

NEWS RELEASE

Pacific Northwest Region - Colville National Forest
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June 5, 2014

South End Project Decision Signed

Colville, WA...Colville National Forest officials announced today that the Decision Notice for the South End Project and Forest Plan Amendment Environmental Assessment (EA) was signed by Supervisor Laura Jo West and is now available on the Colville National Forest Website at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/colville/landmanagement/projects>

The Decision Notice describes the selected alternative (Alternative 3) and provides the rationale of why the Forest Service selected this alternative. The chosen alternative includes designation of new off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes, restoration of campsites currently causing resource damage, development of parking areas, and an adjustment of the boundaries of management areas designated MA-1, MA-5, and MA-6 in the Colville National Forest Plan. The project area includes all or parts of: Ruby, Cusick, Tacoma, Twelvemile, Monaghan, Indian, Addy, Leslie, Bayley, Chewelah, Thomason, Cottonwood, Smalle, Winchester, and Calispell Creek drainages on the Colville National Forest northwest of Newport, WA.

With such a large project area and a number of restoration efforts needed this project will be phased in over the next 15 years. Each potential route requires a safety analysis and a one year monitoring period to ensure there is no unauthorized use before being officially designated as open on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). It is important to understand that until some important restoration and safety analysis work can be completed, the new routes will not be open to the public.

An implementation team will meet twice each year. In the spring, they will determine the roads to be added in the following year. During the summer, each new route will undergo a safety evaluation and be surveyed for user created OHV routes. In the fall, they will review monitoring, and roads that meet the criteria will be put on the MVUM for the following year. To be put on the MVUM, a route must not have any new user-created OHV routes. The first group of routes to be designated will connect the communities of Chewelah, Cusick, and Usk.

In addition to the new routes, an important restoration effort at Phillips Lake will help restore some previous damage. During the restoration of Phillips Lake, there will be walk-in access only. A gate will be placed on the road into the lake and limited parking available. The restoration includes blocking all user created OHV trails, blocking the wetland areas with rocks, and defining parking and camping areas.



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The Forest is working towards restoration of campsites to define parking and reduce compacted areas. Work in Ruby, Tacoma, Cusick, and Calispell is expected to occur next summer with the goal of designated camping along high use areas.

The OHV Ambassador program is being developed with interested parties. Formal agreements are being developed. The OHV Ambassador program involves volunteers riding through the area and interacting with visitors to keep the OHV experience enjoyable.

“This decision will designate a system of roads and trails that create quality loops, connects communities, and provides for better access and increased opportunities for off-highway vehicles, while protecting natural and cultural resources,” said Laura Jo West, Colville National Forest Supervisor. “Once the new routes are added to the Colville National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map they will be a great addition to ride and enjoy”. West Added.

For more information on the South End Project, please contact either:
Rodney Smoldon, District Ranger at rsmoldon@fs.fed.us, 509-738-7700 or Gayne Sears, District Ranger at gsears@fs.fed.us, 509-447-7300.

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The mission of the US Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Recreational activities on our lands contribute \$14.5 billion annually to the U.S. economy. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.



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