

# BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

## Revision Reporter



Bighorn National Forest . 2013 Eastside 2nd Street . Sheridan, Wyoming 82801  
Phone: 307-674-2600 . Fax: 307-674-2668 .

## Recreation and Travel Management Work Group Meeting

A recreation and travel management meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2002 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Colonel Bozeman's in Buffalo, Wyoming. Bighorn National Forest (BNF) Supervisor Bill Bass will be present to discuss concerns of changing C areas to A areas.

Recreation use, both motorized and non-motorized, has increased on the BNF since approval of the 1985 Forest Plan. During plan revision, the BNF recognizes the need to try to reduce user conflicts and still provide recreation opportunities.

As part of the revision process, several travel management meetings have been held to discuss this topic. The most re-

cent meeting was in Buffalo on March 19. During this meeting, people submitted their important routes and destinations on maps. Discussion of the meeting focused on changing the C (open to cross country travel) areas to A areas where motorized travel is restricted to travel on forest system roads and trails. There were approximately 50 people in attendance (more information on this and related meetings can be found on pages 2 and 3).

Anyone is welcome to join these groups to discuss these issues and additional topics during future meetings. If you have any questions about these work groups, please contact Trish Clabaugh at (307) 674-2683.

## Steering Committee Meeting Scheduled

The next steering committee meeting is set for May 9, from 10 am to 3 pm at the Bighorn National Forest Supervisor's Office in Sheridan. There will be a one hour break for lunch on your own. The public is invited to attend this working meeting.

After a short update on progress made on the revision since the last steering committee meeting in December, the main topic will be a review of the initial draft Goals/Objectives, and initial draft Standards/Guidelines for the revised plan. The Goals/Objectives and Standards/Guidelines are the primary direction in a Forest Plan.

"We want people to see this potential direction early in the process, and get some initial feedback from the steering committee," according to Forest Supervisor Bill Bass.

The steering committee is comprised of Bighorn Forest Leadership Team personnel, a US Forest Service Regional Office representative, and representatives from various State of Wyoming agencies, through their cooperating agency status. In addition, local elected officials from the Conservation Districts and County Commissioners are on the steering committee through an agreement with the

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April 2002

Issue Number 5

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If you have comments or questions you would like to direct to the Bighorn National Forest, please call our main office at 307-674-2600 or come by our office at 2013 Eastside 2nd Street in Sheridan, Wyoming, 82801. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon-Fri. You may also submit comments in writing to the above address.

# Travel Management Proposal

## Proposal:

For those of you who have been unable to attend the travel management meetings held over the past few months, the Bighorn NF is considering a proposal to change travel management areas within the Bighorn National Forest from C areas to A areas.

increase in unlimited cross-country motorized travel, we are no longer able to fulfill our stewardship responsibilities in other areas.

5. The Bighorn National Forest is public land. It provides diverse recreational opportunities and experiences for a variety of recreation

open for motorized travel.

## What can you do?

The BNF wants to provide quality motorized recreation opportunities. We encourage your input to help us develop solutions to provide for your recreation needs and protect the natural resources of the Bighorns. To help in that process you can:

- Tell us how you think the changes may affect you
- Let us know what travel routes lead to important destinations
- Be involved in the public meetings like the one coming up May 7 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Colonel Bozeman's in Buffalo, Wyoming.
- You may contact Bighorn National Forest Recreation Planner Trish Claubaugh by phone at 307-674-2683 or by mail at 2013 Eastside Second Street, Sheridan, Wyoming 82801 for more information.

C Area	A Area
Cross country motorized travel is permitted. Motorized travel is also permitted on open system roads and trails designated for motorized use. Within C areas, there are still roads and trails that are not open to motorized use.	Motorized travel is permitted on open system roads and trails designated for motorized use. Motorized travel may also occur within 300 feet of an open system road for parking, camping, firewood gathering, etc.
<p><b>Travel that causes resource damage in ANY area is prohibited by regulation.</b></p> <p><b>System Road (Definition)</b>  <i>A road managed by the Forest Service as part of its transportation network. They are designated on the ground by number and d on the forest map. (For example: Forest Highway 31, Forest Road 488)</i></p>	

