

# **Citizen's Alternative for Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Travel Management Plan**

February 10, 2009

## **Background**

Travel Management is a nationwide Forest Service public planning process primarily designed to identify roads, trails and areas open to non-licensed motorized vehicles such as motorcycles and all terrain vehicles (quads) and routes open to both licensed vehicles and non-licensed users (i.e. mixed use by passenger cars and off-road-vehicles).<sup>1</sup> Currently, most public lands in the **Rogue-River Siskiyou National Forest** (Forest) are open to cross country or off highway travel by non-licensed motor vehicles. The Forest is now in the process of preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement expected February\March 2009.<sup>2</sup> The proposed motor vehicle use maps and travel planning process can be accessed on the Forest's website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/projects/travel/index.shtml>. Proposed Motor Vehicle Maps are also available for review at Forest Service District Offices. Currently, there are approximately 4,620 road miles and approximately 1,155 trail miles. The proposed motor vehicle use maps retains 250 miles of trails in the Prospect OHV Trail System (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue/prospect-orv.htm>) in the Rogue River National Forest but reduces current public use by eliminating public access to many user created mining roads in the Siskiyou National Forest that receive little or no maintenance. Following a decision later in 2009, the Forest will publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) identifying all Forest roads, trails and areas that are designated open for motor vehicle use by the public. The MVUM shall specify the classes of vehicles and, if appropriate, the times of year for which use is authorized.

## **Citizen's Alternative**

The Citizen alternative primarily identifies existing roads where the public would be allowed to operate licensed motor vehicles. Siskiyou Project staff ecologist Richard Nawa modified the Forest Service August 2009 Proposal by identifying changes with the motor vehicle use from currently allowed mixed use to licensed use only. A Citizen Alternative focusing on recreational access and a minimum road network is needed for impact analysis in upcoming draft environmental impact statement. Components of the Citizen Alternative must be analyzed in the impact statement in order for them to be accepted in the decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 216-Nov.9,2005,pp. 68264-68291

<sup>2</sup> Federal Register Vol. 73, No. 166-Aug.26,2008,pp. 50299-50300

The Citizen's alternative recognizes that the overriding public need for a Forest Service road system is for access to recreation sites such as trail heads, campgrounds, boat launchings sites, scenic views, etc. The Forest Service is also required to identify a minimum road system needed for managing the forest. The Citizen Alternative best accomplishes these two basic purpose and needs. The Forest Service's proposed classifications for motor vehicle routes were modified and returned to the Forest Service for analysis in environmental impact statement scheduled for release in March 2009 (Fig. 2).

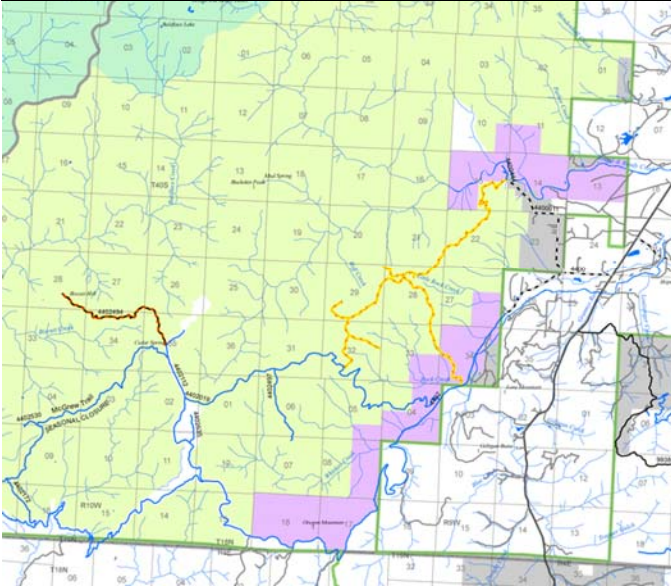
1. **Maintain or Improve Licensed Motorized Recreational Access:** Existing roads to recreational sites such as campgrounds, trailheads, lakes, boat launches, and botanical areas would be maintained or improved for low clearance vehicles and open to licensed (street legal) vehicles only.
2. **Protect Ecologically or Socially Sensitive Areas:** The Forest Service proposes to officially authorize motorized use of existing trails in sensitive roadless areas and proposes new motorized trails (Fig. 2a). In stark contrast, the Citizen's Alternative would eliminate motorized trails in roadless areas and reduce the potential for accessing Wilderness Areas from adjacent roadless areas (Fig 4). In addition non-licensed motorized vehicles would be prohibited in campgrounds, day use areas, established hiking and equestrian trails, botanical areas, research natural areas, riparian reserves, and wild and scenic corridors except for specified areas in Prospect Off-Highway Vehicle Area.
3. **Recreational non-licensed use in Prospect Ranger District Off-Highway Vehicle Area:** Non-licensed motorized use would continue in already established Prospect OHV Area (Fig 3) and Forest Service roads and motorized trails north of Highway 140.
4. **Permitted Administrative Access for High Clearance Vehicles:** Most logging and mining roads would be maintained for high clearance vehicles and limited to administrative Forest Service motorized use, permitted use (e.g. miners, contractors, wood cutters, loggers etc). Maintenance costs would be substantially reduced by eliminating need to maintain roads for low clearance passenger vehicles.
5. **Non-Licensed Access during Deer Hunting Season:** Specified administrative roads would be open to mixed motorized use during fall center fire deer season (October 1-November 10). No hunting or animal pursuit from motorized vehicle allowed. No motorized off-highway game retrieval allowed.
6. **Cross-Country-Motorized Travel Prohibited.** All motorized travel would be limited to designated roads and trails illustrated on motor vehicle use map of Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. No motorized cross country travel would be allowed on user created roads (Fig. 1). Off road travel would be allowed for dispersed motorized camping at designated sites only. Designated dispersed camping sites would have signs identifying where motor vehicles would be allowed.

