



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

San Bernardino National Forest
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Date: January 30, 2007

Route To:

Subject: Scoping Letter - OHV Route Designation Proposal

To: Interested Party

The San Bernardino National Forest has an established, designated system for Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) and other motorized vehicle use. In compliance with the new Travel Management Rule, the Forest is proposing several changes to its motorized travel system, and we would like to hear your thoughts about this proposal. Your ideas will help us refine the proposal and develop alternatives and will assist me, as Forest Supervisor, in making an informed decision. This letter outlines the proposed changes and provides a link to a website where you can view more detailed information and maps. I am also including details about four open house meetings in February where you can view the maps and discuss the proposal with Forest staff. You can provide written comments to us at the workshops or send them to the contact listed below. Your comments will be most effective in helping us develop alternatives if we receive them by February 23, 2007.

The Forest completed the first step of its travel management process in 2006 with an inventory of user-created, unauthorized routes presented at several open house meetings which many of you attended to help us validate the inventory. Our next step is to consider whether we wish to add any of those inventoried unauthorized routes to our designated system and whether we wish to make any other changes to the system. Travel on unauthorized routes is currently illegal under our Land Management Plan and Forest Orders and will remain illegal unless added to our designated system. As we discuss our motorized travel system, it is important to distinguish between (1) the street-legal system, which is open to use by licensed street-legal vehicles such as passenger cars, four wheel drive vehicles, and street-legal motorcycles; and (2) the greensticker/redsticker system which can be used by motorized vehicles up to 50 inches wide with the appropriate green or red sticker purchased from the State of California (hereinafter referred to as "greensticker" system).

Our preliminary analysis found approximately eight miles of unauthorized routes that made sense to add to the system for use by greensticker vehicles. These eight miles are along the Cleghorn Ridge (2N47) and Pilot Rock Ridge (2N33) routes as well as a short connection between 3N03 and 3N07Y. We also propose to add a 0.3 mile segment off 6S05 on the San Jacinto District for street legal use so that it can be properly maintained.

The proposed action includes restoration of some unauthorized routes. Approximately two miles of restoration is needed along the Cleghorn Ridge fuelbreak in conjunction with the four mile route that is proposed there for inclusion in the system. Additionally, we propose to restore approximately 65 miles of unauthorized routes in the Big Bear area. This restoration work takes



advantage of field surveys that have already been completed and helps fulfill our commitment to the Southern California Conservation Strategy.

Other features of the proposed action are:

- Reclassifying approximately 52 miles of existing Forest roads to allow use by greensticker vehicles. Of these 52 miles, 21 miles are proposed for permanent designation where there is currently a temporary designation;
- Widening 2W01, an existing 20 inch wide motorcycle trail, to accommodate greensticker vehicles up to 50 inches wide (2.5 miles);
- Addition of three OHV staging areas (currently located at Summit, Big Pine Flats, and Crab Flats); construction of a Miller Canyon staging area to relocate the unauthorized area currently within a riparian zone; and construction of a new staging area at Vista Grande off 4S06.
- New construction of less than one mile to create necessary linkages and improve loop opportunities for greensticker use;
- Reclassifying approximately 25 miles of existing Forest roads for use only by street legal vehicles and no longer permitting greensticker use where there are safety issues or where there is no viable greensticker network;
- Reclassifying approximately 40 miles of existing Forest roads for administrative use. Many of these are already gated so there is little loss of public access;
- Reclassification of approximately 14 miles of existing Forest roads for authorized use by special use permittees only. All of these routes are already closed to public access;
- Decommissioning approximately 18 miles of existing Forest roads.

This proposed action results in additional greensticker routes and variety of loop opportunities. Our greensticker and street legal systems will be more strategically located to avoid resource damage and residential conflicts. This proposal takes a significant step within current budget constraints toward addressing resource damage caused by unauthorized use.

If you would like to hear more about this project, and see maps of the proposed routes, please attend one of our open house meetings listed below. If you need assistance with special needs for these meetings, please contact Richard Thornburgh at 909-382-2642 (voice), 800-877-8339 (TTY), or rthornburgh@fs.fed.us (email).

- **February 15, San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor's Office, 602 S. Tippecanoe, San Bernardino, 7-9 pm.**
- **February 20, Holiday Inn, 9750 Keystone Point, Hesperia, 7-9 pm.**
- **February 21, Idyllwild Fire Station, 54160 Maranatha Drive, Idyllwild, 7-9 pm.**
- **February 22, Hootman Center, 2929 Running Springs School Road, Running Springs, 7-9 pm.**

A detailed proposed action with maps will be available on the Forest's website beginning February 6 at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardino/projects/ohv.shtml>. The detailed proposed action can also be mailed to you at your request.

At this point, we anticipate preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project during the next four months. If our detailed analysis determines significant environmental effects from the proposal, we will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also anticipate having a comment period per 36 CFR 215 in May/June 2007 once alternatives have been developed and more analysis is available. We intend to publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map in July/August 2007 to comply with the Travel Management Rule, and this map will reflect our current, designated travel system. The changes to the system resulting from the project that we are currently scoping will be reflected in a subsequent publication once a decision has been made.

Please send your written comments to: Richard Thornburgh, Supervisor's Office, 602 S. Tippecanoe, San Bernardino, CA 92408. You may also e-mail comments to: comments-pacificsouthwest-san-bernardino@fs.fed.us, with the words "Route Designation" in the subject line. To be most effective, comments need to be received by February 23, 2007. Please be as specific as possible in your comments. If there is a particular route or routes that you are concerned about, please include the route identifier (e.g. 3N14) and the start and end points if you are only concerned about a portion of it (e.g. "between X and Y").

If you have additional questions about this project at this time, you may contact Richard Thornburgh, Environmental Coordinator, at (909) 382-2642.

JEANNE WADE EVANS
Forest Supervisor

cc: Fran M Colwell
Christopher Evans
Richard M Thornburgh