

# Overview of USFS Travel Management in California

## Travel Management

In 2003, the Forest Service in California outlined a strategy for establishing a sustainable system of designated routes for motor vehicle use, known as Route Designation. The effort would be the start of an ongoing process to provide a sustainable system of roads, trails and areas for public motor vehicle use on national forest lands, and the end of unmanaged cross-country motor vehicle travel.

In 2005, the Forest Service issued a national framework for local forests to use in designating a sustainable system of roads, trails and areas for motor vehicle use. In order to align with the new national framework, **Route Designation became Travel Management.**

Route designation, as identified by the USFS, is “the process of regulating off-highway motor vehicle and street licensed motor vehicle use on a system of authorized roads, trails and areas by vehicle type and/or season of use on National Forest lands.”

Currently, the Forest Service in California is working through a Travel Management process. This process is the "first step" in implementing the national Travel Management Rule which will result in the publication of a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) that identifies the roads, trails and areas open to public motor vehicle use on every national forest. The MVUM maps are required to meet a national standard showing only designated roads and areas.

## Background

In 2000/2001 through the Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program the OHMVR Division began awarding funding to individual forests for route designation. As OHV recreation continued to increase it became increasingly evident that a managed system of roads, trails and areas was necessary on Forest Service lands in California.

In August 2003, the USFS entered into a Memorandum of Intent (MOI) with the OHMVR Division and the OHMVR Commission for the purpose of establishing a common goal to achieve route designation and the regulation of motorized vehicles within Forest Service managed lands in California. For the past seven years the State, in collaboration with Region 5 of the Forest Service, has supported the inventory and travel management planning through grant funding.

The MOI intended, when possible, to provide support for Region 5 Travel Management. To date \$11,915,000.00 has been awarded through the grant and cooperative agreement process.

National Forests throughout California have been working with the motorized, access, environmental, and other non-motorized communities to identify existing routes, trails and areas, and to develop changes to motor vehicle use by the public of the existing National Forest Transportation System. The process has been complex and challenging.

### **Six Step Process:**

#### **Step 1 Inventory**

- Map roads, trails, and areas currently receiving motorized/wheeled vehicle use
- Assemble OHV/motorized information, identify gaps in resource data, and prioritize field surveys
- Tribal consultation.
- Public Involvement & Inventory Validation

#### **Step 2 Temporary Forest Orders**

- Issue Temporary Forest Orders
  - Existing non-system and unplanned roads and trails would remain open for use under **temporary** Forest Order until a designation decision has been made and the rule invoked through publication of the Motor Vehicle Use Map.
  - Past designations, current forest orders, and closures would remain in effect during Step 2, unless site specific actions are taken at the discretion of the responsible official with the appropriate level of NEPA.

#### **Step 3 Planning**

- Complete Internal OHV/Motorized System & Use Analysis
- Tribal Consultation
- Public Involvement
- Develop the proposed OHV/motorized system(s)

#### **Step 4 NEPA**

- Scoping and issue identification
- Alternative analysis
- Tribal consultation
- Public involvement
- Prepare the appropriate NEPA documentation (EIS/EA)
- Alternative selection by Responsible Official

**Outcome:** Designated OHV system for the Forest

#### **Step 5 Implementation**

- Implement the NEPA decisions
- Publish Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM)
- Public involvement – Signs, Trail Maintenance, etc.

## **Current Status:**

Decisions and MVUM maps represent the first in the long term objective of implementing the Travel Management Rule to reduce the environmental impacts associated with public motor vehicle use on national forests, and develop a sustainable system of roads, trails and areas for public motorized use.

The Forest Service recognizes that Travel Management rules will change the way that some people access and experience their national forests. Never the less this change must occur in order to allow long term OHV opportunities and protection of natural and cultural resources.

The majority of Forests in Region 5 have either finished their Final EIS and Record of Determination (ROD), or are in various stages of the NEPA process in the preparation of their Environmental Impact Statements (EIS).

Listed below is the current status of all Forests in Region 5 and their EIS/ROD status including those forests who currently have released the MVUM.

## **EIS/EA status of the 18 Region 5 Forests**

### **Completed Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMS) as result of FEIS/ROD**

Eldorado NF-EIS

Angeles NF-EIS

Los Padres NF (Ojai, Santa Barbara, and Monterey Ranger Districts)-EA

Mendocino NF-EIS

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit-EA

Sequoia NF (Hume Lake and Western Divide Ranger Districts)-EIS

Six Rivers NF (Orleans Ranger District)-EA

### **MVUM's in next 30-45 days**

San Bernardino NF-For existing designated road system

Cleveland NF-For existing designated road system

Stanislaus NF-(Summit Ranger District)- EA

Six Rivers (Gasquet Ranger District)-EA

Cleveland NF-For existing designated road system

## **Forests with current Draft EIS released – Anticipated date of FEIS/ROD**

Modoc NF-FEIS/ROD July/August

Plumas NF-FEIS/ROD August/September

Inyo NF-FEIS/ROD August/September

Sequoia NF-FEIS/ROD September

Sierra NF-FEIS/ROD September

Stanislaus NF-FEIS/ROD September/October

## **Draft EIS currently out for public review; Forests with completion of FEIS/ROD still to be determined;**

Shasta-Trinity NF

Lassen NF

Klamath NF

Six Rivers NF

Tahoe NF-(public comment period closed - FEIS in progress)

## **Possible Action Items:**

- Review current DEIS open for public comment
- Review current FEIS/ROD
- Review MVUM maps
- Discuss release of the next generation maps “Tweener” maps.
  - Mendocino and Eldorado National Forests

# R5 Route Inventory & Designation Strategy

