



Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &  
Thunder Basin National Grassland  
2468 Jackson Street  
Laramie, WY 82070  
307-745-2300  
[www.fs.usda.gov/mbr](http://www.fs.usda.gov/mbr)



## News Release

Media Contact: Aaron Voos  
307-745-2323  
[atvoos@fs.fed.us](mailto:atvoos@fs.fed.us)

### Draft Pole Mountain Travel Management Decision is Announced

**(LARAMIE, Wyo.) April 19, 2017** – Laramie District Ranger Frank Romero has issued a Draft Decision Notice (DN) and final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Pole Mountain Travel Management Project.

The Draft DN contains multiple decision aspects.

- It will leave the majority of roads on Pole Mountain in their current, open status.
- Additionally, select unauthorized routes will be added to the system, parking areas will be added, connectors between existing roads will be added, and the Laramie Ranger District (LRD) will use seasonal closures and designated dispersed camping as management tools.
- In order to address access and resource concerns, other management actions include shortening roads, closing roads to public use, and decommissioning roads.

Ultimately the project decision will designate a sustainable motorized transportation system, or minimum road system that will provide diverse recreation opportunities, and access to manage natural resources and permitted uses on the forest. It will also address user conflicts and impacts to the environment.

“I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this project decision,” said Romero. “Everyone loves Pole Mountain and that was evident in the helpful input we received from members of the public and our cooperating agencies.

“I firmly believe that this draft decision will provide a road system on Pole Mountain that is sustainable in the long term and will meet the needs of Forest users, for both current and future generations.”

Release of the Draft DN marks the beginning of the 45-day objection period. Issues raised in objections must be based on specific written comments submitted during the scoping period or formal comment period, unless based on new information that arose since the opportunity to comment. If objections are filed, they will be resolved following the objection period. There will be no further opportunity for administrative review or objection. This decision may be implemented five days following the resolution of any objections received, or immediately if no objections are received.

The decision is closely aligned with the Modified Proposed Action without the Off-Highway Vehicle Loop. There are three individual road-specific decisions that diverge from this alternative. They were analyzed in other alternatives, but are intended to improve public safety, increase the feasibility of implementation, and reduce resource damage associated with one streamside travel route.

As a result of this decision, the District will:

- Designate an open road system totaling 135 miles (1.55 miles/square mile).
- Provide a firm start date of Feb. 1 for seasonal road closures and a flexible end date, to be responsive to weather and road conditions.
- Add nine parking areas across the unit, including three major parking areas along Wyoming Highway 210 designed to allow parking during seasonal road closures.
- Construct approximately 0.42 miles of new connector road, creating an additional driving loop.

- Add 3.1 miles of well-located unauthorized routes to the National Forest Road System to create additional capacity for dispersed recreation and new loop drives.
- Adopt a designated dispersed camping system along NFSR 700 (Vedauwoo road) and the 700 spur roads to reduce congestion and resource damage caused by the proliferation of user-created campsites.
  - Dispersed camping, as previous, will be allowed throughout the remainder of the unit.
- Retain 14 miles of Level 1 roads for administrative use that would be closed to public motorized travel.
- Reduce habitat and resource damage by removing 32 miles of existing system roads and by decommissioning some truncated (shortened) and closed roads.
- Move forward with closing and returning to a natural state any roads or routes that are not designated as part of the minimum road system.

The Draft EA and alternatives for the project were released Sept. 27, 2016. The EA did not identify any significant environmental effects from the action alternatives.

Public and cooperator input was solicited early and often via pre-scoping information gathering, two comment periods, two cooperator meetings with representatives from Wyoming State Agencies, and six public open houses in Laramie and Cheyenne. Contributions came from local, state, and federal groups, as well as public comments received in a variety of ways.

The Draft DN is responsive to the goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the 2003 Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan. It also satisfies the requirements of the 2005 Travel Management Rule in designating the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for the protection, management and use of the Pole Mountain Unit.

All project documents are located on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests & Thunder Basin National Grassland web site at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=46718>.

The analysis area for the project is mainly north of Interstate 80 between Laramie and Cheyenne in the Laramie Range. It includes the road system that provides motorized access to approximately 55,000 acres on the Medicine Bow National Forest. Popular areas include Tie City, Happy Jack, Blair-Wallis, Vedauwoo, and Eagle Rock.

In the Laramie, Cheyenne, and Fort Collins area, the Pole Mountain unit is some of the closest and most accessible National Forest System lands. Pole Mountain sees heavy year-round usage from visitors who want to explore public lands. Popular uses include mountain biking, livestock grazing, hiking, off-highway vehicle travel, horseback riding, communication sites, climbing, camping, military training, and hunting/fishing.

For more information contact the Laramie Ranger District at (307) 745-2300 or stop by the Laramie District Office at 2468 Jackson St., 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. – Fri.

**-USDA-**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.