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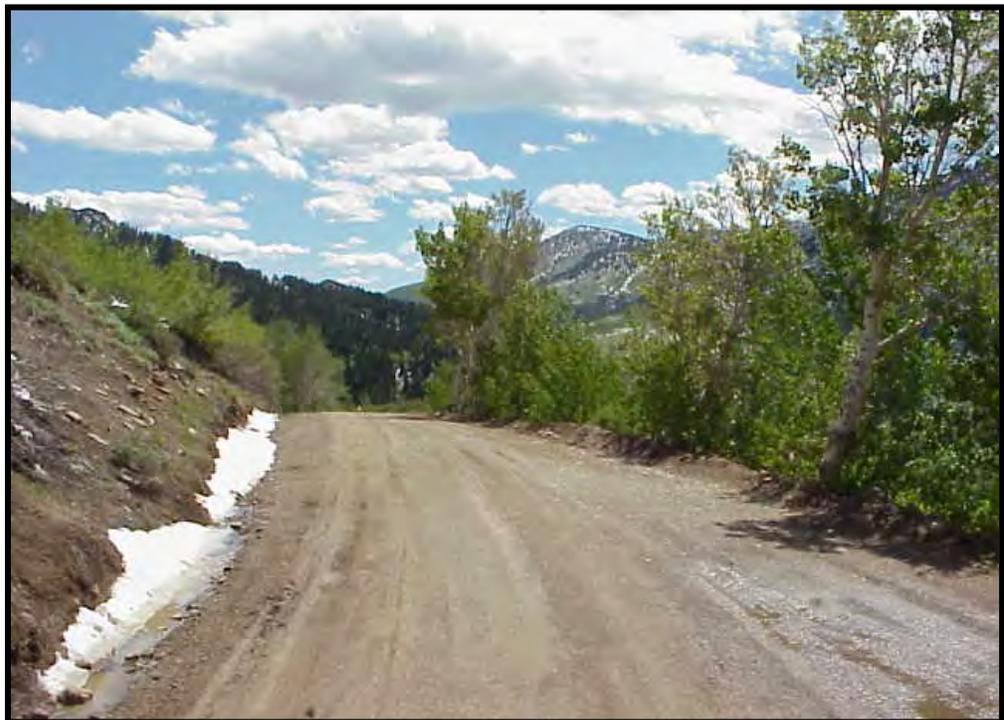
Forest  
Service



# Scoping Document

## Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts Combined Travel Management Project

January 16, 2009



Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest  
Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts  
Elko County, Nevada

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## A. INTRODUCTION

This scoping document is part of the public involvement process for the proposed Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts Combined Travel Management Project. The purpose of this document is to provide initial information on the proposed project and to invite your comments. Public involvement is encouraged and is used for identifying issues that are relevant to this project.

The 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its implementing regulations define the environmental analysis process. The initial analysis for this project will be documented in an environmental assessment.

The Forest Service is the lead agency for the project. The Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge District Rangers are the responsible officials and will make the decisions together.

## B. PURPOSE AND NEED

The Chief of the Forest Service has identified unmanaged recreation, especially impacts from unmanaged off-highway vehicles (OHVs), as one of the four threats facing the nation's forests and grasslands today. In response to that issue, the Forest Service released revised regulations for Travel Management, Designated Routes, and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use (36 CFR 212). The final rule was published in the Federal Register on November 9, 2005. The rule requires designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use by vehicle class and, if appropriate, by time of year (212.51); and identification of designated roads, trails, and areas on a published motor vehicle use map (212.56).

The demand for motorized vehicle opportunities is growing. Nationally, there are over 55 million people driving OHVs. Use increased 109 percent between 1982 and 2000. Newly manufactured vehicles have advanced power, range, and capabilities over OHVs of previous decades. Motor vehicle use on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (Forest) reflects these national trends.

The numbers of non-system routes across the Districts have increased over the last several years. Some of these routes were established where there is potential for resource damage. Other routes are well suited to vehicle use and provide valuable access to National Forest System (NFS) lands and resources. Prohibiting motor vehicles from traveling off designated roads and trails would reduce the effects to natural resources caused by cross-country travel.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide motor vehicle access to meet recreation and management objectives while limiting environmental impacts and ensuring a sustainable transportation system across the three Districts.

