

Abstract

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) describes the environmental effects of a proposal by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest to:

- (1) Prohibit cross-country motor vehicle travel off designated National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) roads, motorized trails, and areas by the public except as allowed by permit or other authorization (excluding snowmobile use);
- (2) Amend the Shasta-Trinity National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) with a non-significant amendment to be consistent with the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B) in prohibiting cross-country motor vehicle travel;
- (3) Add 44.20 miles of unauthorized routes to the current NFTS for public motor vehicle use. Approximately 36.51 miles of unauthorized routes would be added as roads classified open to all vehicles classes (highway-legal and nonhighway-legal), and approximately 7.69 miles of unauthorized routes would be added as motorized trails. Of the motorized trails proposed, about 0.85 miles would be open to "all trail class vehicles," 1.44 miles would be classified as "motorcycle only" and 5.40 miles would be open to "vehicles 50 inches or less in width."
- (4) Add areas open to motor vehicle travel below the high-water mark at Shasta Lake (28,403 acres) and Trinity Lake (15,644 acres) within the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area. These areas would be open to highway-legal vehicles with a maximum speed limit of 15 miles per hour. Seasonal restrictions to protect breeding northern spotted owls in adjacent habitat would apply to the Trinity Lake Area. Resource protection measures for cultural resources would be applied in the open areas as well.
- (5) Amend the Forest Plan to allow six specific routes in or near cultural sites identified in the Forest Plan under Prescription XI: Heritage Resource Management.

These actions are needed in order to implement the 2005 Travel Management Rule while providing for a diversity of motor vehicle recreation opportunities and motorized access to dispersed recreation areas on the STNF. The DEIS discloses environmental impacts associated with the proposed action, a no-action alternative, and three additional action alternatives developed to meet the purpose and need and to respond to issues raised by the public.

Send Comments to: **Travel Management
Shasta-Trinity National Forest
3644 Avtech Parkway
Redding, CA 96002
(530)226-2500**

Electronic comments to: comments-pacificsouthwest-shasta-trinity@fs.fed.us

Subject: Travel Management

Date Comments Must Be Received: The opportunity to comment ends 45 days after the notice of availability (NOA) is published in the Federal Register.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such a way that they are useful to the Agency's preparation of the final environmental impact statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions. The submission of timely and specific comments can affect a reviewer's ability to participate in subsequent administrative review or judicial review.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the respondent with standing to participate in subsequent administrative review or judicial review.

Summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Proposed Action

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF) proposes the following actions: (1) Prohibit cross-country motor vehicle travel off designated National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) roads, motorized trails, and areas by the public except as allowed by permit or other authorization (excluding snowmobile use); (2) Add approximately 44 miles of unauthorized routes (roads and trails) to the current NFTS for public motor vehicle use, with seasonal and vehicle class restrictions assigned to some routes; (3) Add open areas below the high-water mark on Shasta Lake and Trinity Lake, with vehicle class restricted to highway-legal vehicles and a maximum speed limit of 15 miles per hour, with seasonal restrictions and cultural resource protection measures applied to portions of both open areas, (4) Amend the STNF's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to be consistent with the Travel Management Rule in prohibiting cross-country travel and (5) Amend the Forest Plan to allow six specific routes in or near cultural sites identified in the Forest Plan under Prescription XI: Heritage Resource Management.

Significant Issues

The process of scoping included the investigation of concerns among Forest Service and other-agency resource specialists as well as interaction with interested and affected individuals and organizations. Scoping identified the following significant issues which were used in developing the action alternatives:

Table S-1. List of significant issues

Issue # and Topic		
#1	Reduced Motorized Access and Recreation Opportunity	The proposed action will adversely affect the quality of motorized recreation and provides insufficient public access to STNF lands. The prohibition on cross-country travel, restrictions below the high-water mark of the reservoirs, and the addition of only 44 miles of routes to the NFTS unfairly limits motorized recreation.
#2	Impacts on Nonmotorized Recreation	Public motorized use of roads, trails, and open areas as described in the proposed action will adversely affect nonmotorized recreation experiences due to noise, damage to roads and resources, and user conflicts.
#3	Motor Vehicle Resource Impacts	Public motorized use of roads, trails, and areas as described in the proposed action will adversely affect natural resources including soils, water quality, vegetation, air quality, scenery, aquatic habitat and populations, and wildlife habitat and populations, and may increase sedimentation, erosion, and the spread of noxious weeds. Resources and experiences found in designated special areas in the national forest will be adversely affected as well.

Alternatives Considered in Detail

The STNF studied five alternatives: the no-action, the proposed action, and three additional action alternatives developed to meet the purpose and need and to respond to the significant issues listed above. The five alternatives considered in detail for this analysis are listed in Table S-2 below. Complete details of the alternatives are found in chapter 2 of this document.

