



Clearwater National Forest Travel Planning Summary

July 2009

Purpose and Need for Travel Management

Travel management planning is an effort being undertaken by Forest Service units nationwide.

The project's origins can be found in *Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule* which was printed in the Federal Register November 9, 2005.

The Rule required forests to:

- (1) complete a local analysis;
- (2) designate roads, trails and areas where motorized travel will be permitted; and (3) display those designated routes on a motor vehicle use map.

The Clearwater National Forest identified additional needs to address in travel management. In a nutshell, the purpose and need for this project is to:

1. Designate the types of vehicles and seasons of uses for motorized travel, and eliminate unmanaged cross-country motorized travel.
2. Combine similar seasonal restrictions where resource protection objectives can be achieved.
3. Identify a system of motorized trails that provide a variety of recreational opportunities within Forest Plan direction.
4. Protect big-game on areas of winter range where animals are most likely to be disturbed.
5. Protect wilderness character in recommended wildernesses.
6. Remove over-snow and bicycle restrictions that do not have a clearly identifiable purpose.

A more complete discussion of purpose and need can be found in Chapter I of Volume I of the DEIS.

The Alternatives

After the Forest released its proposed action in November 2007 it received nearly 4500 comments.

While some respondents wanted every acre available for motorized uses, others wanted no motorized uses on national forest lands.

Neither alternative is consistent with laws, policy and direction; however, the Forest has attempted to develop a range of alternatives from the most motorized to the least motorized that is consistent with Forest Plan direction.

The four alternatives are:

**Alternative A—
No Action Alternative.**
Required by law.

**Alternative B—
Minimal Travel
Management Rule
Implementation.**

This alternative responds to public comments by taking only the actions necessary to implement requirements of the 2005 Travel Management Rule. It provides more motorized access than the proposed action.

**Alternative C—
Motorcycle Loop Trails
and Wildlife Habitat.**

This alternative responds to public comments about providing motorized single-track and loop trail opportunities while moving wildlife and recommended wilderness conditions toward those described in the Forest Plan.



The Forest Supervisor identified Alternative C as the **preferred alternative**.

**Alternative D—
Wildlife and
Recommended
Wilderness Emphasis.**

Alternative D responds to public comments about protecting wildlife habitat and recommended wilderness characteristics. It also responds to public comments about providing less motorized access than the proposed action.

Actions Common to All Alternatives

The following actions are included in all "action" alternatives (B, C and D):

- The travel planning analysis does not include the construction, reconstruction or decommissioning of roads or trails.
- Cross-country motorized travel is prohibited, except as described for "off-route exceptions."
- Off-route motorized travel is permitted in certain areas and under certain conditions for camping and parking. (Volume 2, Chapter 2, Table 2-3). Provisions are more limited in special corridors and sensitive areas.
- System roads and trails believed impassable are classified as "restricted yearlong."
- Similar seasonal road and trail restrictions are combined to reduce the variety and number of use periods.
- Multiple over-snow route prohibitions are combined

into one over-snow vehicle prohibition from 10/1-11/15.

- Two Forest Plan amendments are proposed.

One would modify the periods of restriction for on-road use described in Forest Plan Appendix F.

The other would remove current Forest Plan elk habitat potential standards and would adopt direction included in the proposed Travel Management Plan. (See Appendices D and E.)

Comparison of Alternatives by Methods of Travel

Opportunity by Acres or Miles	Alternative A "No Action"	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred)	Alternative D
SUMMER TRAVEL				
Acres open to OHV cross-country travel	1,372,959	0	0	0
Miles of motorized road routes open either year-round or seasonally	2,972	2,947	2,943	2,943
Miles of motorized trail routes open either year-round or seasonally	696	738	487	370
Miles of motorized trail routes in Inventoried Roadless Areas ¹ open either year-round or seasonally	447	454	243	139
Miles of motorized trail routes open seasonally	170	170	191	170
Miles of motorized trail routes open to both all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles	191	191	185	166
Miles of motorized trail routes open only to motorcycles	506	547	305	203
Miles of bicycle/mechanized routes on roads open either year-round or seasonally	4,344	4,354	4,354	4,354
Miles of bicycle/mechanized routes on trails open either year-round or seasonally	1,153	1,067	988	988
WINTER TRAVEL				
Acres open to snow machine travel	1,515,903	1,515,903 ²	1,319,623 ²	1,319,623 ²

¹ Inventoried Roadless Areas include recommended wilderness acres and miles. Recommended Wildernesses are Hoodoo (Great Burn), Mallard-Larkins and additions to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

²Alternative B provides the same area for winter snow machine use as Alternative A. Alternatives B, C and D would prohibit fall snow machine use on the Forest from 10/1-11/15 to provide security for big game during hunting season.

Next Steps and Comments

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement and maps can be viewed at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater/>. Compact discs are available upon request for those with slow internet connections. Paper copies are available at most local libraries. Thank you for helping to save printing and mailing costs.

All travel management documents will be available for public review beginning in July 2009. Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral and electronic comments will be accepted for 45 calendar days following the printing of the legal notice in the *Lewiston Tribune*.

Written comments should be submitted to the project team leader at the following address:

Kamiah Ranger Station
 Attention: Lois Foster, Travel Planning Team Leader
 903 3rd Street
 Kamiah, ID 83536

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf), or a Microsoft Word (.doc) document. Send electronic comments to: comments-northern-clearwater@fs.fed.us. E-mail comments must include the commenter's name, and the words "Travel Planning" should appear in the subject line of the message. Comments must be submitted by the close of the comment period. For further information, contact Lois Foster at (208)935-4258.