
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN & FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
REGION 6
UMPQUA NATIONAL FOREST
LANE, DOUGLAS, AND JACKSON COUNTIES, OREGON

CONTEXT

The Umpqua National Forest is amending the Umpqua Forest Plan to prohibit motor vehicle use off of the designated system of roads, trails, and areas available for motor vehicle use. The Decision to implement modified Alternative 5 will amend Standards and Guidelines for Recreation and Transportation and multiple Management Prescriptions. Management direction for all or portions of six Management Areas (approximately 858,800 acres) will be changed to prohibit motorized cross-country travel, and general travel management direction on the Forest will be changed from “motorized use open, unless designated as closed” to “motorized use closed, unless designated as open.” A list of proposed Forest Plan amendments is contained in Appendix 2 of the EA (Proposed Amendments to the Forest Plan).

The Travel Management Plan will close the Forest to cross-country travel and will designate roads, trails and an open area for motor vehicle use. Routes will be designated by type of vehicle and season of use based on Umpqua Forest Plan and District ATM plan management direction as well as observed current motor vehicle use patterns. A Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) will be produced, free of charge, showing those roads, trails, and areas open for motorized use on the Umpqua National Forest. The MVUM will be reviewed, updated as needed and published annually. The updated MVUM will show any new routes the Responsible Official had decided will be open for motorized use, and will not show any routes that are no longer open for motorized use.

The project area includes the transportation system of motorized roads, trails and areas within the boundaries of the Umpqua National Forest, and those roads outside the Forest boundary but under Forest Service jurisdiction. There are approximately 986,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Umpqua National Forest, which is located in southwest Oregon and includes portions of Lane, Douglas and Jackson Counties. The Forest is comprised of four Ranger Districts: Cottage Grove, North Umpqua, Diamond Lake and Tiller. Situated on the western slopes of the Cascade Range, the Umpqua National Forest includes the headwaters of the North and South Umpqua rivers and Row River. Dense stands of hemlock, true fir, Douglas-fir and cedar transition to lower elevation forests of mixed conifers and hardwoods. The waterways and diverse landscapes of the Forest create desirable habitat for many species of fish and wildlife in addition to providing outstanding recreational opportunities for local communities and visitors.

After considering the environmental effects described in the Travel Management Plan & Forest Plan Amendment Environmental Assessment, I have determined that the Forest Plan Amendments and route designations will not constitute a major Federal action and will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27):

INTENSITY

The intensity of effects was considered in terms of the following:

- 1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that, on balance, the effect will be beneficial.** For all natural resources, benefits were noted for the elimination of cross country travel. These benefits were not used to cancel out potential adverse effects. Incremental adverse effects of road and trail designations were noted separately where they occurred. Since the road and trail designations are all on existing National Forest System roads and trails with the exception of 3 miles of road, adverse effects of designation were minimal. Examples of these incremental adverse effects include the following. Minor potential effects related to hazard tree removal are noted in the Wildlife section (EA pp. 93-123). Continued erosion and sediment delivery to streams is noted in the aquatic section (EA pp. 81-82). Where continued use of roads would cause problems, roads will not be designated. Nine miles of roads with known resource problems related to streams will be closed (EA pp. 77-78). Closure areas to protect Survey and Manage Mollusks will be placed within the camping corridors and pull out areas in five locations (EA p. 25).

- 2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.**

The Umpqua Travel Management Plan aims to improve public safety by minimizing user conflicts and improving agency communication with the public. The Forest completed a motorized mixed use safety analysis of the existing condition (EA p. 31) and identified potential public safety risks. Existing roads that will be reclassified or added to the system as Maintenance Level 2 roads have had a mixed use analysis completed that was approved by the Forest Supervisor. The MVUM will improve safety by displaying where mixed use occurs. The MVUM is also a communication tool to share information with the public related to closures due to safety concerns, such as roads closed following damage from natural events (EA p. 35) and trail design limitations (EA p. 45). There will be no significant effects on public safety because motorized use is expected to continue at current levels (EA p. 155). Annual MVUM revisions will respond to new safety concerns such as increased use, new natural disasters, or temporary closures.

There will be no significant effects on public health because the Umpqua Travel Management Plan complies with the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act (EA p. 163).

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The supporting documentation located in the Travel Management Plan & Forest Plan Amendment EA and Analysis File provides sufficient information to determine that this project will not have significant effects to known unique characteristics of the geographic area.

