



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

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Pole Mountain Travel Management Proposed Action Announced

(LARAMIE, Wyo.) November 4, 2015 – The Proposed Action for Pole Mountain Travel Management has been announced, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) officials will be hosting two open houses in November to distribute and discuss information on the project.

The Laramie Ranger District (LRD) has proposed to leave the majority of roads on Pole Mountain in their current, open status. In order to address access and resource concerns, other management proposals include shortening roads, closing roads, and decommissioning roads. Additionally, the USFS proposes to add select unauthorized routes to the system, convert some roads to Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails, build new OHV trails, and use seasonal closures and designated dispersed camping as management tools.

Development of the Proposed Action was a collaborative effort, as the LRD combined public and staff input with a thorough road assessment. Public contributions came from local, state, and federal groups, multiple public meetings, and public comments that were received online.

Details of the Proposed Action can be found on the project web site:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=46718>.

A formal, 30-day public comment period will start today, Nov. 4. This will be the first of two formal comment periods during the project. The public will also have an opportunity to comment on the Environmental Analysis, expected to be completed in the spring of 2016.

"I appreciate all of the input received to help develop this proposal," said Laramie District Ranger Frank Romero. "We are still in the beginning of this process and public input from those who recreate and travel on Pole Mountain is critical to helping me make a successful management decision. I encourage the community to continue to engage with me throughout the NEPA process.

"Overall, I'm pleased with the proposal, but I know it can be improved upon. I think that we have tried to use some different approaches toward management of the area that can be effective and still meet recreation and management needs."

The Forest Service will host two public open houses during the comment period to allow interested groups and individuals to work collaboratively toward improving the proposal. The open houses will have maps available for viewing and copies of the proposed action. USFS personnel will be on hand to answer questions. Dates and locations are as follows:

Laramie

Thursday, Nov. 12, 6-8 p.m., at Laramie Plains Civic Center Ballroom, 710 E. Garfield

Cheyenne

Tuesday, Nov. 17, 6-8 p.m., at Laramie County Library Cottonwood Meeting Room, 2200 Pioneer Ave.

Specific, substantive public comments will be used in the next step of the project, when the Forest Service will modify the Proposed Action or develop and analyze alternatives to the Proposed Action. An Environmental Assessment that will analyze alternative actions is expected to be complete in the spring 2016, with a final decision later in the year.

The overall purpose of the project is to identify a sustainable motorized transportation system that will provide diverse motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities, provide adequate access for the Forest Service to manage natural resources, recreation, and permitted uses on the forest, and minimize user conflicts and impacts to the environment.

The Laramie Ranger District partnered this summer with the University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources to help facilitate a public information gathering process prior to the official start of the project. The Ruckelshaus Institute coordinated public meetings, developed a public-information website, and collated public input for the Forest Service.

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.

Environmental Coordinator, Monique Nelson, is available to answer questions at (307) 745-2310, or via email, moniquenelson@fs.fed.us. Interested parties can also stop by the Laramie District Office at 2468 Jackson St., 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. – Fri.

For more information about this project contact the Laramie Ranger District at (307) 745-2300. You can also visit our website at <http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>, or follow the Medicine Bow National Forest on Twitter, [@FS_MBRTB](https://twitter.com/FS_MBRTB).

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