## C. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement in the environmental analysis process is essential. In 2005, the Districts conducted open houses. Forest maps displayed system and non-system routes. Attendees gave input on which routes they felt were needed for recreation and access across the Forest. The public is now invited to submit written comments stating their concerns and issues that are relevant to the proposed action. Comments received from this scoping document and from personal contacts will be used to help establish the scope of the environmental analysis.

Public involvement will be ongoing throughout the analysis process. However, written scoping comments should be received by February 16, 2009. Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

## D. PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would:

- Change seven National Forest System (NFS) roads (9.1 miles) to NFS motorized trails (all of these remain open to motorized vehicle use). On the attached maps (see [Section I: Maps](#)), these routes are shown as double dashed gold lines.
- Change three NFS non-motorized trails (18038, 18190, and 18191, 12.3 miles) to NFS motorized trails. On the maps (Jarbridge Ranger District only), these routes are shown as double dashed purple lines.
- Add 237 existing non-system routes (241.8 miles) to the Forest transportation system as NFS trails. Of these, 235 routes (236.8 miles) would be designated as open to motor vehicle use. On the maps, these routes are shown as double dashed blue lines. The other two routes (U58071 and J5205, 5 miles) would not be open to motor vehicle use. On the maps, these routes are shown as single dashed purple lines.
- Add 47 existing non-system routes (48 miles) as NFS roads. On the maps, these routes are shown as bold green and white lines.
- Prohibit the use of motor vehicles off designated routes. Exemptions to the prohibition of motor vehicles off designated routes include:
  - Aircraft.
  - Watercraft.
  - Over-snow vehicles.
  - Limited administrative use by the Forest Service; use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes.
  - Authorized use of any combat or combat support vehicle for national defense purposes.

- ♦ Law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit.
- ♦ Motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under federal law or regulation (i.e., including woodcutting permits, term grazing permits, approved minerals plans of operations) (36 CFR 212.51a).

The exemptions to the prohibitions allow motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under federal law or regulation (e.g., woodcutting permits, term grazing permits, approved plans of operations) (36 CFR 212.51a). Mine operators, grazing permittees, private landowners, and others can acquire permits to use motor vehicles off designated system routes or even to construct roads following the appropriate processes outlined in Forest Service manuals and handbooks. These uses would require additional site-specific NEPA analysis.

Highway-legal vehicles and unlicensed vehicles, such as all terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles, and other similar types of motor vehicles share current system roads. These mixed-use routes currently include both roads maintained to accommodate standard passenger automobiles as well as more primitive roads for high clearance four-wheel drive vehicles. Any additions to the District transportation system would be added as a mixed-use route unless specifically identified for a single vehicle type.

In summary, this proposed action would prohibit motor vehicle use off the designated NFS roads and NFS trails in accordance with 36 CFR 261.13. The proposed action also includes changes to the current Forest transportation system located on the Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts. These include changes to the status of NFS roads by converting some NFS roads to NFS trails open for motorized use.

The proposed action includes the addition of some non-system routes to the current Forest transportation system as either NFS roads or NFS trails. Motor vehicle use on these routes may be authorized by the type of vehicle permitted and by the time of year (36 CFR 212.50). The proposed action does not designate “areas” for unrestricted cross-country motor vehicle use or provide blanket exceptions for cross-country use of motor vehicles for game retrieval or dispersed camping. The Forest would continue to be open to other forms of non-motorized cross-country travel such as by horseback, hiking, mountain bicycle, over snow machines and cross-country skiing.



