

Proposed Rule for Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use
c/o Content Analysis Team
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I urge the Forest Service to significantly strengthen the proposed rule for designated routes and areas for motor vehicle use. Although this proposal is a step forward, it must be revised as described below to begin to address one of the greatest threats to our National Forests.

The future of America's National Forests and the values they represent are threatened by growing and uncontrolled use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), dirt bikes, snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles. In many National Forests, off-road vehicles can go drive almost anywhere. This one use dominates the landscape at the expense of almost any other activity. According to the Forest Service, millions more people visit National Forests to hike, view nature, hunt or fish than visit to ride off-road vehicles. But with vehicles almost everywhere, there are fewer places where families can go for a quiet walk in the woods or a picnic, where hunters and fishermen can find quality experiences, or where hikers and horseback riders can avoid dangerous conflicts.

I support several elements of the proposed rule and urge that they be retained, including the:

- general prohibition on motorized cross-country recreation, provided that any area designated as available for off-road vehicle use be limited and discrete;
- requirement that off-road vehicle use be authorized only on those roads and routes specifically designated as open on use maps; and
- conclusion that forests are not required to inventory and/or map unauthorized -- or renegade -- routes prior to commencing the route designation process.

I urge the Forest Service to ensure that any final rule requires each National Forest to:

- complete off-road vehicle route designations within 2 years of the effective date of that rule and include new rules for snowmobiles;
- designate roads and routes, including any unauthorized renegade route, for off-road use only after public participation and site-specific analysis of environmental impacts and user-conflicts reveals that such use is consistent with the criteria in the two off-road vehicle Executive Orders;
- immediately end use of all unauthorized renegade ATV and dirt bike routes pending site-specific study and official designation; and
- ensure that it can afford, maintain and manage any system of roads and routes designated for off-roads vehicle use.

Sincerely,