Table S-2. List of alternatives considered in detail

<p>Alternative 1: No-action Alternative</p>	<p>The no-action alternative provides a baseline for comparing the other alternatives. This alternative maintains the status quo. Under the no-action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. No changes would be made to the current NFTS (approximately 5,329 miles of roads and 87 miles of trails open to wheeled motor vehicle travel) and no cross-country travel prohibition would be implemented in areas that are currently open to cross-country summertime use. The Travel Management Rule would not be implemented, and no motor vehicle use map (MVUM) would be produced. Motor vehicle travel by the public would not be limited to designated routes and would continue on the existing unauthorized routes (1,252 miles). Cross-country travel could continue on 1,632,316 acres of national forest lands outside of designated wilderness. Unrestricted motor vehicle use below the high-water marks on the reservoirs would continue. The agency would take no affirmative action on any unauthorized routes or open areas.</p>
<p>Alternative 2: Proposed Action</p>	<p>Alternative 2 is the proposed action described in the notice of intent (NOI) published in the Federal Register on August 8, 2008 (Vol. 73, No.154), with some modifications. It was designed to meet the purpose and need for travel management as described in the NOI and includes additions to the NFTS that provide access to dispersed recreation sites. It was developed by the Forest's interdisciplinary team and included field surveys of many unauthorized routes. Alternative 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibits cross-country motor vehicle travel. • Adds 36.51 miles of NFTS roads and 7.69 miles of NFTS motorized trails, with seasonal and vehicle class restrictions assigned to some routes. • Adds open areas below the high-water marks of Shasta Lake (28,403 acres) and Trinity Lake (15,644 acres)^a with vehicle class restricted to highway-legal vehicles and a maximum speed limit of 15 miles per hour. Seasonal restrictions and cultural resource protection measures would be applied to portions of both open areas. • Amends the Forest Plan with a non-significant amendment to be consistent with the Travel Management Rule in prohibiting cross-country motor vehicle travel • Amends the Forest Plan to allow six specific routes in or near cultural sites identified in the Forest Plan under Prescription XI: Heritage Resource Management.
<p>Alternative 3: Cross Country Travel Prohibition Only</p>	<p>Alternative 3 responds to issues related to quiet, nonmotorized recreation and impacts to natural resources (significant issues #2 and #3) by prohibiting cross-country motor vehicle travel off of designated roads, trails, and areas. No facilities would be added to the NFTS. This alternative provides a baseline for comparing the impacts of other alternatives that propose additions to the NFTS. Alternative 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibits cross-country motor vehicle travel • Amends the Forest Plan with a non-significant amendment to be consistent with the Travel Management Rule in prohibiting cross-country motor vehicle travel.
<p>Alternative 4: Minimize Impacts to Natural Resources and Roadless Areas</p>	<p>Alternative 4 responds to the nonmotorized recreation and resource issues (significant issues #2 and #3) by limiting additions to the NFTS and increasing restrictions to reduce conflicts and to provide additional resource protection. This alternative prohibits cross-country travel and avoids additions and changes to the NFTS in areas where resource concerns were raised externally and internally. Alternative 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibits cross-country motor vehicle travel • Adds 0.88 miles as NFTS roads and 14.68 miles as NFTS motorized trails, with seasonal and vehicle class restrictions assigned to some routes. • Adds open areas below the high-water marks of Shasta Lake (28,403 acres), Trinity Lake (15,644 acres), and Iron Canyon Reservoir (429 acres)^a with vehicle class restricted to highway-legal vehicles and a maximum speed limit of 10 miles per hour. Seasonal restrictions and cultural resource protection measures would be applied to portions of all open areas. • Proposes motorized mixed-use on 30.41 miles of existing NFTS maintenance level 3 roads, pending a mixed-use analysis and decision by the responsible official. • Amends the Forest Plan with a non-significant amendment to be consistent with the Travel Management Rule in prohibiting cross-country motor vehicle travel.

Alternative 5: Improved Access and Motorized Recreation Opportunities	<p>Alternative 5 responds to the motorized recreation access and opportunities issue (significant issue #1) by providing additional routes and reducing restrictions. Route additions and motorized mixed-use road segments were chosen to provide loops and extended rides. This alternative would maximize motorized recreation opportunities, including those accessing dispersed recreation activities. Alternative 5 incorporates many additions to the NFTS suggested by the public and intended to enhance access and motorized recreation opportunities. Alternative 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibits cross-country motor vehicle travel • Adds 43.49 miles as NFTS roads and 62.62 miles as NFTS motorized trails, with vehicle class and seasonal restrictions assigned to some routes. • Adds open areas below the high-water marks of Shasta Lake (28,403 acres), Trinity Lake (15,644 acres), and Iron Canyon Reservoir (429 acres)^a with all vehicle classes allowed, a maximum speed limit of 10 miles per hour, and seasonal restrictions and cultural resource protection measures applied where needed. • Proposes motorized mixed-use on 30.41 miles of existing NFTS maintenance level 3 roads, pending a mixed-use analysis and decision by the responsible official. • Amends the Forest Plan with a non-significant amendment to be consistent with the Travel Management Rule in prohibiting cross-country motor vehicle travel • Amends the Forest Plan to allow seven specific routes in or near cultural sites identified in the Forest Plan under Prescription XI: Heritage Resource Management.
--	--

^a Actual open areas below the high-water mark on the reservoirs vary depending on water levels and season of use restrictions.

Summary of Environmental Consequences

Table S-3 summarizes the environmental consequences by providing an average ranking of each alternative by resource area. Detailed information can be found in chapter 3. Rankings are scored on a scale of 1 to 5 from most (1) to least (5) impact.

Table S-3. Comparison of environmental consequences

Resource Area	Rankings of alternatives, averaged across indicators				
	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5
Nonmotorized Recreation	1	3	4	3.5	2
Motorized Recreation	5	3	1	2	4
Watersheds	1	3.2	5	3.4	2.4
Aquatic Resources	1	3	5	4	2
Wildlife	1	3	5	4	2
Cultural Resources	1	3	5	4	2
Botany	1	3	5	4	2
Nonnative Invasive Species	1	3	5	4	2
Visuals	1	4	5	4.5	3.5
Roadless Areas	1	3	5	4	2
Air Quality	1	4	5	4	2.5
Geology	1	3	5	4	2