

**Santa Fe National Forest Travel Management Planning
Steering Committee Agenda**

February 19, 2009

SO First Floor Conference Room, 1300 – 1600 or via videoconference

Facilitator: Chantel Cook

Pre-work:

- ___ Read the subcommittee notes from NEPA, mapping, and motorized dispersed camping and be ready with your comments.
- ___ Read the timeline and be ready with comments.
- ___ Review the key issues in preparation for the discussion of alternatives.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Presenter</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
1300-1315	Update on meeting with RO	Dan	Information
1315-1345	Motorized dispersed camping	Julie B	A decision on issues raised by the motorized dispersed camping subcommittee.
1345-1415	NEPA	Julie B	A decision on issues raised by the NEPA subcommittee. An understanding of the “representative” alternative.
1415-1430	Mapping	Julie B	A decision on issues raised by the mapping subcommittee.
1430-1450	IDT goals and expectations	Julie B	An understanding of the IDTs goals and expectations of line and each other. Agreement to provide requested support.
1450-1530	Alternative development	Julie B	A decision on what alternatives to fully develop and analyze in the DEIS
1530-1545	Timeline	Julie B	A commitment to the timeline
1545-1600	Update on meeting with the Carson National Forest	Diane	Information on main differences.

Santa Fe Travel Management Planning Steering Committee Meeting

February 19, 2009

Present: Chantel Cook (facilitating), Mike Frazier, Dan Jiron, Erin Connelly, Diane Taliaferro, Julie Bain, Dolores Maese; via videoconference: Derek Padilla and Francisco Sanchez; via conference call: Steve Romero, Vicky Gullang-Harris (Acting DR, Jemez), Sandy Hurlocker

The record of each decision, its rationale, and the discussion is set up in this document as follows:

Decision

Rationale

- Discussion

1. The Forest will use adaptive management to add or remove routes, areas, and/or fixed distance corridors. The adaptive management “triggers” will be described and analyzed in the DEIS.

Adaptive management allows the Forest to implement changes without further analysis or decision-making if the action, trigger, and planned response are analyzed in the DEIS. It allows the Forest to be more flexible as changes occur.

- Adaptive management puts side boards on the uncertainty of our actions for a large-scale project such as travel management.
- A key benefit of setting up "triggers" or "design criteria" is that it helps set boundaries on the amount of analysis that's necessary. In other words, if we assume trails will be included with proper grade, water bars, distance from live water, etc, then the specialist doesn't need to go into a deep discussion about impacts to water/soils of bad trails because the triggers mean those trails would not be included in the system. The adaptive management is to make sure the system fits those criteria.
- The IDT needs explore how sideboards would be set and used: What could be the total extent of change post-decision? How would the creation of new sites be handled? How could the criteria address major fires / floods and the resultant changes to the system? Would we plan for the maximum?
- Can we leave an open-ended decision to create more dispersed camping on any sites we choose to add later if they fit the design criteria? If we decide to allow ourselves to add any number of additional ones as long as they meet certain criteria, would we not be explaining the full extent of the decision? Also need to consider the cumulative effects.
- Explore the use of plain language instead of the term “adaptive management.”

2. The IDT will develop a simpler protocol (compared to last field season) for field verifying routes and dispersed campsites by 30 April 2009.

The Forest collected detailed field data last summer in preparation for effects analysis. The focus for this field season is on map accuracy, and in order to cover a lot of ground the protocol needs to be simpler.

- Specialists can use GIS layers in combination with GPS locations to supplement their effects analysis.
- If there is data that would need to be collected anyways, might as well get it while we are in the field.
- There may be an existing protocol that meets our needs.

3. The Forest's definition of an existing dispersed campsite is one that can be seen on the ground (e.g., bare ground, hardened site) or where the district has personal knowledge that people use the site for motorized dispersed camping.

This definition encompasses both heavily and lightly used sites and would most accurately capture the Forest's existing use. A common definition is needed to have consistency in the alternatives

- The definition would depend on how we intend to designate motorized dispersed camping; would we focus on possible new sites or on existing opportunities? Alternatives could address different camping themes.
- Definition in the recreation profession of a dispersed camping site? It is a hardened site, barren core area, previously impacted site – does not need to have a fire ring. There is usually an access route to the site, can see the human browse line. No definition exists in this region.
- Not sure we want to designate lightly used sites – prefer to have those revegetated.
- Lightly used sites often recover.
- What about day use?
- For the Proposed Action, the Forest tried to capture where people are currently going.

4. The alternatives will display various potential “niches” for motorized dispersed camping. By exploring different scenarios (existing use only, encouraging new use, planning for future use, for instance), the Forest can receive public comment that will help identify the niche.

5. The IDT needs to determine the appropriate amount of data (e.g., does the route exist, how much ground work is needed to construct, etc.) required to analyze new routes and new connectors at the programmatic level by 24 March 2009.

The Forest needs to clearly identify the difference between existing and new routes proposed for designation.