NON-SYSTEM ROUTES PROPOSED FOR ADDITION TO THE FOREST TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AS NFS TRAILS								
Route #	Length (miles)	Reason for Addition*	Route #	Length (miles)	Reason for Addition*	Route #	Length (miles)	Reason for Addition*
<b>Mountain City Routes</b>								
M1289	3.4	2	M1945	0.5	3	M2070	0.9	2
M2644	1.4	2	M2687	2.5	2	M2704	2.3	3
M3312	0.8	2	M3525	0.9	4	M3754	0.3	1
M3825	2.8	3	M3859	7.5	3	M3880	1.8	2
M3901	0.5	2	M3902	0.9	2	M4036	0.2	2
M4100	0.5	2	M4143	2.1	5	M6999	3.9	2
U56056f	1.6	3	U56061a	0.9	3	U56093a	1.4	2
U56103	0.8	1	U56103x	0.1	1	U56104	3.0	2
U56136a	0.2	2	U56178j	0.4	2	U56182b	1.2	2
U56238a	2.4	2	U56239a	0.4	5	U56250a	1.8	5
U56508	1.8	2	U56509	0.2	2	U56509a	1.3	2
U56511	0.3	2	U56512a	3.0	2	U56514	2.4	2
U56514a	0.3	2	U56519	0.9	2	U56519a	0.4	2
U56522	3.0	2	U56526	1.7	3	U56529	3.0	2
U56535	0.7	4	U56538	0.6	2	U56539	0.8	2
U56546	3.6	3	U56561	2.3	3	U56565	1.8	2
U56574	0.5	5	U56595	0.8	2	U56595a	0.4	2
U56596	1.3	2	U56665b	0.6	2	U56665c	0.9	2
U56868a	3.1	2	U56885	3.2	2	U56913	1.0	2
U56915	1.8	2	U56917	3.3	2	U56921	1.3	2
U56936d	4.8	2	U56940	2.9	2	U56945b	0.7	2
U56946	3.6	2	U56952d	2.5	2	U56952e	0.3	2
U56957	2.4	2	U56962c	0.5	2	U56962d	2.0	2
U56964	2.2	2	U56964b	0.5	2	U56967	0.2	4
U56970	2.0	2	U56973	0.6	2	U56974	2.2	2
U56978	1.2	2	U56983d	0.9	4	U56987	2.1	2
<b>Ruby Mountains Routes</b>								
R299	1.0	2	R7022	0.5	2	R7276	0.2	1
R7363	0.9	2	R7504	0.5	2	R7512	0.5	2
R7531	0.2	1	R7548	0.1	1	R7549	0.1	1
R7870	0.1	1	R7901	0.5	3	R7902	0.7	3
R7928	1.0	2	R7987	0.8	1	R7989	0.4	2
R8051	1.0	2	R8225	1.7	2	R8228	0.9	2
R8230	0.6	3	R8302	0.4	1	R8341	0.3	2
R8351	0.1	1	R8351x	0.1	1	R8351z	0.2	1
R8397	1.4	2	R8406	0.2	2	R8414	0.2	4
R8425	0.2	1	R8460	0.1	1	R8562	0.4	4
R8676x	0.1	2	R8681	0.1	2	R8683	0.1	2
R8788	0.5	2	R8796	0.6	3	R8842	0.3	2
R9178	1.0	2	R9183	0.1	2	R9184	1.0	2
R9264	1.7	2	R9367	0.3	2	R9455	0.9	2
R9456	1.0	2	R9459	1.1	1	R9504	0.3	2
R9531	0.1	2	R9820	0.1	1	R9937	0.5	1

**NON-SYSTEM ROUTES PROPOSED FOR ADDITION TO THE  
FOREST TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AS NFS TRAILS**

