

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

June 25, 2009 : 1300 – 1500

SO, first floor conference room or via videoconference (no conference calls, please)

Facilitator: Julie B

Attachments:

- revised list of draft key issues
- information on adaptive management (forthcoming from Mike Dechter)

AGENDA

<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Presenter</i>	<i>Desired Outcome</i>
1300-1320	Jemez petition updates	Dan	Information
1320-1335	Progress updates, including FY10 budget	Julie B	Information
1335-1400	Issues and alternatives	Julie B	Information and approve revised list of issues. RO position on “mix and match.”
1400-1430	Monitoring and adaptive management	Mike D	An understanding of the results of TM adaptive management on other forests. Start thinking about how to monitor.
1430-1500	“Barrier” assumption	Julie B / Mike B	A decision on whether to include the assumption in question.

Present: John Phillips, Linda Riddle, Mike Dechter, Sandy Hurlocker, Dan Jirón, Mike Frazier, Julie Bain

Item: Jemez petition updates

The Forest Supervisor responded to Mr. Stillman and Mr. Curry, denying their request to close roads prior to the completion of the NEPA process. The Forest has contacted the Environmental Protection Agency to let them know of the petition and our response.

Item: Progress updates

The IDT is still working on mapping the alternatives, and anticipates having maps ready for the Steering Committee to review at the 7/22 meeting. The list of issues has also been revised; in writing the alternative descriptions the IDT Leader realized that one issue was actually more of

an opinion. That list was presented later in the meeting for review and approval. It is still not final.

Field work is beginning. The districts are field verifying routes proposed. We have two seasonal workers on board doing nothing but this.

The FY10 budget request has been submitted to the region.

Item: Issues and alternatives

The IDT Leader presented the revised list of issues and they were approved by the Steering Committee. They will not be final until the Forest Supervisor signs an official memorandum to the file.

Item: Adaptive management and monitoring

Decision: The Forest will not use adaptive management as described in FSH 1909.15.14.1. Instead, the Forest will list specific triggers that would cause a route to be removed from the motor vehicle use map at its next revision.

Reasons for decision:

- The ID Team researched the implementation of adaptive management on other forests and found that it did not work as planned or stated, was overly complicated and not attainable, or not supported by funding.
- The Assistant Regional NEPA Coordinator stated that, to meet the intent of the directives, adaptive management must describe and analyze site-specific conditions, triggers, and the effects of management changes. Because the scale of the travel management project is the forest level, it would not be practical to list proposed management actions and analyze those effects on a route-by-route basis.
- The Forest may continue to use closure orders where needed.

Decision: The Forest will develop a monitoring plan after the draft environmental impact statement.

Reason for decision: Monitoring will identify problem areas that need to be removed from the map, temporarily closed, or need further NEPA.

Discussion:

Adaptive management sounds good on paper, and may work for certain projects, but practicing it for travel management is difficult.

Forests that included adaptive management plans received comments back from the EPA stating that the proposed plan did not go far enough, and needed to identify things like who would be doing the monitoring and what funding would be allocated for them.

EPA has no authority in regards to our monitoring plan, but they are free to comment.

Adaptive management could be a way for the specialists to address unknowns. If they are writing their reports and find a gap in data, they could develop a criteria instead. The criteria would then be the limit beyond which the forest could not go. This might not really be adaptive management, but a way to address unknowns.

Closure orders are still used liberally on the forests in California. They are used to temporarily fix a problem.

Not sure we want to include adaptive management if it complicates the analysis, and does not do anything differently from what we can already do administratively, like closure orders.

Don't try to fix too much with travel management.

Adaptive management relates to the desired future condition. Its purpose should be to identify when we are not meeting desired future conditions, and to then say what we would do to fix it.

If we have a monitoring program, then we can identify problems and use a closure order. If the problem continues, then it warrants further analysis under NFMA and then another NEPA process to figure out what to do.

