

Appendix C

Public Involvement and Collaboration

Eldorado National Forest

Travel Analysis Process

APPENDIX C

Public Involvement and Collaboration

The Travel Analysis Process (TAP) is a science based process that uses an interdisciplinary approach to integrate multiple resource areas. TAP findings place roads in two broad categories: 1) roads likely needed for future use and 2) roads likely not needed for future use. The analysis relies on existing Forest Service data. No new data are developed or collected as part of this process.

The TAP Report is not a decision document. Rather, the analysis developed provides a basis for evaluating opportunities in future decisions. In addition to the two broad categories, TAP uses a nine-category matrix of risk versus benefit. This matrix is useful in prioritizing further analysis and supporting future decisions. Roads with low benefit and high risk may be prime candidates for additional analysis if road closures are considered. Roads with high benefit and low risk are likely most suitable for retention. Any future proposals for changes in the road status will include a full analysis of alternatives and their impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process with full public involvement. The NEPA process provides the public and agency decision makers additional information about proposed actions and their effects on the environment.

The Leadership Team on the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) considered how to involve the public in the TAP process. The ENF recently completed the Subpart B Travel Management process, which included NEPA analysis of alternative road networks open for motorized travel. During that process the ENF received a wealth of recent public comment on the road system. In addition, the Forest Leadership Team is currently making decisions for important projects such as the King Fire Restoration, vegetation and fuels treatments, recreation improvements, road reconstruction, land exchange, over-snow vehicle use, and special use permits. The Leadership Team considered that an effort to involve the public throughout internal data analysis phase of the TAP could impact the ability to receive important comments on the projects currently in decision processes. Therefore, the Leadership Team decided to perform internal analysis of the science based TAP process and produce a report for public review and comment. Public comments will be solicited on the completed TAP report.

During the TAP analysis public review period meetings will be scheduled to discuss the findings of the report. Public input will be taken and appended to the report for use in future project scoping and analysis.

The ENF continues to maintain a strong public involvement process to scope projects, collect information for proposed actions, and consider public information in the NEPA review process. The NEPA process will be used for all decisions.

The TAP is a “living” document and will be updated as needed. The TAP process can be refined for use in a project-level decision to develop specific criteria for the roads in that decision. This allows gathering additional data and analyzing additional species that were not possible to include at the forest-scale. Public involvement in project level decision processes is much more useful than public involvement at the forest scale. These project-level processes may result in decisions that are not consistent with the initial recommendations of the TAP because of the more detailed analysis which is possible at the project level. The TAP is only a broad recommendation and may be modified as a result of the final project decisions.