



Subpart A of the Travel Management Rule – Bighorn National Forest

June 2015

Overview

The Forest Service Travel Management Rule went into effect in 2015.¹ The rule consists of three parts.

- Subpart A – administration of the forest’s transportation system (this step)
- Subpart B – designation of roads and trails for motor vehicle use (completed in 2007 with publication of the motor vehicle use map)
- Subpart C – use by over-snow vehicles (coming attraction)

To be eligible to receive future road funding, all national forests must complete the analysis outlined in subpart A and submit a transportation analysis report by September 30, 2015.

Subpart A travel analysis

- Is not a decision making process. Site-specific National Environmental Policy Act processes, including public involvement, will be completed for upcoming decisions.
- Is a science-based analysis that assess the risks and values of each road.
- Directs the Forest Service to identify the most ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable road system.
- Is a continuation of the travel analysis we’ve been doing for years. The first Bighorn National Forest forest-wide analysis was completed in 2004.

Questions and answers

Are you looking to reduce public access?

Not specifically. Rather, we’re looking to define a road system that meets management and public use needs and that we can afford to maintain, given shrinking budgets.

How will the travel analysis report be used?

It will be used as a reference for future management decisions during the National Environmental Policy Act process.

¹The Federal Register notice for the rule <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/final.pdf>



When will the recommendations in this report be implemented?

The recommendations will be reviewed and considered during future project-specific National Environmental Policy Act processes. Recommendations may be carried forward, rejected, or changed, depending on the project.

Who conducted the analysis and made recommendations?

We established a core team and three ranger district teams to review the roads and make recommendations. Representatives from the Bighorn's program areas (recreation, engineering, hydrology, fire management, wildlife, timber, etc.) were involved.

Were motorized trails analyzed?

No. We chose not to analyze motorized trails due to timing, staffing, and budget constraints. We anticipate an analysis of the entire trails system, motorized and non-motorized, will be conducted in the future.

Can I get a copy of the report?

Yes. The report is posted on the web at www.fs.usda.gov/bighorn/.

Are you requesting public input?

Yes. Comments on the report will be included in an appendix.

How do I submit comments?

Comments can be hand delivered or sent by regular mail to Dave McKee, Bighorn National Forest, 2013 Eastside 2nd Street, Sheridan, WY 82801, or by email to comments-bighorn@fs.fed.us with "travel analysis" in the subject line.

When are comments due?

To be included in the report's appendix when the report is sent to the Regional Office, comments should be received by July 15, 2015.

How will the public comments be used?

When site-specific analyses for upcoming decisions are initiated in the future, we will review the report's recommendations and public comments received during this 30-day review period.

Will the public have other opportunities to comment on the recommendations?

Yes, when site-specific decisions are made in the future, the analysis processes will include full public participation.



What are the recommendations?

Major recommendations include:

- No change to current miles of maintenance level 3, 4, and 5 roads
- Reduce maintenance level 2 roads by 58 miles (8 percent of 704 miles) by decommissioning 15 miles, converting 15 miles to level 1 (closed) roads, and converting 28 miles to motorized trails
- Reduce maintenance level 1 (closed) roads by 110 miles (23 percent of 497 miles) by decommissioning 106 miles and converting four miles to motorized trails

How much of the road system would be removed under the recommendations?

1,433 miles of current roads would be reduced to 1,280 miles, for an 11 percent reduction.

What are road maintenance levels?

- Maintenance level 5 = paved
- Maintenance level 4 = single lane, gravel surface, passenger cars, moderate comfort
- Maintenance level 3 = single lane, gravel surface, passenger cars, prudent care
- Maintenance level 2 = single lane, native surface, high-clearance vehicles
- Maintenance level 1 = closed roads used periodically for timber harvest operations

What issues were addressed?

Reduced budgets, the need to provide access, environmental impacts, jurisdiction, safety, and user conflicts.

What are risks?

Road condition/maintenance costs, impacts to water, soil erosion/geology hazards, wildlife impacts, invasive plant species, cultural resources impacts, safety/social conflicts, and jurisdiction issues.

What are benefits?

Timber management, emergency access, motorized recreation, general recreation, access, stakeholder access (permittees).



What were the benefits to the Bighorn for completing this analysis?

- Meet the legal requirement of the Travel Management Rule
- Keep road maintenance funds coming
- Create a useful reference document for future analyses and decisions

Will you save money by implementing the recommendations?

Yes. We estimate a savings of approximately \$25,500 annually in road maintenance and a reduction of \$398,000 in road deferred maintenance if all recommendations are implemented.

Where can I get more information?

Dave McKee telephone 307.674.2636 or dfmckee@fs.fed.us

Jason Ruybal telephone 307.674.2615 or jruybal@fs.fed.us

It's field season, so leave messages for Dave or Jason if they're out of the office. Please be patient if it takes a day or so for Dave or Jason to return your call. Thank you.