

NEWS RELEASE
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Superior National Forest
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Superior National Forest Reduces Environmental Impacts While Improving Riding Opportunities for Off-Highway Vehicles

The Superior National Forest has issued a decision regarding the Forest-wide Travel Management project. Since 2006, the Superior National Forest has been collaborating with the State, tribal government, local counties and soliciting public feedback as part of this analysis.

As part of ongoing Forest Plan implementation, this decision includes site-specific determinations of where and when different types of motorized vehicle use may occur on national forest roads and trails within the Forest boundary and also provides direction for disposition of previously unclassified roads (existing roads that are not managed as part of the official Forest Road inventory).

As an outcome of implementing the decision, riding opportunities for off-highway vehicle users on designated loop routes will increase across the Forest by 285 miles and long distance riding opportunities will increase by more than 300 miles. In order to connect existing trails at various locations, a total of 2.5 miles of new trail will be constructed. In addition, a total of 154 miles of unclassified road will be decommissioned.

There will be very little overall change in the total miles currently available (1,600 miles) on the Forest for off-highway vehicle use. This is because existing roads and trails are being utilized to designate loop and long distance routes where riding opportunities previously were fragmented and not coordinated with other land managers. Consolidating OHV use is expected to, over the long run, result in lower road maintenance costs, cleaner water, improved wildlife and fish habitat, and fewer conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreationists.

The Travel Management project decision will be implemented through publication of an official free motor vehicle use map that will be available at Superior National Forest offices in early 2009. The motor vehicle use map will be updated annually.

Under this project decision, off-highway vehicles include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles, and four-wheel drive vehicles. Off-highway vehicle riders will be expected to use the map as their official guide to which roads and trails are open for their use. If the road is not on the official motor vehicle use map, then it is not legal to ride on that road. For more information and to view the Decision Notice, Environmental Analysis, and maps, please visit www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior