. Montoya and Abbas will continue to promote the best and latest information on this topic via ads and articles in the *Elko Daily Free Press*, as well as through local radio and TV programs. We hope that you will take the time to read the information, become an active Travel Management planning participant, and consider attending one of the below-listed meetings this week.

**Meetings This Week:** Your help is requested in identifying roads and trails that should or should not be included on the Travel Management planning maps. You will be creating a transportation system that meets other visitors and your recreation needs. Four meetings are scheduled for 5 -7 p.m., Pacific Standard Time around Elko County:

- Monday, February 23, in Elko at the Elko BLM Office;
- Tuesday, February 24, in Wells at the Forest Service Ranger Station;
- Wednesday, February 25, in Jackpot at the Community Recreation Center; and,
- Thursday, February 26, in Mountain City at the Visitor Center.

**Proposal:** For the Mountain City, Jarbidge, and Ruby Mountains Ranger Districts, the Forest Service proposes to:

- Add 337 miles of motorized trails and 48 miles of road to the Forest transportation system;
- Reclassify 44 National Forest System roads, totaling 85 miles that are already blocked by private gates as "Administrative Use" only; and,
- Restrict motor vehicles to designated roads and trails.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **1) What routes will be closed to the public?**

The Travel Rule requires that the Forest Service designate those roads and trails that are open to the general public. Under the proposal identified in the scoping document, 598 routes, totaling 1,707 miles, would be open to motor vehicle use on the Mountain City, Jarbidge, and Ruby

Mountains Ranger Districts. Routes that are not included on these maps would be closed to motor vehicle use.

This is *why it is so important to identify* those routes that are important to you. As we learn of routes that provide important access to dispersed campsites, valued recreation areas, or loop opportunities for responsible motorized visitors, we will consider adding them to the proposed action.

**After this scoping comment period ends on March 9**, the Forest will revise the proposed action to reflect any changes.

**2) How is the Forest Service addressing roads blocked by private gates? What are “Administrative Use” roads?**

Some existing National Forest System roads are only accessible by crossing private property.

Some private property owners provide public rights of way across their property to the Forest Service, the County, or other public road authorities.

Others have gated roads on their private property to control access.

The Forest Service respects private property rights, and cannot authorize public use where we do not have the legal right to do so. The Forest Service would like to designate existing roads and trails for motorized use on a number of places on the Forest, but cannot because of a lack of legal public access.

Because of these cases, we have included 85 miles of “Administrative Roads” in our proposal. These routes will be retained on our system and considered in the analysis so that they can be opened to the public if legal public access is acquired. Until then, “Administrative Roads” would be off-limits to motorized vehicles. *We previously reported that 122 miles of such routes existed in our February 14 ad. The miles of routes have changed because we were including routes outside the Forest boundary.*

We are sometimes asked why these routes cannot remain open to property owners as private roads, available to them alone, and to the individuals the owners allow to cross their property. This approach would violate fundamental principles of fairness. National Forest System lands belong to all Americans, and we cannot grant selective control over access to these lands on the basis of ownership of adjacent property.

**3) Will Elko County Commissioners’ decision last Thursday to choose not to be a cooperating agency have any affect on their participation in this Travel Management planning process?**

The Forest Service will continue to make every effort keep you and the Elko County Commission informed on the Travel Management planning process. Forest Supervisor Ed Monnig attended Monday night’s meeting in Elko, and tonight’s meeting in Wells. He firmly supports District Rangers’ Montoya and Abbas in completing this important endeavor.

**4) Will the Forest Service hold joint public hearings on its Travel Management planning process as requested by the Elko County Commission?**

Yes. We will attend and participate in any meetings and hearings that can provide useful information for the Travel Management planning process.

**5) Many roads and trails in Elko County are currently inaccessible due to snow. Will people have the opportunity to comment on the Travel Management proposal at the time when these routes are accessible?**

Yes. Public involvement in Travel Management will continue throughout 2009. We expect to have a formal opportunity for public comment this summer. No Travel Management decision will be made until at least fall, after the public has had the opportunity to visit and comment on routes included in the proposal.

**6) How Can I Get Involved?** The designation of a transportation system on the Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts is a big task. Although our public meetings are a great way for you to learn more about our process and proposal, your written comments are equally important.

The input we've received to date has been very helpful as we work to develop alternatives to our proposed action. We would like to hear from you about specific routes that you use on the National Forest that should be included in our proposed action, or routes that you believe should not be included. Please provide specifics and your rationale.

Log on to [www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/projects](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/projects) to review the present scoping documents and maps. If you do not have a computer, stop in at either our Elko or Wells office locations. Either District Ranger welcomes group or individual presentation requests.

## **Contact Numbers and Web Site**

- Mountain City District Ranger, Tom Montoya, 775-738-5171
- Jarbidge & Ruby Mountains District Ranger, Gar Abbas, 775-752-3357
- Visitor information, [www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/projects](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/projects).

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