Notes written by Julie Bain

Adaptive Management for Travel Management

Santa Fe National Forest TM Steering Committee • 6/25/09

Overall findings

- Adaptive management is regularly prescribed to address travel management problems/uncertainties, but it is rarely fully put to practice
- For adaptive management to work there needs to be some protocol or framework for monitoring and thresholds/change points need to be identified
- Greatest difficulties are working with partners on defining a framework and funding for monitoring and management of the program
- There are currently very few or no successful Forest Service adaptive management (AM) programs for motorized recreation
 - This is primarily because there are few successful motorized recreation monitoring programs
- The EPA and other regulatory agencies have extremely high expectations for AM (see Tahoe and Modoc blurbs below)

Examples/Case Studies

California BLM (from 2004)

- Received a grant for adaptive management (AM) of OHVs in sensitive desert ecosystem
- Funding allowed for signage, monitoring, and additional closures, which were the main components of the AM program
- The monitoring program resulted in substantial closure of sensitive habitats (based on ongoing unauthorized use).
- It also facilitated a massive signage, education, and trail maintenance programs

Modoc National Forest, Travel Management Planning, 2009

- Included a Monitoring Plan in DEIS
- Monitoring plan is rather complex and uneven. Some resources identify what will be monitored and when, other resources lack this information.
- There is no 'adaptive management' part
- Management Plan is used as a mitigation to limit effects to T&E plants and heritage resources
- In the EPA review of the EIS, they commended the Modoc on the plan but asked that more information be included on specific locations of focus areas, personnel, cost, funding, and data to demonstrate it would be adequate.
- For routes that need mitigation prior to being put on the MVUM map, the EPA requested that the Modoc include a list of mitigation measures needed for each specific route and how the use of the route would be restricted until the mitigation is implemented.

BLM Gold Belt Planning Area, 2005

- Opted not to address the issue of adaptive management because they didn't want to create required monitoring, which couldn't be afforded.

Elkhorn Management Areas, Helena and Beaverhead/Deerlodge National Forests, 2008

- Decided a new TM decision was not needed for the Elkhorns because of a TM adaptive management approach based on a 'monitoring expectation'
- Adaptive management was tied to the Ecosystem Management Initiative.
- No monitoring data or AM framework, was this really AM?
- Funding for monitoring and personnel to monitor, analyze data, and present it was an ongoing challenge.
- The AM framework was led by one full-time employee. She recently left, and those present on the Forests know little about the program.

Lost River Motorized Recreation Trail System, Salmon-Challis NF, 2004

- A multi-jurisdictional adaptive management approach
- An AM framework was never completed
- The Forest currently has no TM monitoring framework

GMUG National Forest

- Monitoring is completed on a district-by-district basis
- Monitoring covers unauthorized use, motorized rec traffic surveys, motorized rec experience surveys
- Monitoring was started as part of EMS program pilot in 2005. Monitoring data seems to be used casually to identify needs for future TM NEPA.

Tahoe NF, FEIS, 2008

- DEIS identifies specific routes for monitoring. Identifies what resources should be monitored for, but not what is going to be measured.
- DEIS includes sampling protocol and how monitoring results would be reported. There is no mention of how monitoring results would be used.
- In the EPA DEIS review, the agency calls for information to be included in the FEIS on monitoring and enforcement program priorities, personnel needs, costs, funding sources, and evidence that the plan would be adequate. The EPA also recommends the plan should be periodically updated.

Superior NF, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, 2008

- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was included in the TM DN/FONSI (later withdrawn b/c of lack of air quality analysis).
- Much of the monitoring is already occurring, but this plan is to help standardize data collection/monitoring, and respond to public demand.
- Funding for motorized rec monitoring comes primarily from NFIM, but project funds are also used.
- Monitoring items include unauthorized OHV use, route closure effectiveness, soil erosion, safety, noise near wilderness, invasive species.

Wildlands CPR

- Calls for AM, but does not define it.
- Calls for monitoring of erosion, unauthorized use, and effectiveness of management efforts.