

## Nez Perce National Forest – Travel Plan – Status July 2009 Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use - DRAMVU Project

### Where we are in the process

#### Step 1 - Compile Existing Travel Management Direction, Assemble Resource Data, Identify Proposals for Change.

- ✓ May – Nov 2006: Collect Information and Display Current Condition
- ✓ Nov '06-March '07: Inform Key Internal and External Contacts
- ✓ March-April '07: Develop Proposed Action.
  - No cross country travel.
  - Designate routes open for motorized use.
  - Limited dispersed camping use 300' from centerline of roads.
  - No change to over-the-snow motorized use.
  - No areas for motorized use identified.

#### Step 2 – Environmental Analysis and Decision Making

- ✓ May 17, 2007: Notice of Intent Published (45 days)
- ✓ July-October '07: Analysis Comments, Identify Issues, Use Comments to Develop Alternatives
- ✓ Nov '07 – March '08: Develop and Analyze Alternatives.
- ✓ Dec '08: Release Draft EIS
- ✓ Jan-April 2009: Receive Public Comments on DEIS
- ✓ April-May '09: Content Analysis
- June – August '09: Complete Effects Analysis and Complete Consultation
  - ▶ Sept '09: Sign and release Record of Decision (ROD) and Final EIS
  - ▶ Nov '09: Appeal Period – 45 days followed by Appeal Resolution.

Work on the Nez Perce forest travel planning project, Designated Roads and Areas for Motorized Vehicle Use (DRAMVU), is proceeding this month. The Forest received over 32,000 letters during the original and extended comment periods (January to April). We received 4 form letters and 5 replicate letters (more than 5 duplicates). The result was approximately 1320 unique letters received. Multiple comments were contained in most letters.

The Interdisciplinary team (IDT) is working on responding to comments this month. Letters were read and reviewed, and unique substantive comments were identified by the Content Analysis Team. The IDT is reading and considering these comments, including individual road or trail designations, in the Final EIS. We are also completing additional analysis, and making corrections that will be included in the Final EIS (e.g. economic, tribal issues, etc). We may develop additional design measures, mitigation or monitoring requirements based on comments that will be added to Chapter 2, effects analysis and the Record of Decision (ROD). A response to comments section will be included in the Final EIS.

Currently we are consulting with federal agencies (US Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA-Fisheries), state agencies (State Historic Preservation Office) and the Nez Perce Tribe. The consultation must be completed before we can sign the decision.

We are working toward having a recommended alternative to Ralph (Acting Forest Supervisor in early July. Once finalized, effects analysis and consultation will be completed. Then the decision will be signed and Final EIS presented to the public (estimate September 2009). The appeal period is 45-days.

### **Step 3 - Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map**

#### **► January 2010: Final Map (MVUM) Available for Distribution**

Publication of a motor vehicle use map completes the designation process. Under the new travel management rule, the motor vehicle use map is the principal enforcement tool for motor vehicle regulations. It will display only those roads and trails designated for motor vehicle use by the public. Routes not designated for motor vehicle use (such as non-motorized trails, single-purpose roads and trails, unauthorized roads and trails, and temporary roads and trails) will not be shown on the motor vehicle use map. The motor vehicle use map does not replace visitor maps, travel maps, or other maps intended to convey visitor information.

The motor vehicle use map will be free to the public, and will be available both in hard copy and on agency websites. After their initial publication, the maps will be re-published annually, reflecting any changes to designations since the last printing.

### **Step 4 - Implement, Monitor and Revise.**

#### **► January 2010: Implementation of the decision.**

##### **Implementation**

Implementation of motor vehicle designations will include publishing and disseminating a motor vehicle use map; educating visitors on travel management regulations and designations; amending existing authorizations to provide for needed motor vehicle access; and enforcing travel management restrictions.

##### **Monitoring**

Monitoring can include several kinds of activities. Project implementation monitoring evaluates compliance with land management plans and project decisions, including any required mitigation measures. Effectiveness monitoring evaluates the effectiveness of management actions in achieving desired outcomes. Program monitoring tracks and evaluates ecological, social, and economic trends. Validation monitoring verifies assumptions and models used in project implementation. Each kind of monitoring is relevant to managing motor vehicle use.