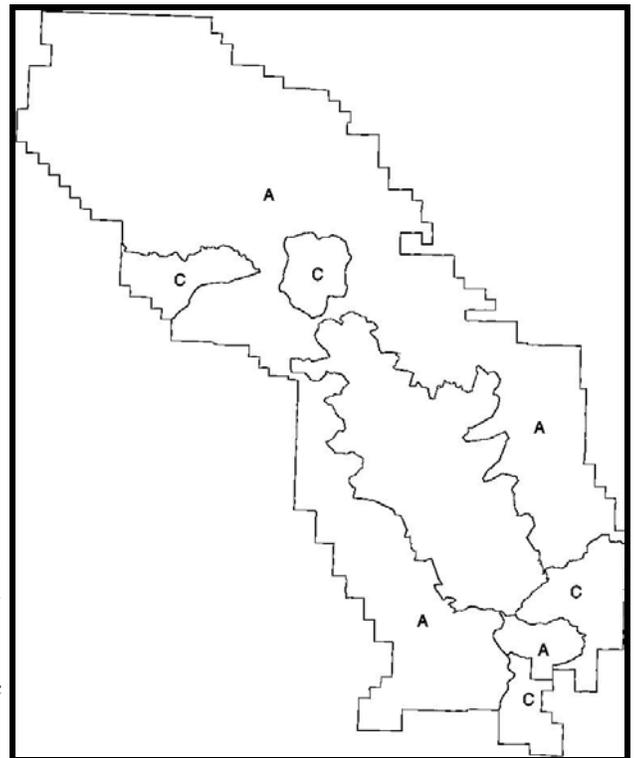
## Why make the change?

1. The current C areas were designated prior to the signing of the Bighorn National Forest plan in 1985. The Forest Service based that decision on the existing data and information available at that time. New information shows dramatic changes in recreation use.
2. There is a need to develop a transportation system to meet an increasing demand for motorized recreation travel opportunities from various users.
3. There is a need to protect resources from damage caused by unrestricted motorized travel and set common expectations on enforcement.
4. Forest Service travel management must consider: the protection of wildlife habitat, riparian and wetland areas, soil and water quality, and maintain visual quality while providing livestock grazing, motorized and non-motorized recreation and timber management. With an

activities. Care must be taken to satisfy current users as well as preserve the resources for future generations.

## What do the changes mean to the motorized user?

1. Changing C areas to A areas means motorized travel would no longer be permitted except on open system roads or trails, or within 300 feet of a system road or trail.
2. Changing C areas to A areas will not result in the closure of any open system road or trail. However, there are user-created roads or trails that will not be



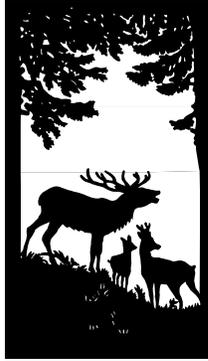
**Current Travel Management Areas**  
 All C areas would change to A areas under the proposal.

# Travel Management Meetings Summary

There have been seven meetings between August 2001 and March 2002 focused on recreation/travel management issues.

Issues the groups wanted to discuss were:

- access
- winter motorized and non-motorized use
- simplifying the travel map
- designated use for ATV trails



routes and destinations. Opinions are varied. Some persons responded they would like to see all roads and trails open and not want to change C areas, while others recognize the resource damage occurring and would like to see a change. Attendees were asked how they thought changing a C area to an A area would affect them.

The following are some responses identified from the work groups.

- “The change would take away opportunities; less areas being open creates more impact with more vehicles on existing roads.”
- “I would expect to see less damage to Elgin Park area. I would expect to see an increase/return of the deer herds at Elgin which have drastically decreased in the last ten years. I haven’t seen Sand Hill Cranes in Elgin since ATV use has become so popular. Fewer eagles too.”
- “It will restrict travel options in a given area.”
- “It would improve my outlook on my recreational activities. I like to hike and don’t appreciate seeing, hearing and smelling ATVs and trucks roaming wherever they want (and seeing their damage). When



During the November meetings, the Wyoming Game and Fish discussed the relationship of road densities and wildlife on the Bighorn National Forest. The biologists expressed concern for habitat quality being reduced because

of open roads and more people recreating on the forest.

The January, February and March meetings focused on the proposal to change C areas to A areas.

