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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***Travel Management Process***

#### **1. What is Travel Management?**

The Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212, Subpart B) provides the framework for each National Forest to designate those roads and trails open to motor vehicle use and prohibit cross-country travel.

#### **2. Who and what types of vehicles are affected by Travel Management?**

Travel management decisions will affect anyone who uses a motor vehicle on the National Forests with the following **exceptions**: 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 regulations; and use of a road or trail that is authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a state, county, or other local public road authority (36 CFR 261.13).

#### **3. Why is the Forest Service going through this process?**

The Chief of the Forest Service (Dale Bosworth) identified unmanaged recreation - especially impacts from motor vehicles - as one of Four Threats facing the National Forests today. Unmanaged motorized use resulted in unplanned roads, trails and areas from off route use that cause erosion, watershed and habitat degradation, as well as impacts to wildlife and cultural resources. Currently, motorized travel is not prohibited off designated routes. As a result, motorized users created numerous unauthorized routes. The number of such routes grows each year with unaddressed impacts and safety concerns. The Travel Management Rule provides policy for ending this trend of unauthorized route proliferation and managing the Forest transportation system in a sustainable manner through designation of motorized facilities and the prohibition of cross-country travel.

#### **4. Does the travel management rule interfere with my right to use public land?**

Americans have every right to use their public lands, but in responsible and sustainable ways that do not diminish future use for everyone. It's a question of impact. The goal of managing the National Forests for recreation use is to allow everyone to have a pleasurable experience. Management is called for when a use threatens to damage the land or affect the experience of others.

#### **5. How does the travel management rule affect unauthorized routes (user-created routes)?**

Some user-created routes are well-sited and well suited; they provide excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation, and would enhance the system of designated routes and areas. Other user-created routes are poorly located and are causing unacceptable environmental impacts. The agency anticipates that some user-created routes will be designated for motor

vehicle use and become part of the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) after site-specific evaluation and public involvement.

## ***Alternatives***

### **6. What is proposed?**

There are five alternatives proposed in the DEIS that are considered in detail. The no action alternative would not make any changes to the current use of system roads and unauthorized routes. 660,000 acres (approximately 100 square miles) of the forest would continue to be open for cross-country travel. The other four alternatives would each result in a different motorized transportation system, depending on which unauthorized routes are added.

### **7. Why doesn't this proposal look at all roads for possible closure or decommissioning?**

This proposal is based on implementing Subpart B of the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212) which requires designation of those roads and trails that are open to motor vehicle use. It considers: prohibiting cross country travel; additions to the NFTS; and, changes to the existing NFTS in terms of vehicle class and season of use. Other activities, such as those suggested are outside the scope of this analysis.

### **8. How can I see what happens to a specific route?**

If you know the route number, you can review Appendix A (summary of route specific data) You can also review the maps to see if the route has been brought forward in the alternatives.

### **9. How were the alternatives formulated and why do certain routes appear in one alternative and not another?**

The action alternatives represent a wide range of perspectives designed to address the issues that the public identified through scoping.

#### **Are you closing routes and if you aren't closing them, why can't I ride on them?**

Upon implementation of the cross country travel prohibitions, motor vehicle travel off NFTS routes by the public would be prohibited. This means that routes not included in the NFTS will be closed to public motorized use; however, this proposal does not authorize permanent closure or removal (decommissioning) of any routes.

### **10. How can I comment?**

The Environmental Protection Agency published a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS in the Federal Register on May 1, 2009; the opportunity to comment ends on June 15, 2009. Comments may be submitted to Sierra National Forest; Attn: Travel Management Team Leader, 1600 Tollhouse Road, Clovis, CA 93611. Electronic comments may be submitted to [sierra.route@fs.fed.us](mailto:sierra.route@fs.fed.us) with Subject: Travel Management Comments. Comments may be hand-delivered to the address shown above, during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

## ***Parking***

### **11. How long is one vehicle length and what happens if I have a big vehicle towing a long trailer?**

According to the recently issued (January 8, 2009) Forest Service Manual (FSM) 7716.1: A designation of a road or trail includes all terminal facilities, trailheads, parking lots, and turnouts associated with the road or trail. The designation also includes parking a motor vehicle on the side of the road when it is safe to do so without causing damage to National

Forest resources or facilities, unless prohibited by state law, a traffic sign, or an order (36 CFR 261.54). The action alternatives considered in the DEIS all prohibit cross country travel and allow parking within one vehicle length of NFTS routes.

This means that a vehicle or a vehicle towing a trailer would be allowed to park within one vehicle length of the NFTS route as long as it is not causing damage to National Forest resources or otherwise prohibited (36 CFR 261.54). **Does this proposal shut down access to dispersed camping and where can I camp after the plan is finalized?**

This proposal does not shut down access to dispersed camping and it does not address where you can camp. It does limit direct motorized access into some campsites; however, you will be able to park within one vehicle length of a NFTS route and camp nearby.

### ***Decision and Implementation***

#### **12. Who will make the decision; when is it expected; and, what is the available decision space?**

As the Responsible Official, the Forest Supervisor will make a decision in the fall of 2009. The Forest Supervisor may decide to: (1) select the proposed action; (2) select one of the alternatives; (3) select one of the alternatives after modifying the alternative with additional mitigating measures or combination of activities from other alternatives; or, (4) select the no action alternative, choosing to take no action at this time to prohibit cross country motor vehicle travel by the public off the designated system and make changes to the existing Sierra National Forest Transportation System.

#### **13. How will you enforce the plan?**

After a decision, the Forest Service will publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), which will be an enforceable federal regulation. Compliance and enforcement efforts will begin by educating the public about the newly designated NFTS. Violation notices may be issued, but the main emphasis will be on education for the first year of implementation.