

Sawtooth National Forest

SNOW-FREE SEASON MOTORIZED TRAVEL PLANNING

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MOTORIZED TRAVEL PLANNING

(Snow-free Season)

PROJECT

The Sawtooth National Forest (SNF) is initiating actions to *designate* a system of roads, trails and areas for motorized vehicle use for the following purposes:

- Better protect natural resources
- Enhance recreation opportunities
- Revise current Forest Travel Plan

The following sideboards will guide this project:

- The Forest will focus their efforts where cross country motorized travel is currently allowed
 - Specifically – the Minidoka Ranger District and the portions of the Ketchum and Fairfield Ranger Districts (motorized travel on most of the Ketchum RD and part of the Fairfield RD is already restricted to designated routes)
- Winter use will not be addressed by this effort; over-snow vehicle use will continue to be managed under the current SNF Travel Plan. However, we will accept input and continue to address winter issues as raised on a case-by-case basis.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A key part of the planning process is special efforts put forth by the Forest to work closely with organized user groups, interest groups, local governments and state agencies to determine a system of designated roads and trails that are most appropriate for motorized use, now and in the future. This will be accomplished by:

- One-on-one meetings with organized and interest groups
- A series of open-houses conducted for people who do not belong to organized groups
 - Providing maps for people to take home, mark up and submit their comments on

PLANNING PROCESS

The Forest will use a three-step approach:

- 1 - Working with the public, identify a system of roads, trails and areas that could be designated for motorized travel
- 2 - Forest Service resource specialists will run public input through a set of established criteria, which includes consistency with the Forest Plan direction; the roads, trails and areas that pass the screen will be carried forward in a proposal to be analyzed
- 3 - A proposal for revising the current Forest Travel Plan will be released for public review and comment

TIMELINE

The following is the estimated timeline for this project:

- September 9th
 - Initial contacts made with organizations
 - News release distributed to media
 - Information about project
 - Process
 - Timelines
 - How to get involved
 - Open houses details
- September 13-27th
 - Meetings with organizations conducted
 - Open houses scheduled during this time period
- To be the most helpful, public input requested by this fall
- Late fall 2004 – May 16, 2005
 - Forest Service Resource Specialists review on-the-ground and screen public input
- June 15, 2005
 - Proposal released for 30-day public review and comment
- September 30, 2005
 - Decision issued, appeal period starts
- 2006 Field Season (late spring)
 - New Travel Plan maps printed and available
 - Implementation of revised Forest Travel Plan

NATIONAL DIRECTION

‘Unmanaged recreation,’ especially impacts to natural resources from wheeled OHV impacts, is one of the ‘Four Threats’ identified by the Chief of the Forest Service that is affecting the health of our nation’s national forests. Actions being taken by the Sawtooth NF are consistent with the agency’s effort to develop a national consistent approach to travel management as articulated in the July 15, 2004 Proposed Rule for Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use (which is currently out for a 60-day public review and comment period).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information, please contact Terry Clark, Project Leader, Sawtooth National Forest Headquarters Office, 2647 Kimberly Road East, Twin Falls, ID 83301 (208) 737-3200