



OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING Redding, CA

March 23, 2013

STAFF REPORT: USFS Eldorado National Forest Travel Management Draft SEIS
STAFF: Dan Canfield, Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Eldorado NF Draft SEIS – 42 OHV Routes

Summary

The Eldorado National Forest (NF) has released a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Forest's Travel Management Plan (see Attachment 1). The Draft SEIS documents the analysis of portions of 42 OHV routes temporarily closed by court order.

The 45-day public comment period for the Draft SEIS closes April 8, 2013.

Discussion

In March 2008, the Eldorado NF issued the Final EIS and Record of Decision for the Forest's Travel Management system. A subsequent legal challenge resulted in a court order temporarily closing portions of 42 OHV routes included in the Forest's Travel Management system. The Draft SEIS reconsiders the designation of the 42 OHV routes in light of the Forest's Riparian Conservation Objectives. Specifically, the Eldorado NF is analyzing the 42 routes with respect to a Standard and Guideline (S&G) which directs the Forest Service to "*maintain and restore the hydrologic connectivity of ... meadows ... by identifying roads and trails that intercept, divert, or disrupt natural surface and subsurface water flow paths. Implement corrective actions where necessary to restore connectivity.*"

Through field inspections, the Eldorado NF has determined that 24 of the 42 routes do not go through a meadow or are otherwise meeting the S&G. The remaining 18 routes do intercept meadows and are affecting the hydrologic connectivity of the meadows.

The Draft SEIS analyzes four alternatives:

Alternative 1 (proposed action) – Under this alternative, 24 of the 42 routes would be designated for public motorized use. The Eldorado NF Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) would be amended to allow continued public motorized use on the remaining 18 routes which do not meet the S&G.

Alternative 2 (no action) – The portions of the 42 routes would remain closed to public motorized use.

Alternative 3 (preferred alternative) – Under this alternative, the 24 routes that meet the S&G would be designated for public motorized use. The remaining 18 routes will remain in the Travel Management system, but will not be available for public motorized use until the routes are brought into compliance with the S&G. LRMP not amended in this alternative.

Alternative 4 – Under this alternative, 10 of the 42 routes would be designated for public motorized use. 19 of the routes would remain closed permanently. The remaining 13 routes will remain in the Travel Management system, but will not be available for public motorized use until further resource conservation efforts are implemented. LRMP not amended in this alternative.

Commission Action

The Commission may:

1. Take no action.
2. Submit a comment letter to Eldorado NF on the Draft SEIS.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Eldorado NF Draft SEIS Public Notice



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Eldorado National Forest

100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 622-5061 (Voice)
(530) 642-5122 (TTY)

File Code: 1950

Date: February 20, 2013

Dear Interested Party,

The Forest Service, Eldorado National Forest, has prepared a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Travel Management Project to designate 42 specific existing routes for public motorized use, and is inviting comments on the draft document. The document analyzes four different alternatives. It is organized in two parts. Volume 1 contains the analysis, and Volume 2 Contains maps for each alternative. I have identified Alternative 3 as my preferred alternative at this point in time.

The DSEIS is available for review on the web at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/eldorado/>. A printed copy may also be viewed at the Eldorado National Forest Supervisor's Office located at 100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667; at the Placerville Ranger District Office located at 4260 Eight Mile Road, Camino, CA 95709; at the Pacific Ranger District Office located at 7887 Highway 50, Pollock Pines, CA 95726-9602; and at the Amador Ranger District Office located at 26820 Silver Drive, Pioneer, CA 95666.

Three open house meetings will be held to present and discuss the DSEIS. The purpose of these open houses is to introduce the DSEIS, and to provide you with guidance on providing meaningful comments during the public comment period. We hope you will join us at one of these meetings:

February 26, 2013; 3 PM to 8 PM

Placerville Best Western Inn, 6850 Green Leaf Drive, Placerville, CA

March 5, 2013; 4 PM to 8 PM

Turtle Rock Community Center, 17300 State Route 89, Markleeville, CA

March 6, 2013; 3 PM to 8 PM

Amador County Supervisor's Office; 810 Court Street, Jackson, CA

The purpose of this comment period is to give an opportunity for the public to provide early and meaningful participation on a proposed action prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official. Those who provide comments during this comment period are eligible to participate in the administrative review process. At this time the Notice, Comment, and Appeal Procedures (36 CFR part 215) are the regulations providing guidance on the administrative review process. The Forest Service published a proposed rule for a Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process in the Federal Register (Federal Register volume 77, Number 153, August 8, 2012) to replace the 36 CFR part 215 Notice, Comment and Appeal Procedures. The Forest Service will be implementing the Final Predecisional Administrative Review Procedures (36 CFR part 218) in the next few months and the Responsible Official may choose to follow that process for this project if available and timely.



Comment Period: The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DSEIS in the Federal Register on February 22, 2013. The opportunity to provide comments to establish eligibility to appeal/object under 36 CFR 215/36 CFR 218 ends 45 days following that date, expected to be April 8, 2013. Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted; however, to assure eligibility to object if the administrative review process is used, comments should be written rather than oral. The publication date of the NOA in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for a proposed action documented in a DSEIS. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

How to Comment: Written comments must be submitted to: Kathryn D. Hardy, Forest Supervisor, 100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 to 4:30 Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone (530) 622-5061 or in person, or at an official agency function (public open house) that is designed to elicit public comments. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-pacificsouthwest-eldorado@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Only those who submit timely comments will have eligibility to appeal/object the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215/36 CFR 218. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal/object must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6/36 CFR 218.5.

Sincerely,



KATHRYN D. HARDY
Forest Supervisor

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FEB 27 2013

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DIVISION OF OFF HIGHWAY
MOTOR VEHICLES RECREATION