



File Code: 2300/7700

Date: April 27, 2006

Dear Forest User:

The Salmon-Challis National Forest needs to revise its existing forest travel management plans to accommodate increasing numbers and capabilities of off highway vehicles (OHVs) on the forest and to protect natural resources. OHVs and other motorized vehicles can be fun and exciting ways to experience national forests and are appropriate in the right places and at the right times. However, a few riders traveling off roads and trails can create lasting impacts to wetlands, wildlife habitat, and water quality. The Salmon-Challis National Forest has seen a dramatic increase in the popularity of OHVs in the last decade. We also currently have two different travel plans on the forest, one for the Challis portion and another for the Salmon portion. These plans were developed 12 and 18 years ago, respectively, and they need to be updated to address the expanded motorized use we are seeing on the forest.

The forest is not alone. On November 2, 2005 the Forest Service announced a new regulation – or “rule” for recreational motor vehicle use in national forests. The rule will forge a sustainable system of routes and areas designated for motorized use in the future. The new travel management rule requires the Salmon-Challis National Forest to identify and designate those roads, trails and areas that will be open to motor vehicle use and what types of vehicles will be allowed. District Rangers will seek public input and coordinate with the BLM, state and county road agencies, tribal governments and local recreational users before any decision is made on a particular road, trail or area. Unplanned, user-created routes may be considered at the local level during the designation process.

We realize that the travel planning process will affect all forest users. We are developing a process to involve everyone who is interested in travel management on the forest and we need your help. The current travel plans will be a starting point and we will work collaboratively with user groups and other interested parties to establish a plan that will accommodate sustainable motorized use.

We expect that it will take up to three and a half years to complete the designation process, including appropriate environmental analysis. At the conclusion of this process the forest will publish a motor vehicle use map showing where motorized vehicle use is allowed and what types of vehicles and season of use are appropriate. Once the map is published, motor vehicle use off of these designated routes or areas will be prohibited. This rule will not affect over-snow vehicles, such as snowmobiles. The rule will only affect motor vehicle use on roads, trails and areas under Forest Service jurisdiction. State, county or other roads authorized under permit within national forest boundaries will not be included in the designation process. Some areas already have an established system of roads, and motorized trails designated and managed for motorized use. This rule does not require changes in those areas.



As a first step in developing a collaborative process the forest will hold a number of open house meetings during May. District Rangers will be on hand to acquaint people with the new planning rule and to discuss the existing travel plan for the area.

The meetings will be from 7 to 9 p.m. at the following locations:

<b>Community</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Arco	Business Incubation Center	May 2
Mackay	City Hall	May 3
Howe	Community Center	May 4
Idaho Falls	Caribou-Targhee N.F. Supervisors Office	May 9
Pocatello	Westside Ranger District Office	May 10
Blackfoot	City Hall	May 11
Hailey	Old County Courthouse	May 16
Salmon	Business Innovation Center	May 16
North Fork-Gibbonsville	Gibbonsville Grange Hall	May 17
Challis	Challis-Yankee Fork, Middle Fork Offices	May 17
Boise	Boise Community Center	May 18
Stanley	Community Center	May 24
Leadore	Community Center	May 24

I invite you to attend one of the meetings in your area to learn more about the travel planning process and join us in working toward a travel system that provides sustainable motorized access in the Salmon-Challis National Forest.

Sincerely,

*/s/Lyle E. Powers*  
WILLIAM A. WOOD  
Forest Supervisor