

# **Ottawa National Forest**

## **Travel Management Rule**

### **Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use**

On November 9, 2005, the Forest Service published a final travel management regulation, governing use of OHVs and other motor vehicles on National Forest System lands. Following are some frequently asked questions that were developed to help foster an understanding of this new regulation. If you have questions that aren't answered here, please feel free to call your local Forest Service Office.

#### **Travel Management Rule 101**

#### **What does the Travel Management Rule actually do?**

The rule requires individual national forests to designate those roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use. Once designation is complete, the rule prohibits motor vehicles off the designated system.

#### **Why do we need a rule for motor vehicle use?**

The Travel Management Rule provides direction for providing sustainable access for motor vehicles, including OHVs, on the National Forests.

OHV use on the Ottawa (and indeed across the Nation) has increased significantly over the past decade. While OHVs are a legitimate use of the National Forests, if they are not carefully managed, they can damage the land and the resources that visitors come to enjoy.

#### **What will the designated system cover?**

Designation includes class of vehicle and, if appropriate, time of year for motor vehicle use. A given route, for example, could be designated for use by ATVs, 4-wheel drive trucks, or street-legal vehicles.

#### **Who decides what roads and trails to designate?**

Designation decisions are made locally, with public input and in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments.

#### **How is the Ottawa implementing the new rule?**

Off Highway Vehicle use was addressed during our Forest Plan Revision Process. The Record of Decision, which presents the final approval of the 2006 Forest Plan, provides for diverse motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities on the Ottawa. Motorized use is restricted to a system of roads and trails designated for OHVs, consistent with the Travel Management Rule.

#### **How do I know which roads and trails are open for use?**

A Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) will be published in spring 2007, to display those roads and trails that are available for use by vehicle class and time of year. These maps will be updated annually and will be available to the public free of cost.

## Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM)

### **When can I get an Ottawa Motor Vehicle Use Map?**

The first map will be available to the public in spring 2007. This map will reflect existing conditions on the Forest. That is to say, it will display all of those roads and trails that are currently open to OHV use and other wheeled motor vehicles.

### **How much will a Motor Vehicle Use Map cost?**

Motor Vehicle Use Maps will be free of charge and will be available at all Forest Service offices. You will also be able to access the Motor Vehicle Use Map on the web.

### **Why are you updating the map every year?**

The Forest recognizes that conditions change, as well as our user's needs and expectations. By reviewing maps annually, we will be able to address the need for new trail designations, re-route old trails to address resource damage, or simply to fix any errors that may have been made on the previous map.

### **What if I notice that some of the roads and trails that I've been using for years aren't on the Motor Vehicle Use Map?**

We need your input! The first map produced will show existing conditions on the Ottawa, which may or may not include roads and trails that are currently being used. It may be that some of the "roads and trails" that people frequently use are not actually a part of the Ottawa's transportation system--many of these are user created. Some of these user created roads and trails may be available for designation in the future.

## Designating Roads and Trails

### **Can anyone propose that a road or trail be designated?**

Yes. Designation decisions will be made locally, with public input and in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments.

### **What does it take to designate road or trail?**

Roads and trails proposed for designation will need to undergo a thorough review before they are designated. Forest personnel will analyze existing travel management direction, any orders or other prohibitions governing motor vehicle use, jurisdiction for roads and trails, resource and safety issues, etc. It may be that some designations will require NEPA. To facilitate the process, this analysis may be incorporated into other, on-going projects of a larger scope (e.g., some of our Vegetation Management Plans may offer opportunities to create a trail system, re-align or re-route existing trails, provide for connector routes, etc.).

### **Who do I talk to about trail proposals?**

Talk to your local Ranger's office about roads and trails you would like to see designated. Decisions will be made locally and public input will be critical in helping us create a trail system that meets your needs.

## Access to the National Forest

### **I've heard the Forest is closed to OHVs. Is this true?**

Absolutely not! In fact, in the right places, and managed carefully, OHVs are an appropriate use of the National Forest. The Travel Management Rule provides that OHVs are to be operated on roads and trails that allow for that use.

### **The Ottawa doesn't have a "designated" trail system right now. Where can I legally use my OHV?**

The Record of Decision recognizes that the Forest doesn't have a formal, designated trail system. Therefore, implementation of the Travel Management Rule and the Revised Forest Plan will be phased in.

Initially, all cross-country travel is prohibited (a Forest Supervisor Closure Order was signed in July of 2006). Next, Forest personnel will review the Forest's entire transportation network of roads open to OHV travel and trail segments to prepare a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). This map will be available in Spring of 2007. Until the MVUM is produced, use of OHVs on roads and trails allowed under the 1986 Forest Plan will be still be allowed (remember the vertical and horizontal road signs?)

### **What about access to my UPPCO camp or private property?**

Access to UPPCO camps is provided under the terms and conditions of the UPPCO lease. This is not changed under the Travel Management Rule. Private property can be accessed with the appropriate authorization.

### **I'm getting older and can't get around like I used to. I use my OHV to access the Forest. What does this mean for me?**

All visitors to the Forest will be provided the same access on the designated roads and trails.

### **I am a contractor for the Forest Service and need OHV access. How can I do my work if I can't reach the Forest?**

Motor vehicles may be used off the designated system when specifically authorized under a contract, permit, operating plan, or other written instrument issued by the Forest. If you feel this applies to you, please contact your local Forest Service office.

### **Does the Travel Management Rule apply to snowmobiles?**

No. There will be no changes to our current snowmobile trail system.

## For More Information

### **Where can I find more information about the Travel Management Rule?**

Information on the Travel Management Rule can be obtained from any Forest Service office or on the web. Check out the following websites: [www.fs.fed.us/r9/ottawa](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/ottawa) or <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/>.