C areas allow cross-country motorized travel as long as there is no resource damage that occurs as a result of that



“(Changing from C to A) would improve my outlook on my recreational activities. I like to hike and don’t appreciate seeing, hearing and smelling ATVs and trucks roaming wherever they want (and seeing their damage).” *BNF User*

travel. In A areas, motorized roads and trails are open and vehicles are allowed up to 300 feet off roads and trails for activities such as camping and getting firewood.

The groups were asked how they think changing C to A will affect them and asked to identify their important travel



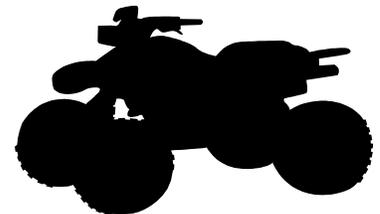
we hunt we would rather not see an ATV traveling off road. I know people at this meeting see the change as missed opportunities – I see it as an opportunity to return the area to a more pleasing recreational experience.”

- “Not being able to recover game with a vehicle will limit the area. Many people, myself included, can hunt. I don’t have access to horses, and am reaching the age I

“The (C to A) change would take away opportunities; less areas being open creates more impact with more vehicles on existing roads.” *BNF User*

prefer not to have to drag or carry them out. This can limit harvest, and drag hunting season into snowmobile season, etc.”

- “Doing this will close lots of current access open to motorized use. Access loss seems to occur too often.”
- “Positive affect of changing from C to A will be elimination / reduction of resource damage and “eyesore” landscapes.”
- “It will stop my hunting, also shut off a lot of fishing spots. Will



not let us haul our game out.”

- “I would like to see exceptions for licensed hunters to retrieve game.”
- “May need to look at seasons and close during certain times that are most impacted.”

The next recreation / travel management work group is scheduled for May 7 at Colonel Bozeman’s 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

# BNF Plan Revision Overview

Many of you have been on the plan revision newsletter mailing list since the Notice of Intent was published in November of 1999. However, as we get deeper into the revision process, there have been many new subscribers to this newsletter. In order to bring everyone up to speed, we want to outline the basics of forest plan revision and try to respond to the questions many people have had about the revision process.

All management activities which occur on national forests are implemented using management direction set forth in a document called a forest plan. A forest plan provides guidance for all resource management activities on a national forest. A forest plan is necessary because:

1. It establishes forest-wide multiple-use goals and objectives.
2. It establishes forest-wide standards and guidelines which control the imple-

*(Continued from page 1)*

State of Wyoming. The steering committee provides direction to the Forest Service revision team, approves work schedules, and sets overall strategy for the revision team.

“At the suggestion of some local residents, steering committee meetings are open to the public,” Bass said. “We want to have a transparent, open, revision process, so that people have the opportunity to learn exactly how the Forest Plan revision is being done.”

People should be aware these are working meetings, and there are ground rules for public attendees. Notably, this is not a forum for public input or comments, although attendees may be called upon by steering committee members to provide information.

If you have questions about this meeting, please call Joel Strong at 674-2645 or Bernie Bornong at 674-2685.

mentation of management practices.

3. It establishes management area direction (management area prescriptions) applying to future activities in a management area.

4. It designates lands as suited or not suited for timber production or other resource management activities.

5. It establishes monitoring and evaluation requirements.

6. It provides recommendations to Congress for the establishment of wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and other special designations as appropriate.

A forest plan is revised every 10 to 15 years. The Bighorn National Forest plan was first published in 1985. Since that time changing laws, environmental conditions, and scientific information have prompted the need to reevaluate the plan.

## Why are changes being made?

Forest plan revision is not unique to the Bighorn National Forest. Many national forests across the United States are currently undergoing a plan revision. There are several reasons a forest plan undergoes a revision. First, the plan needs to be updated with new scientific understanding regarding the management of watersheds and wildlife habitat. Second, it needs to deal with changing public views about the values and uses of public land, including increasing demand for outdoor recreation. Third, the plan needs to be revised now because the National Forest Management Act (1976) requires revision every 10-15 years.