Route #	Length (miles)	Reason for Addition*	Route #	Length (miles)	Reason for Addition*	Route #	Length (miles)	Reason for Addition*
R10095	0.1	3	R10133	0.5	2	R10134	0.1	1
R10154	0.7	2	R10180	0.7	3	R10230	0.5	2
R10232	0.5	3	R10245	1.4	2	R10284	0.5	3
R10319	0.7	2	R10322	0.7	2	R10326	0.5	2
R10330	0.7	2	R10331	0.8	2	R10334	0.9	2
R10346	0.6	2	R10374	1.2	3	R10377	1.1	2
R10389	0.8	2	R10453	1.4	3	R10527	0.1	3
R10528	0.1	1	R10531	0.2	1	R10534	0.4	1
R10546	1.0	1	R10562	0.8	3	U57089a	1.9	3
U57102c	0.2	2	U57111c	0.7	2	U57118b	1.3	2
U57119b	0.9	2	U57138	1.6	2	U57138a	0.4	2
U57142	0.6	3	U57144	0.3	1	U57149b	1.3	2
U57158	0.1	2	U57159	0.6	2	U57159a	0.1	2
U57160	0.1	2	U57161	0.1	2	U57302	0.8	2
U57311	0.8	2	U57312	0.4	2	U57341	0.9	2
U57366a	0.5	2	U57400	0.6	3	U57413	0.4	2
U57498a	1.6	3	U57518	2.0	3	U57519	0.2	1
U57524	0.8	2	U57524a	0.3	2	U57527	0.2	2
U57531	0.2	1	U57532	0.3	2	U57532a	0.1	2
U57533	0.4	1	U57534	0.1	4	U57534x	0.1	4
U57536	0.1	2	U57537	0.1	1	U57538	0.2	1
U57541	0.3	1	U57541a	0.1	1	U57542	0.8	4
U57544	0.5	4	U57545	0.5	1	U57550	2.5	3
U57555	0.7	2	U57811	0.1	1	U57822	0.9	3
U57841	2.1	3	U57872	0.6	1	U57843a	0.6	2
U57858a	0.9	2	U57871	0.5	1	U57873	0.2	1
U57874	1.1	2						

**Jarbidge Routes**

J5205	4.3	2	J5388	0.7	2	J5391	0.3	2
J5843	0.2	2	J6335	0.4	2	J6712	3.0	3
J6882	0.9	1	J6885	1.7	2	U58016a	0.2	1
U58016c	0.8	1	U58062	0.3	5	U58071	0.7	2
U58074a	0.7	2	U58074c	0.4	2	U58084	2.7	2
U58134b	1.3	2	U58134c	4.5	3	U58285c	0.2	1
U58289b	0.5	2	U58295c	0.7	3	U58297	2.3	3
U58303e	0.8	2	U58304	0.4	2	U58310	1.1	1
U58317	3.7	2	U58319	2.6	2	U58323	0.4	1
U58324	1.0	1	U58667b	1.9	2	U58667c	0.8	2
U58667d	0.8	2	U58670a	1.0	4			

\* 1 – Dispersed recreation access  
2 – Recreation  
3 – Connect system route

4 – Access to other lands (federal, state, private)  
5 – Administrative access

If selected as described above, the proposed action would result in the following changes to the Forest transportation system on the Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts.

COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PROPOSED ROUTES MOUNTAIN CITY (MC), RUBY MOUNTAINS (RM) AND JARBIDGE (J) RANGER DISTRICTS												
Type of Route	Current Number of Routes			Proposed Number of Routes			Current Miles of Routes			Proposed Miles of Routes		
	MC	RM	J	MC	RM	J	MC	RM	J	MC	RM	J
NFS Roads	176	132	68	186	161	69	733.1	421.1	263.7	751.3	446.2	264.4
NFS Trails (non-motorized)	3	81	27	3	81	26	39.6	352.6	159.2	39.6	352.6	151.9
NFS Trails (motorized)	0	0	0	80	131	31	0	0	0	130.4	77.9	37.6
Total NFS Trails	3	81	27	83	212	57	39.6	352.6	159.2	170.0	430.5	189.5

## E. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The starting point for the environmental assessment is the current Forest transportation system and existing motor vehicle use restrictions and prohibitions. The No Action Alternative would make no change to the transportation system, restrictions, or prohibitions. All non-system routes would remain open to motorized use and cross-country travel off those routes would continue in areas where current restrictions do not apply. The Forest Service is required to address the No Action Alternative, even though it fails to meet the project purpose and need and does not implement 36 CFR 212.

## F. SCOPE OF PROJECT

The geographic scope of this project is the area included in the Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. Where appropriate, the analysis of motor vehicle impacts may also address some off-Forest lands.

