



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Huron-Manistee National Forests
Manistee Ranger Station
412 Red Apple Road
Manistee, MI 49660

231-723-2211 (Voice)
231-723-8642 (Fax)
231-723-0124 (TTY)

File Code: 1950/2350
Date: August 12, 2008

Dear Interested Parties:

A portion of the Michigan Cycle Conservation Club (MCCCT) motorcycle trail system on the Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District of the Huron-Manistee National Forests (HMNF) is proposed for relocation. This trail segment is located northwest of the town of Boon along Forest Road (FR) 7724 in T22N, R11W, Sections 3, 10, and 15, Boon Township, Wexford County, Michigan (see attached map). The HMNF's 2006 Forest Plan changed the management area designation in this area from Semi-Primitive Non-motorized to Semi-Primitive Motorized (Management Area 6.2). This change allowed us to consider re-locating the MCCCT trail off of FR 7724. For safety reasons, the District is moving toward re-locating all trails from Forest Roads where possible. The new trail relocation proposal, which is approximately 3.5 miles long, would be designed as a single track cross country motorcycle trail. The MCCCT is the only non-snowmobile motorized trail on the Cadillac-Manistee District. This new proposed MCCCT trail segment is located in the vicinity of an active timber sale (Briar Hills timber sale). The MCCCT Trail Relocation Project is expected to be implemented in 2010 after the Briar Hills timber sale is completed.

The Michigan Cycle Conservation Club cooperates with the Forest Service in maintaining the trail. They have been in existence since 1968. The Forest Service and The Cycle Conservation Club have been working to maintain and re-locate the MCCCT trail off roads since 1994. Grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources supply most of the annual maintenance funds. Most of the trail maintenance is completed by crews of Club volunteers, under supervision of the Forest Service.

This project proposal is similar to previous trail relocation projects which have occurred on the Huron-Manistee National Forests and for which there are no known adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative effects. A proposed action may be categorically excluded from documentation in environmental impact statements or environmental assessments only if there are no extraordinary circumstances in accordance with Chapter 30 of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 and if the actions are within one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30, Sections 31.1 or 31.2. The proposed activities will not impact wetlands or floodplains, Congressionally designated areas, RNAs, threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, or religious or cultural sites. This has been verified by a field review by District specialists and documented in their reports.

This proposal falls under Categorical Exclusion 31.2(1) that includes "Construction and reconstruction of trails."

A recent court order (*Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck*, CIV F-03-6386 JKS) required that opportunity for public comment on Categorical Exclusions (CEs) be provided, pursuant to the Appeals Reform Act. We are providing that opportunity for the **MCCCT Trail Relocation Project**, via this notice. This scoping opportunity is also the 30-day comment period to establish standing under a Forest Service administrative appeal regulation. To have standing to appeal a decision resulting from this analysis a commenter must submit timely comments on the proposed actions to the deciding official during this 30-day comment period beginning upon publication of the legal notice in the *Manistee News Advocate*.



If you have any questions or you need further information, please contact Steve Metzner at the Manistee Ranger Station at (231) 723-2211 extension 3146, or Ramona DeGeorgio-Venegas (231) 723-2211 extension 3108.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments on this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in the *Manistee News Advocate*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments must be submitted to: Steven Metzner, District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service, 412 Red Apple Road, Manistee, MI 49660, or by fax (231) 723-8642. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., M-F, excluding holidays.

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone to Jim A. Thompson or Steven Metzner, (231) 723-2211, or in person at U.S. Forest Service, 412 Red Apple Road, Manistee, MI 49660. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf), Word (.doc) or Portable Document Format (.pdf), to: smetzner@fs.fed.us. Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments.

Appeal Eligibility

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Only those who provide timely comments during this comment period are eligible to appeal the decision.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Sincerely,

/s/ JIM A. THOMPSON
District Ranger

Enclosure

From:

Place
Postage
Here

TO: Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District
Huron-Manistee National Forests
412 Red Apple Road
Manistee, MI 49660

Attention: Steven Metzner