## The Revision Team

Who's who on the Revision Team and how they can be reached

**Bernie Bornong**  
Team Leader  
307-674-2685

**Trish Clabaugh**  
Recreation Planner  
307-674-2683

**Phil Fessler**  
Civil Engineer  
307-674-2640

**Jon Warder**  
Wildlife Biologist  
307-674-2631

**Scott Gall**  
Rangeland Management Specialist  
307-674-1113

**Ruth Beckwith**  
Forest Landscape Architect  
307-674-2639

**Bryce Bohn**  
Hydrologist  
307-674-2621

**Chris Thomas**  
Silviculturist  
307-674-2686

**Mike Scanlon**  
Data Manager  
307-674-2659

**Dee Dee Arzy**  
Geographic Information  
Systems (mapping)  
307-674-2650

**Dee Ann Burkes**  
Writer/Editor  
307-674-2632

**Bighorn National Forest**  
Main Office—Sheridan, Wyoming  
307-674-2600

# Existing Forest Condition Assessments on Web

The revision interdisciplinary team (ID team) compiled existing condition assessments in 2001 and early 2002. The purpose of these existing condition assessments, compiled at the forest-wide and geographic areas scale, is to:

1. Provide existing condition information, at the two scales, that will be used to define the affected environment in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements, and to help in the alternative development process.

2. Use the watershed scale information in the description of the "Geographic Areas" in the revised Forest Plan. The nine watersheds will become the forest plan geographic areas, used to provide plan direction at an intermediate scale between the forest-wide scale and the management area scale.

3. At the geographic area and forest-wide scale identify parts of the current forest plan that need to be revised.

The Bighorn NF initiated the concept of watershed assessments in the mid-1990s, and originally envisioned that one of the nine watershed assessments would be completed each year. This work would feed into site-specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project analysis, and would be used in forest plan monitoring and revision. Two assessments were completed, on the North Fork of Powder River and on Clear Creek/Crazy Woman Creek. The process was abandoned in about 1996.

Beginning in 2001, the forest plan revision interdisciplinary team re-initiated this concept for revision. *Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale*, a federal

guide for watershed analysis, was used to develop a series of questions that form the organization for each assessment.

These Geographic Area Assessments are now available for public viewing. They can be viewed on the Bighorn Forest Website at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bighorn>  
Once on the Bighorn website, click on Management Planning, then Forest Plan, then Geographic Assessments.

Some topic/resource areas were determined to be better addressed at the national forest scale, as opposed to the watershed scale. For example, most wildlife species are not bound by watersheds, and needless repetition in the document can be avoided by addressing such topics once at the national forest scale. The assessment for topics analyzed at the national forest scale will be available soon.



## Bighorn Geographic Areas

*Tongue*

*Piney/Rock*

*Little Bighorn*

*Tensleep*

*Shell*

*Paintrock*

*Goose*

*Devil's Canyon*

*Clear/Crazy/Powder*



*Horseback riding is one of the many activities that can be enjoyed in the Bighorn Mountains.*

Photo by Rob Yingling

## WE WANT YOU!

The Bighorn National Forest is extending an invitation to people interested in participating in the revision process to be a part of the Recreation and Travel Management Work Group. Contact our office at (307) 674-2600 for more information.

# How is the Bighorn National Forest making an effort to ensure all members of the public have an opportunity to make their issues known?

## Public comments

Public involvement is crucial to forest plan revision. The revision includes two official comment periods. The first followed the publication of the Notice of Intent to Revise in November 1999 when the public was asked to identify the issues they wanted the revision to address. The other official comment period will follow the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Revised Forest Plan in the Summer of 2003. However, the Bighorn NF has an active, ongoing schedule of public contact that spans the revision process, including public meetings, open houses, speaking engagements, newsletters, our interactive website, and everyday "open door policy" public contact.

## State of Wyoming Cooperating Agency Status

Wyoming citizens also have access to the revision process through their state government. The State of Wyoming has formal Cooperating Agency status with the Bighorn National Forest for the Plan revision process. Coordinated by the Office of Federal Land Policy, Wyoming assists in social and economic assessments and analysis, and wildlife population management as it relates to habitat management. Counties and conservation districts participate through the state's Cooperating Agency "umbrella". Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Wyoming, the county commissioners and conservation districts participate on the State working team and revision steering committee. (See information on page 1 for the upcoming steering committee meeting.) Please feel free to contact your county commissioners and conservation district's board members with revision comments.

