



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tahoe
National
Forest

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File Code: 1950-3

Date: February 16, 2010

Dear Friends of the Tahoe National Forest:

I am pleased to announce the release the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Motorized Travel Management on the Tahoe National Forest. The SDEIS discloses the environmental impacts associated with seven alternatives for managing motor vehicle use on the Tahoe National Forest.

Corrections to the NFTS Data in the DEIS/Preparation of a Supplemental DEIS

The Tahoe NF undertook a comprehensive review of its existing National Forest Transportation System after the release of the Draft Travel Management EIS. This review was done to respond to the following two concerns expressed by the public during the comment period on the DEIS.

- **Status of NFTS:** Letters questioned the inclusion or exclusion of roads/trails from the existing NFTS. Some individuals felt many of the NFTS roads/trails should be considered “unauthorized” while others felt that many of the “unauthorized” routes were actually part of the previously approved NFTS.
- **Valid Rights-of-Way (ROW):** Letters from private landowners stated that several of the NFTS roads/trails were shown in error on their land since the Forest Service did not have a valid existing ROW. They requested these roads/trails not be shown on their land.

Based on this review, the following corrections were made to the NFTS motorized recreation opportunities. These corrections were incorporated into all of the alternatives: Refer to Tables 1 and 2.



Table 1. Summary of corrections to the motorized recreation opportunities

| Category of correction | Reason for correction | Miles |
|---|---|---------------|
| Additional NFTS motorized recreation opportunities | State or County roads determined to be part of the NFTS | +32.2 |
| | Previous NEPA decision added road/trail to the NFTS | +69.4 |
| | Previous NEPA decision converted non-motorized trail to a motorized road or trail | +2.7 |
| | Subtotal | +104.3 |
| Changes in type of NFTS motorized recreation opportunities | Previous NEPA decision changed the class of vehicle allowed | 76.8 |
| | Previous NEPA decision changed season of use on NFTS road/trail | 579.6 |
| | Previous NEPA decision changed both season of use and class of vehicle allowed on NFTS road/trail | 33.5 |
| | Subtotal | 689.9 |
| Reductions in NFTS motorized recreation opportunities | Previous NEPA decision scheduled NFTS road/trail for decommissioning | -20.7 |
| | NFTS roads/trails on private land determined to not have a valid right of way | -124.5 |
| | NFTS roads determined to be under State or County Jurisdiction | -8.8 |
| | Previous NEPA decision converted motorized road/trail to a non-motorized trail | -5.2 |
| | Previous NEPA Decision closed the road/trail | -349.7 |
| | Subtotal | -508.9 |

Table 2. Summary of NFTS Mileage Before and After Corrections

| Class of Vehicle | DEIS Mileage | Supplemental DEIS Mileage | Change |
|--|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Roads open to highway legal vehicles only | 629.3 | 616.7 | -12.6 |
| Roads open to all vehicles | 1,845.2 | 1,450.9 | -394.3 |
| Trails open to high clearance trail vehicles only | 161.5 | 133.8 | -27.7 |
| Trails open to ATV's and motorcycles only | 16.8 | 25.5 | +8.7 |
| Trails open to motorcycles only | 147.6 | 168.8 | +21.2 |
| Total | 2,800.4 | 2,395.7 | -404.7 |

I reviewed this information and based on the interdisciplinary team's recommendation, determined the preparation of a Supplemental DEIS was warranted so the public has an opportunity to review the proposed action and alternatives in light of the corrections that have been made since the DEIS was circulated.

Modifications to Alternative 6 in Response to Comments

I have also reviewed the public comments received in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and have made some changes to the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) between the DEIS and SDEIS based on these comments. These changes were incorporated into Alternative 6 as presented and analyzed in the SDEIS. The changes maintained the original theme and intent of the alternative, but also addressed issues that arose during public comment. Highlights of the changes I made in the SDEIS Alternative 6, based on what I heard from the public, include the following:

- Shortened the seasonal restrictions on motorized vehicle use by one month for routes on the westside of the Forest to enhance opportunities for motorized recreation.
- Allowed wheeled over-the-snow motorized vehicle use on 3.6 miles of the Fordyce jeep trail when 15 inches of snow is present on the ground.
- Increased protection for the Forest's Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) by adding only a few routes, all of which lie on the periphery of these areas, to the NFTS.
- Limited year-round motorized mixed use (highway-legal vehicles sharing roads with non-highway legal vehicles) to roads less than 3 miles in length that have a low mixed use crash probability combined with a low mixed use crash severity, or that are consistent with the California Vehicle Code Division 16.5.
- Allowed motorized mixed use on certain roads longer than 3 miles, but only during deer hunting season, which ensures a low mixed use crash probability and severity will be maintained on these roads.
- I allowed motorized mixed use on certain routes recommended by the public during the comment period. These routes, which have been identified in our NFTS objectives as Maintenance Level 3 roads (typically low speed, single lane roads with turnouts maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car), will now be maintained as Maintenance Level 2 roads (roads open for use by high clearance vehicles).
- Ensured that the public has adequate access to important non-motorized recreation opportunities on the Forest by allowing such places to be safely reached in highway legal vehicles.
- Added numerous, primarily short unauthorized route segments recommended by the public to the NFTS to provide motorized access to dispersed recreation sites where found no significant adverse resource impacts associated with such additions.
- Added "Open Areas" at the Boca, Stampede, and Prosser Reservoirs to provide motorized access to the shorelines.
- Incorporated additional mitigation measures for specific routes to minimize impacts associated with motorized vehicle use, which will allow these routes to be added to the NFTS in a sustainable manner.

Public Comment Period

It is important to remember this proposal is just a draft. Your comments will be critical in refining this draft proposal prior to my final decision in June 2010. I strongly encourage each of you to closely review the enclosed documents and maps. Try to make your comments as site specific as possible, preferably by referring to those specific roads or trails you have concerns about.

Technical questions can be addressed to:

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| <p>David Arrasmith, Forest Planner 631 Coyote Street Nevada City, CA 95945 (530) 478-6220 EMAIL: darrasmith@fs.fed.us</p> |
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Public open houses will be held at the times and locations listed below to assist you in formulating your comments. These open houses will provide an opportunity for people to view displays, talk with various team members, and get questions answered.

| DATE | TIME | LOCATION |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Mar. 2, 2010 | Open House 3:30 PM to 7:30 pm | Sierraville, California Sierraville Ranger Station 317 South Lincoln Highway (Highway 89N) |
| Mar. 4, 2010 | Open House 3:30 PM to 7:30 pm | Auburn, California The Ridge Golf Course 2020 Golf Course Road |
| Mar. 10 | Open House 3:30 PM to 7:30 pm | Nevada City, California Forest Supervisors Office 631 Coyote Street (entry via upstairs parking lot) |

Mail Written Comments to: Travel Management Team
631 Coyote Street
Nevada City, CA. 95959

Or send EMAIL Comments to: tnf_rte_desig@fs.fed.us

Comments Must Be Postmarked by: April 12, 2010

Thank you for taking the time to be involved in this important process.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tom Quinn

TOM QUINN
Forest Supervisor