- No significant effects are anticipated to historic or cultural resources because no new ground disturbance will occur. The National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) is currently being used, and this decision requires future use to be well defined and all identified and potential adverse effects (both direct and indirect) will be mitigated (EA p. 161).
 - No significant effects are anticipated to wild and scenic rivers because although the action alternatives affect the amount of motorized access within the corridor to varying degrees as described in the Recreation section (EA pp. 35-56), it will continue to be managed to protect the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) in accordance with the LRMP and the Oregon Omnibus Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988 (EA p. 57).
 - No significant effects are anticipated to wetlands or floodplains because all action alternatives will utilize existing roads, trails, and dispersed sites and reduce off-road use. The spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds will be maintained. The physical nature of existing movement corridors will remain unchanged. Reductions in off-road use will not adversely affect those aquatic network connections (EA p. 88). The Alternatives meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objective 7 because floodplains will not be influenced, and wetland habitat will be protected. (EA pp. 89-90).
 - No significant effects are expected in wilderness because Alternative 5 does not propose any motorized use within designated wilderness and as such, there will be no change and no effect to these areas (EA p. 57).
 - No significant effects are expected in Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) because motorized use does not affect whether an area meets the criteria for inventory as potential wilderness, nor does it preclude it from consideration for congressional designation as wilderness. None of the alternatives will affect the status of potential wilderness areas, IRAs or undeveloped areas (EA p. 59). This decision reduces the motorized trails in IRAs (DN p.5).
 - No significant effects will occur to prime farmlands or parklands because none are present on the Forest (EA p. 164). The travel management plan does not manage vegetation or develop land. Roads and trails designated in the plan already exist on the landscape.
- 4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial because there is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project. The effects of eliminating cross-country travel and continued use of roads and trails are well known and well-studied. Commenters that discussed

controversy in their comments generally did so regarding the potential for reducing access under the Travel Management Plan, not scientific controversy related to natural resource effects. While there were some disagreements related to analysis, I did not consider them to indicate scientific controversy. For example, some commenters said that extensive analysis was needed to prove the need to close roads or that resource specialists overestimated effects. Road closures are based on field review and well-documented site-specific problems (EA pp. 77-78). Further modeling and analysis would not lessen the need to close these roads, and is therefore unnecessary. I considered all resource-related comments, and they are discussed in the Consideration of Public Comments document in the project record. None of the effects analysis in the EA or information provided by the public indicated scientific controversy that would meet the threshold for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risks. This is a regulatory activity being implemented nationwide and the Agency has considerable experience with implementing travel management plans and managing, monitoring and maintaining roads and trails.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects. The Travel Management Plan and Forest Plan Amendments eliminate cross-country travel and designate roads and trails in order to comply with the Travel Management Rule. Some commenters were concerned that this would permanently close many roads on the Forest and eliminate traditional access in large areas. That is not the case. This Decision provides 4,382 miles of roads and trails for motorized use and incorporates traditional motorized use brought forward by the public (DN p. 3). Other commenters were concerned about having motorized trails in inventoried roadless areas (IRAs). These trails have a history of motor vehicle use and designation does not set a precedent for that use. The 2001 Roadless Rule does not exclude motorized use from Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA) nor does the presence of motorized routes preclude later wilderness designation by Congress (EA p. 59). Motorized trails in IRAs were reduced in the final Decision Notice by 24.7 miles (DN p. 5).
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** Cumulative effects are those which result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Effects are quantified in each resource section of the EA as follows: forest transportation system (pp. 34-35), recreation (p. 56), visual resources (p. 63), aquatic resources (p. 83), wildlife (pp. 93-119), botanicals (pp. 124-144), fuels (p. 148), vegetation management (p. 149), soils (p. 152), cultural resources (pp. 158-161), and economics (p. 163). Any expected direct and indirect effects are limited to the local area and there are no other effects that would be additive to the effects of the proposed action. Past, present and foreseeable actions are listed in the EA on pages 29-30 and were

considered for each resource. The cumulative impacts of the Travel Management Plan & Forest Plan Amendment EA are not significant.

- 8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places because motor vehicles can already use NFTS roads. This action is not considered an undertaking subject to NHPA Section 106 compliance (USDA Forest Service Policy for Section 106 of the NHPA Compliance in Travel Management: Designated Routes for Motor Vehicle Use (2005)) (EA p. 155). Allowing or prohibiting non-highway vehicle use will have no direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on cultural resources (EA p. 155). The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources because no ground disturbing activities are authorized (EA p. 161). Further uses of the NFTS will be well defined, and all identified and potential adverse effects (both direct and indirect) will be mitigated (EA p. 161).
- 9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** Based on specialists' reports, the information disclosed in the Travel Management Plan & Forest Plan Amendment EA, the wildlife (EA pp. 93-123), fisheries (EA pp. 64-92), and botanical biological evaluations (EA pp. 123-144) and a concurrence letter dated March 27, 2015 from US Fish and Wildlife Service, I have determined that this action will not adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- 10. Whether the action threatens to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered by resource in Chapter 3 of the EA (EA pp. 29-163). The action is consistent with the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Land and Resource Management Plan – Umpqua National Forest (USDA, 1990), as amended, including the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (Northwest Forest Plan) (USDA, 1994) (EA p. 7). Implementation of the action will not conflict with the plans or policies of other jurisdictions, including Tribes (EA p. 163). None of the action alternatives will conflict with any other policies, regulations, or laws, including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act (EA p. 163).

After considering the effects of the actions analyzed, in terms of context and intensity, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Alice B. Carlton

9/28/2015

Alice Carlton

Date

Umpqua National Forest Supervisor

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