

NEWS RELEASE

Pacific Northwest Region - Colville National Forest
765 S. Main Street, Colville, WA 99114, www.fs.usda.gov/colville

Contact: Franklin Pemberton, 509.684.7177

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New Routes on the 2015 Motor Vehicle Use Maps

COLVILLE, WASH.- With almost 100 miles of newly designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes open on the Colville National Forest and many Forest Service roads opening April 1, it's a great time to prepare for your recreation plans on the Colville National Forest. The critical first step is knowing which roads and trails are open to motorized use. The Colville National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) show which roads and trails are available for use by different types of motor vehicles. These maps are free to visitors and are updated when changes occur in our road and motorized trail system. If you own a mobile device that runs Apple iOS, Android or Windows Phone you can download the Colville National Forest MVUMs with Avenza PDF Maps Mobile App and take them with you.

“Our OHV route system has been designed to reduce the level of erosion caused by OHVs and the impact of sediment getting into creeks and degrading fish habitat. By providing longer rides and designated routes, we are helping reduce the damage to the forest currently caused by unmanaged cross-country travel and the creation of new routes by users looking for new opportunities or ways to connect routes themselves,” said Laura Jo West, Colville National Forest Supervisor. “Additional steps will be taken to reduce off-road travel, including education, enforcement, signing and physically blocking the off-road access,” West added.

The motor vehicle use maps contain important information on which routes are legally open, prohibitions regarding motor vehicle use on the Forest, and operator responsibilities. If a motor vehicle is operated off the designated route system shown on the MVUM, the operator is subject to fines of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months or both. Additional penalties may apply to motor vehicle operators causing resource damage (such as rutting or damaging vegetation) when driving off the designated route system or on muddy roads and trails.

The MVUMs are free and available at all Colville National Forest Offices and the Bureau of Land Management Office on North Fancher in Spokane. The MVUMs are also available on the Colville National Forest Web site at www.fs.usda.gov/colville/ under Maps and Publications.

For more information on Colville National Forest roads and motorized trails, please contact your nearest Colville National Forest office.

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for the greatest good

Background

The additional 96.7 miles designated on the Colville N.F. were all in the South End Project area northeast of the community of Chewelah, Washington. The South End Project was initiated to address increasing motorized recreation and dispersed camping along with their associated resource impacts in the south-central portion of the Colville National Forest (CNF). Located closest to the population center of Spokane, the south-central part of the Forest receives a high level of recreation use that includes dispersed camping in riparian areas and meadows, off-highway vehicle (OHV) and four-wheel drive vehicle use. Many of the routes currently open to OHVs are not connected to other routes, do not provide loop riding opportunities and average less than 3 miles in length.; The existing OHV routes provide a less than optimal OHV riding experience and has resulted in many pioneered routes being created by users to increase ride time and loop opportunities.

The project's goals include: designating and expanding a system of routes for motor vehicle use (including OHVs), providing for public safety, protecting natural resources, rehabilitating existing resource damage caused by unmanaged motor vehicle use, minimizing user conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreation interests, and addressing impacts from dispersed camping associated with motor vehicle access to dispersed campsites.

The South End project will designate up to 177 miles of open roads currently open to highway-legal vehicles to be 'Open to All Vehicles' including OHVs. With more designated quality routes, riders have a place to go that gives them the experience they are after. The OHV route system has been designed to reduce the impacts of OHVs on erosion and sediment getting into creeks and degrading fish habitat. Longer rides and destination routes also helps to reduce the damage to the forest by cross-country travel and the creation of new routes by users looking for new opportunities or ways to connect routes themselves. Steps will be taken to reduce off-road travel. These steps include increased education, increased enforcement, increased signing, physically blocking the off-road access, and possibly changing the designation to highway-legal vehicles only.

This project is expected to be phased in over the next several years, with a majority of new routes designated over the next five years. Campsite relocation and rehabilitation will occur over the next five years as well. As funding allows, the project may convert approximately 8 miles of closed NFS roads and 4.5 miles of existing unauthorized OHV routes to managed OHV trails to provide connections between existing roads and to create loop routes. Priority routes have been identified and designated that connect communities and provides loop opportunities for riders. Some of these routes connect the Chewelah, the Little Pend Oreille Lakes and Pend Oreille valley communities.

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