## Steering Committee

Another unique feature of our public involvement process is the structure and operation of the Forest Plan Steering Committee. The Steering Committee offers strategic and process advice and oversight to the Planning Team. Membership includes District Rangers, the Forest Supervisor's staff officers, a representative from the State of Wyoming, a Forest Service Regional Office liaison, and the Forest Service Wyoming Statewide Coordinator. Members of the State of Wyoming working team (State of Wyoming agencies, county



Public involvement is a big part of the Forest Plan Revision Process.

commissioners and conservation district board) participate in the steering committee. The meetings are open to the public, although business is conducted without public input.

## Public involvement in Alternative development

Federal laws and regulations require public involvement at two distinct phases of the revision process: 1) Scoping for issues following the publication of the Notice of Intent to Revise, and 2) A 90 day comment period following publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Draft Revised Forest Plan.

However, the Bighorn NF has sought and will continue to seek public input

throughout the Planning process. We routinely meet with individuals and groups and read many letters and emails submitted outside required comment periods. This summer we will host public meetings regarding alternative development. We aim to keep the public informed of alternative development through these meetings, this newsletter, and our website. Phone calls, office visits and written comments are always welcomed. Additionally, if you belong to a group or organization that has an interest in the direction of the Bighorn National Forest, we have Forest Service officials who would be willing to attend one of your meetings and discuss revision topics of interest to your group.

## What are the results of these public involvement efforts?

We have a better-informed public, able and willing to participate in the planning process, and we have better products, including a wide range of draft alternatives. Regular media coverage of our public involvement efforts keeps the planning process in the public eye. Public input will enhance the analysis of alternatives and ultimately result in a better revised forest plan in which citizens have ownership.

**THANKS...**  
**To those of you who have been coming to meetings and providing input to the revision process. Your comments are helpful in providing direction for the plan. Public participation will result in a better overall plan.**

# Bighorn Plan Revision Schedule

Date	Action	Comments
November 1999	Notice of Intent	The Notice of Intent to revise the Bighorn National Forest Plan initiates the Revision process. The NOI was published in the Federal Register on November 10, 1999.
October 2000 - January 2001	Public Meetings	A series of public meetings were held in six locations: Buffalo, Sheridan, Gillette, Lovell, Worland and Greybull. Public input helps define the revision issues.
July & August 2001	Field Trips	Two public field trips to Meadowlark Lake on the south end of the mountains and Burgess Junction on the north end.
Summer 2002	Public Meetings	Meetings planned to discuss potential alternatives.
Fall 2002	Analyzing of Alternatives	The ID team analyzes the effects implementing each alternative would have on resources in the forest, on forest users, and the social economic impacts to communities.
Summer 2003	DEIS	The analysis of the effects of implementing each Alternative is published in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS is accompanied by the release of the Draft Revised Forest Plan (DRFP), which includes the BNF preferred alternative. A 90 day public comment period follows the release of the DEIS and the DRFP.
Summer/Fall 2003	Public Meetings	The Bighorn NF hosts public meetings and solicits comments on the DEIS and DRFP.
Summer 2004	Final EIS Final Revised Plan	The Final EIS and the Final Revised Forest Plan are published with the Record of Decision. The FEIS is similar to DEIS but incorporates additional information based on the review of the DEIS.

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 Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Ave.  
 SW, Washington DC 20250-9410  
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Bighorn National Forest

**We're on the Web!!!**  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bighorn/>

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## What's Happening...

- May 7 Recreation/Travel Management Meeting  
Colonel Bozeman's – Buffalo, WY  
6:30–8:30 p.m.
- May 9 Steering Committee Meeting  
Bighorn National Forest Main Office  
2013 Eastside 2nd St., Sheridan, WY  
10 a.m.–3 p.m.

Coming Up This Summer:  
Public Meetings to discuss  
Alternative Development.

## Where are we in the Revision Process?

The Forest Plan Interdisciplinary Team (ID team) of resource specialists has been reviewing and updating the Goals and Objectives, Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines and the Management Area Categories and Prescriptions Standards and Guidelines. The initial drafts of these documents will be reviewed at the Steering Committee meeting on May 9 (see information on left).

For a complete forest plan revision schedule, see page 7.

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**We're on the Web at**  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/bighorn/>

**Call or Write:**  
**307-674-2600**

**2013 Eastside 2nd Street, Sheridan, WY 82801**

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