##### **Revision**

Designations identified on the motor vehicle use map are subject to revision. Information collected through monitoring and through public user groups will be useful in evaluating and revising travel management decisions.

## Description of Alternatives Considered for Detailed Analysis

### Alternative 1 – No Action – Existing Legal Access (Pre-Travel Mgt Rule).

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires a “no action” alternative to serve as the baseline for analyzing effects. Under this alternative no change to routes/areas available for motorized use would be implemented to meet the intent of the Travel Plan Rule (36 CFR 212, 251, 261, 295; 11/9/2005). Existing road, trail and area closures would remain in place.

- ◆ Cross-country motor vehicle use is allowed outside of existing area closures. Does not meet the intent of the Travel Rule.
- ◆ Maintains legally enforceable access restrictions on motorized roads and trails.
- ◆ Dispersed camping or parking allowed outside of existing area closures.
- ◆ No new motorized routes or changes to existing routes are considered.
- ◆ No Forest Plan amendment.

#### Items common to all action alternatives:

1. No cross-country motor vehicle use is allowed on the Forests, including retrieval of downed big game.
2. Routes are closed to motorized use unless designated open.
3. Limited motorized access for dispersed camping or parking is allowed from the centerline of designated roads or trails for a specified distance, depending upon alternative.

### Alternative 1A – Proposed Action

This alternative reflects existing forest system roads and trails designations based on forest databases and past NEPA decisions. We reviewed past NEPA decisions that determined forest access within this analysis. Following these reviews, any inconsistencies were corrected, and databases updated. These changes are reflected in Alternatives 1 and 1A.

- ◆ Proposes changes
  - Designates routes for motorized use.
- ◆ Limited motorized access for dispersed camping or parking is allowed from the centerline of designated roads (300 feet).
- ◆ No new motorized routes.
- ◆ Amends the Forest Plan.

### Alternative 2 – Modified Current Condition

Alternative 2 reflects the corrections to the databases with modifications to the current routes based on the original design of the route, location of route or resource concerns and past NEPA decisions.

- ◆ No cross-country motor vehicle use is allowed on the Forests, including retrieval of downed big game.
- ◆ Routes are closed to motorized use unless designated open.
- ◆ Proposes changes
  - Designates routes for motorized use.
- ◆ Limited motorized access for dispersed camping or parking is allowed from the centerline of designated roads (300 feet) and designated trails (100 feet).
- ◆ No new motorized routes.
- ◆ Amends the Forest Plan.

Based on public comments, two driving issues emerged: motorized use within Inventoried Roadless Areas and motorized recreation opportunities. These comments were used to formulate and are reflected in Alternatives 3 and 4.

### **Alternative 3 – Response to Requests for Decrease Motorized Use**

This alternative was developed in response to the issue related to requests to decrease motorized use in Inventoried Roadless Areas while maintaining motorized access to forest areas and facilities. Comments received on the proposed action identified a concern that motorized use is not appropriate in Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs).

- ◆ No cross-country motor vehicle use is allowed on the Forests, including retrieval of downed big game.
- ◆ Routes are closed to motorized use unless designated open.
- ◆ Proposed changes:
  - Specifically closes motorized use of trails within Inventoried Roadless Areas.
  - Designated existing routes to reduce motorized use.
  - Seasonally restricts motorized use on some routes.
- ◆ Continues motorized use of existing roads within Inventoried Roadless Areas as currently designated.
- ◆ Limited motorized access for dispersed camping or parking is allowed only from the centerline of designated roads (300 feet).
- ◆ No new motorized routes.
- ◆ Amends the Forest Plan.

### **Alternative 4 – Response to Requests for Increase Motorized Use**

In Alternative 4, comments submitted by the public requesting changes to existing routes or adding new routes were screened using the criteria given to the public in May of 2007, 'How to Propose a Route for Consideration'.

- ◆ No cross-country motor vehicle use is allowed on the Forests, including retrieval of downed big game.
- ◆ Routes are closed to motorized use unless designated open.
- ◆ Proposed changes:
  - Opens existing routes that would increase motorized use and meet criteria.
  - Opens motorized use on some existing routes within Inventoried Roadless Areas.
- ◆ Limited motorized access for dispersed camping or parking is allowed from the centerline of designated roads (300 feet) and designated trails (300 feet).
- ◆ Proposes new motorized routes.