

OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Implementing the Travel Management Rule on the Ottawa

Ironwood, Mi. – Forest Supervisor Bob Lueckel provided an update to the public today on the Ottawa National Forest's work to comply with the national Travel Management Rule and the 2006 revised Forest Plan as it relates to Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use. "As described in the Record of Decision for the revised Forest Plan signed by the Regional Forester, the Ottawa is moving toward a designated system of roads and trails open for motorized use." This applies only to federal lands and Forest Service roads.

Both the Travel Management Rule and revised Forest Plan prohibit the use of motor vehicles off the designated system.

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Roads and trails that have been open for use in recent years as allowed by the 1986 Forest Plan will remain open. With the release of the revised Forest Plan in May 2006, cross country use of OHV's is prohibited. This brings the Ottawa in line with all other national forests located in the Agency's Eastern Region, including the other 2 national forests in Michigan.

The next step in the process will be to work with the public to identify those roads and trail segments that will be open to OHV use in the future. These roads will then be displayed on a Motor Vehicle Use Map, available to the public in the Spring of 2007. "Until this map is available, those roads and trails that are currently available for OHV use will remain open," Forest Supervisor Lueckel said. "As described in the revised Forest Plan and the Record of Decision, we will be reviewing our entire transportation network of roads to prepare this map. Public involvement will be an important part of the process."

The Forest Service is moving to a designated use system to minimize or eliminate the impacts from unmanaged motor vehicle use related to the significant increase in off-road motorized vehicle use in the past decade. Designated trails and elimination of cross-country travel will help protect soil and water resources, control the spread of invasive species, provide for public safety and reduce conflicts with other multiple uses. For additional information on the Travel Management Rule, the 2006 revised Forest Plan, or the Ottawa's implementation plan, please visit www.fs.fed.us/r9/ottawa or call your local Forest Service office.

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