

Motorized Travel Management EIS

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Lead Agency: Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Cooperating Agencies: None

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Abstract: This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) describes the environmental effects of a proposal by the Modoc National Forest (MDF) to make the following changes to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) roads:

1. Prohibit cross-country motorized vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads by the public, except as allowed by permit or other authorization. Cross-country motor vehicle travel is defined as any travel off an authorized NFTS route. This includes travel on unauthorized routes or open land.
2. Add 1,158 existing unauthorized routes (336 miles) to its National Forest road system. Approximately 20 miles, or 74 of the added routes, would have seasonal restrictions.
3. Make the following changes to existing NFTS roads:
 - Add seasonal restrictions to approximately 312 miles of 213 roads
 - Allow non-highway legal vehicle access on approximately 138 additional miles
 - Restrict use to “highway vehicles only on” roads 44N08 and 44N01
 - Close road 46B29HB
4. Amend the MDF Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for areas not covered under the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA ROD, pg. 59, #69), by removing the objective to “Keep over 87% of the Forest open to Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs).”
5. Amend the MDF LRMP to provide a specific area exemption to the bald eagle winter roost guidelines to allow for motor-vehicle use year round in the bald eagle winter roost area directly outside of Tionesta. Forest system roads 44A19D, 44A19C, 44N19, 44N20, and 44N04Y would be exempt from the winter roost guidelines.

These actions are needed to implement the 2005 Travel Management Rule (36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B) while providing for a diversity of motor vehicle recreation opportunities, and providing motorized access to dispersed recreation opportunities on the MDF. The DEIS discloses environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action, a No Action Alternative

and three additional action alternatives developed in response to issues raised by the public during scoping of the Proposed Action. Of the alternatives under consideration at this stage, the Responsible Official prefers Alternatives 2, 4, and 5.