6. The Forest will analyze proposed new routes and connectors programmatically in the EIS. The effects analysis will focus on the use of these new routes and not the effects from constructing them.

The Forest needs to analyze the expected use of proposed new routes to display to the public what the effects of the use would be if the route existed. It provides an avenue for public comment on whether the route is needed.

- The EIS needs to be programmatic and provide enough opportunities. The effects of construction would require further NEPA analysis, but it should be able to tier off of the EIS.
- There is probably a limit to what programmatic opportunities would be analyzed in this NEPA document. For instance, the Forest may not ever have funding to construct miles of new routes, and it may be prudent to analyze brand new routes (as opposed to connectors) in totally separate NEPA documents once we have funds secured.
- Analyzing potential new routes would meet the public's demands.
- There is a non-appealable CE for trail construction, which could be used for the connectors.

7. The Forest will NOT do site-specific NEPA for new route construction in the Travel Management EIS.

The travel management plan is programmatic in nature. Site-specific analysis is not appropriate in a forestwide analysis.

8. The Forest will not publish existing routes on the motor vehicle use map until they have been field-verified. The Forest will not publish new routes on the MVUM until the site-specific NEPA for them has been completed.

To provide a map that accurately represents ground conditions, routes must be field-verified. This provision is intended for smaller roads that cannot be seen easily on aerial photos.

9. This field season, the Forest will field verify a "reference set" of routes – those routes most likely to be designated under any alternative or to be included in the final decision. The IDT will identify the reference set and a basic protocol for field verification by 30 April 2009.

The Forest does not have the resources to field verify every route comprising every alternative. By focusing our efforts on the reference set, we will be more prepared to implement the decision when it is made. It would not be practical to wait until the decision to field-verify because implementation would be delayed.

- Focusing on a reference set is not pre-decisional, merely a way of planning ahead to complete field work. Once the decision is made, the appropriate routes will be field-verified and surveyed.
- There is already a protocol for data needed to update INFRA roads & trails. Look at these existing protocols for field verifying roads and trails to decide what data's required, yet simple and easy to collect.

10. The subcommittee needs to examine the possibility of including tracked vehicles in the alternatives and make a recommendation to the steering committee by 25 March 2009.

11. The proposed action and alternatives will keep trail designations at 50 inches or less, which would mean that UTVs would not be allowed on forest trails, just roads.

The rationale is to keep trails for use by smaller vehicles only to prevent widening of trails and user conflicts.

12. All trails designated for use by vehicles 50 inches or less would also allow motorcycles. This would mean there would be no “ATV only” trails in the alternatives.

The rationale is that ATV users generally find motorcycle use of trails to be acceptable (they do not mind sharing), and allowing motorcycles on all trails would increase the total number of miles available to motorcyclists. There would also be “motorcycle only” trails in the decision. (Note: This may have changed during the mapping of alternatives. – Julie Bain, June 23, 2009)

13. The Forest Supervisor and Deputy will make a decision as to whether the Forest should adopt a single corridor width of 150 feet on either side of the road.

- Having a single corridor width would make the map easier to read, thereby enhancing user compliance.
- The subcommittee believes that routes to motorized dispersed campsites farther than 150 feet from the road should be individually designated.
- A 150 foot corridor would cover the majority of use on the Forest.
- Some districts have situations where 300 foot corridors are most appropriate. They designated these corridors because the sites are not distinct and do not have roads to them.

14. The common definition of an existing road and an existing trail is its appearance on the ground, rather than inclusion in the Infra database and/or existence on old forest maps. In other words, an existing route is one that the average person can physically see and follow, even if faint.

The rationale is that site specific NEPA will be required to create new (or open existing) routes if they require ground disturbance, even if they existed at one time.

15. The GIS shop will keep an errata sheet of changes made to the alternatives as field verification progresses. Further, the GIS shop would not need to verify the corrections if moving the road on the map results in no change in anticipated environmental effects. For instance, moving the open designation from a road in an upland location to another (existing) connecting route in an upland location would not generally result in changes. If switching the designations could lead to a change in effects, for instance from an upland to a riparian area, then the road would be flagged for further analysis. Note that “move” in this case means on the electronic GIS

layer rather than on the ground. It would be correcting the electronic version to match ground conditions.

The Forest's goal is to have a map that accurately represents ground conditions, and corrections are inevitable once field-verification progresses. Keeping an errata sheet will allow the public to see what has been changed.

16. There will be no "secret" trails on the forest. Designated routes will be clearly marked and identified. This item came from those trails purposefully concealed by motorcyclists to prevent ATV access.

17. The IDT will proceed with the alternatives as presented, and consider combining More Motorized Access and More Motorized Trails. It will need to report back to the Steering Committee on whether combining these two is feasible. They will also report back on the Enforcement alternative.

18. The IDT will analyze the alternatives submitted by individuals and groups and make a recommendation as to whether they should be additional alternatives. Or, aspects of the alternatives could be incorporated into the ones currently proposed.

Notes written by Julie Bain on February 20, 2009