



U.S. Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Travel Management



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Inside this Issue

- Cooperating Agencies
- Timeline
- Mixed-use Analysis
- Alternative Development

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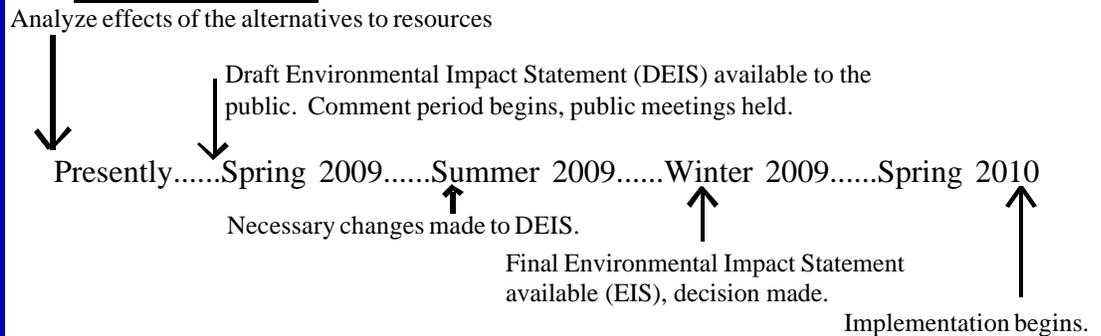
Refer to our website:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/recreation/ohv/ohv-rule.shtml>

Cooperating Agencies



A memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Union, Wallowa, Baker, Grant and Umatilla counties has been signed granting the counties Cooperating Agency status. The MOU signifies that each county is cooperating in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process in association with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The counties will provide expertise on the potential social and economic impacts the Travel Management Plan may have not only on their individual counties but on Northeastern Oregon as a whole. Another Cooperating Agency MOU has been signed with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). We look forward to working with the Counties and ODFW as we analyze the natural and social resources affected by this project.

Current Timeline



Mixed-Use Analysis Update

Across the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest mixed use studies have been taking place. Motorized mixed-use analysis is done to determine safety and hazard mitigation measures. For all National Forest System roads used by both highway legal and non-highway legal motor vehicles, the motorized mixed use study is required before roads can be designated on the motor vehicle use map. The analysis will help reduce the severity and/or probability of an accident occurring on mixed-use roads. Maintenance Level four and five roads are not included in the analysis because they fall under Oregon state law and regulations and are governed accordingly. Maintenance Level one roads are omitted because they do not meet mixed use criteria.

Alternative Development

Alternative One



Known as the existing condition, it follows current Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Plan direction. The forest is generally open to motorized vehicles unless designated closed. Motorized cross-country travel is permitted in all open areas. Closure areas have 27 different closure periods and include motorized routes that are a combination of open year round and open seasonally depending on the nature and reason of the closure area. User-created road and trail use is permitted in open areas under the cross-country guidelines of the Forest Plan.

Alternative Two



This alternative is the original proposed action updated to reflect the most current inventory of the Forest Transportation System. This alternative implements all of the District Travel Management decisions from environmental analyses completed on the Forest over the last 18 years. All roads with an objective maintenance level of open (ML2-5) would become designated motorized routes and all roads with an objective maintenance level of closed (ML1) would not be available for non-emergency motorized use. Cross-country travel would be eliminated unless authorized by special permit.

Alternative Three



Part A: Submitted by Wallowa County: Wallowa County motorized access is based on maintaining open road access at current levels. In general, National Forest lands within the County would be designated open to motorized use and motorized use would be permitted on designated routes where postings are present and regulations comply with Travel Management decisions. Travel off-road would be closed except for dispersed camping, firewood, and big game retrieval.

Part B: Submitted by Baker County: Baker and Grant County emphasize the designation of roads with a high degree of public interest that are currently open to motorized vehicles as motorized routes. Emphasis would be on full-sized vehicle access with very limited OHVs ≤ 50 inches only trail designation.

Part C: Union and Umatilla County propose maintaining access at current levels. The emphasis would be to retain the motorized recreation opportunities that are currently available on the National Forest within Union County. The National Forest within Union County would generally be considered a “designated area” open to motorized use, unless designated closed. Most of Union County would be a Permitted Use Area, where cross-country travel is permitted, all OHV trails would be available as well as those non-motorized trails not currently closed to motorized uses, operational ML1 roads would be designated as OHV routes, and use on user built roads and trails would be permitted. Closures for existing decisions may continue on roads with an objective of ML1 or decommission, however, additional public notification efforts would be required for future proposed road closures and information would be made public before road closures occurred.



Scenes on Forest throughout the year



Alternative Development

Development

continued

Alternative Four



This alternative reflects many public comments received which support restrictions on cross-country travel; however, many commenters also indicated a preference for motorized access at existing levels on all roads and trails currently open to motorized vehicles. It closely reflects the current situation except that cross-country travel would not be permitted. Other aspects of this alternative include:

- roads that have revegetated would not be open for motorized use,
- roads that currently have a physical barrier, yet can be driven around, would be available to motorized vehicles with a wheel base of less than 50 inches;
- roads that are currently open (not physically closed or legally promulgated) would remain open to full size motorized vehicle use (become ML2 roads).

Alternative Five



The intent of this alternative is to blend public requests for motorized and non-motorized opportunities in high interest areas with resource protection. Roads with an objective maintenance level of open (ML 2-5) would become designated motorized routes. Full sized vehicle closures would continue to be implemented on ML-1 roads, though selected ML-1 roads would be designated as motorized trails and would be open to motorized vehicles with a wheel base of less than 50 inches. These routes would be selected based on areas of high public interest, whether they are currently open or closed (currently open routes are preferred), ease of maintenance, and resource protection.

This alternative would recommend a reduction in the number of closure periods from 27 to approximately 10. Cross-country travel would not be permitted (unless it is within 300 feet to and from dispersed camp sites or for firewood retrieval). Use of user created roads and trails would not be permitted except for small tie-through routes that make logical loops and are designated for OHV use.

Alternative Six



Submitted by a coalition of environmental groups, this alternative implements all of the District Travel Management decisions from the environmental analyses completed on the Forest over the last 18 years. Roads with an objective maintenance level of open (ML2-5) would become a designated motorized route and all roads with an objective (or currently operational) ML of decommission or ML1 would not be available for motorized use. Approximately 140 miles of additional objective ML2 road would be converted to ML1/decommission and not designated for use. These roads are primarily located along the west side of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, face of the Elkhorns, Joseph Canyon, Deadhorse area, and Mt. Emily.

The website you are currently visiting has the most up-to-date information; please refer to it when needed throughout the Travel Management process.