7. **Monitoring & Law Enforcement:** Mandatory monitoring, public education, and law enforcement would be equally distributed on all ranger districts. Soil compaction would be monitored spatially to document trends and new locations of soil damage (Fig. 1).
8. **Port Orford Cedar Road Closures:** All 7<sup>th</sup> field and larger watersheds with substantial uninfected Port Orford Cedar would have at least seasonal road closures. Existing closures would be listed and mapped in Travel Management Plan. Closures would be maintained, monitored, and enforced annually.



Figure 1. Both Citizen Alternative and Forest Service proposals would prohibit motorized off-highway-use that destroyed all vegetation along this stream. Citizen Alternative would provide for mandatory law enforcement and monitoring. Photo taken March 2007 on public land near Cave Junction, Oregon.

Forest Service Proposed Motor Vehicle Use



Citizen Alternative Proposed Motor Vehicle Use

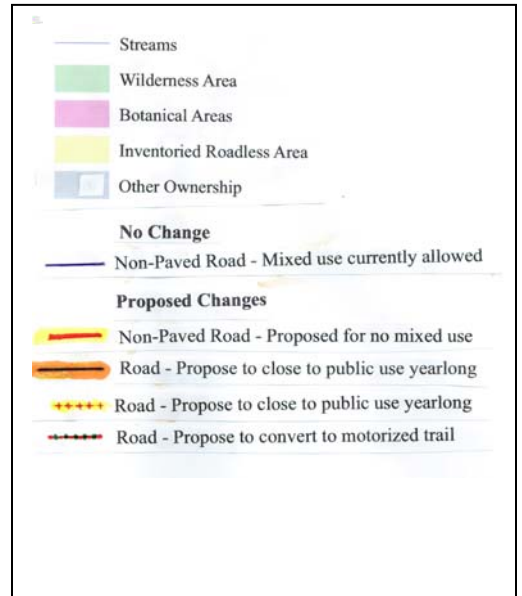
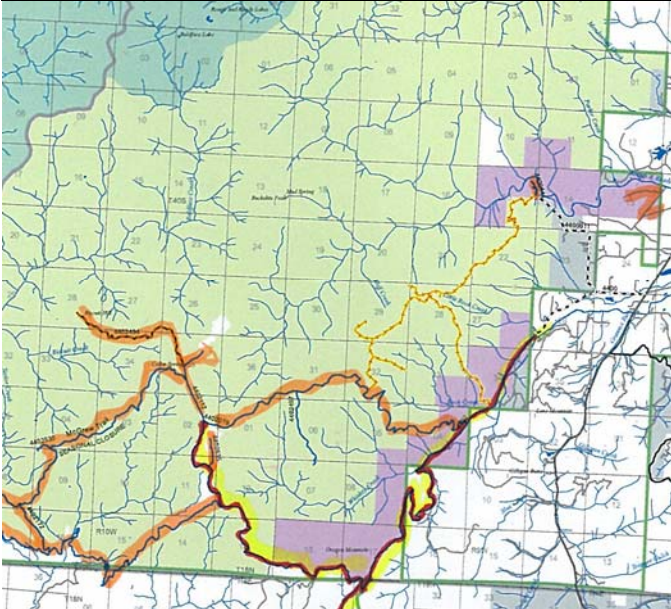


Figure 2a. (top) A remote area in South Kalmiopsis Inventoried Roadless Area illustrating Forest Service proposed motorized trail (red green dashes), existing routes that would continue with mixed use (dark blue), and routes eliminated from motorized use (yellow). Numbered sections are 1 mile square.

Figure 2b. (bottom) Same area modified by citizen's alternative which limits motorized access to trail heads in roadless area via licensed street legal vehicles only (red/yellow).