**Scope of Proposed Action:** It is not within the scope of the project to physically alter any NFS roads or non-system routes. The proposal would designate those routes open to motor vehicle use and restrict motor vehicle use off the designated system. Physical treatments would require separate site-specific environmental analysis.

The proposal is also limited to lands and routes under Forest Service jurisdiction. Private lands on which there is no public right of access and roads controlled by the state or county are not subject to Forest Service decision-making and are beyond the scope of the proposed action.

The decision resulting from this analysis is expected to identify those roads and trails open to motor vehicle use on the Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts. Future changes to the Forest transportation system will be based on appropriate environmental analysis and public involvement and reflected on annual updates to the motor vehicle use map.

## G. PRELIMINARY ISSUES

The interdisciplinary team has identified the following potential issues related to the proposed action.

1. Some existing non-system routes being considered as additions to the Forest transportation system may be located on steep slopes, in or along riparian zones, through sensitive wildlife habitat, or near cultural and historic properties. Adding these routes to the Forest transportation system allows any environmental impacts associated with these routes and associated public access to continue.
2. Some of the existing non-system routes being considered for designation in the proposed action are located in inventoried roadless areas. Even though these routes were present prior to identification of the roadless areas, adding them to the Forest transportation system could affect roadless characteristics and the long-term potential for wilderness designation.
3. The proposed action would change current use patterns by restricting motorized travel to designated routes. Forest visitors would no longer be authorized to drive cross-country to hunt, retrieve game, create dispersed campsites, or engage in other motorized off-road recreation opportunities. By prohibiting cross-country motor vehicle use, the proposed action could reduce motorized recreation opportunities and conversely could enhance the non-motorized recreation experience.

## H. DECISION FRAMEWORK

Based on the environmental analysis, the District Rangers will decide which routes motorized traffic will be restricted to, and what areas, if any, will be open to cross-country motorized travel.

## I. MAPS

The attached maps provide an overview of the Mountain City and Jarbidge Ranger Districts ([Map Set A](#)) and Ruby Mountains Ranger District ([Map Set B](#)). To determine which map to view for the area you are interested in, refer to Map 1 for either set. A vicinity map displays each district area breakdown by map number.

The maps display NFS roads open for use by highway-legal vehicles and unlicensed vehicles. The maps also show routes proposed for addition to the Forest transportation system as either NFS roads or NFS trails. These maps are searchable and the viewer can zoom in and out to see more or less map detail. Using the “find” function, the viewer can search for and be directed to specific routes using the “route #” in the tables above.

Existing NFS roads are indicated as bold black and white lines. Existing NFS roads proposed for conversion to NFS motorized trails are indicated as double dashed gold lines. Existing NFS non-motorized trails proposed for conversion to NFS motorized trails are indicated as double dashed purple lines (Jarbidge Ranger District only).

The existing non-system routes proposed for addition to the Forest transportation system as NFS roads are indicated as bold green and white lines. Existing non-system routes proposed for designation as NFS trails open to motor vehicle use are displayed as double dashed blue lines. Existing non-system routes proposed for designation as NFS trails not open to motor vehicle use are indicated as single dashed purple lines.

## J. COMMENT DISCLOSURE

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments or suggestions should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific events, conditions, or practices whenever possible. Comments may also address the proposed action, issues, and alternatives described in this scoping document. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

## K. CONTACTS

To submit your comments, you may mail your comments to:

Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger Districts  
Combined Travel Management Project  
c/o James Winfrey  
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest  
1200 Franklin Way  
Sparks, NV 89431

You may email your comments to:

[comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-mtncty@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-mtncty@fs.fed.us) or  
[comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-rubymtns-jarbidge@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-rubymtns-jarbidge@fs.fed.us).

You may also FAX your comments to James Winfrey at (775) 355-5399 or hand deliver them to either the Mountain City District Office or the Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge District Office at the addresses below.

Tom Montoya Mountain City District Ranger 2035 Last Chance Road Elko, NV 89801-4808 775-738-5171 FAX 775-778-6199	Gar Abbas Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge District Ranger 140 Pacific Ave. P. O. Box 246 Wells, NV 89835 775-752-3357 FAX 775-752-1799
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