



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Southern Region

## Know Before You Go...

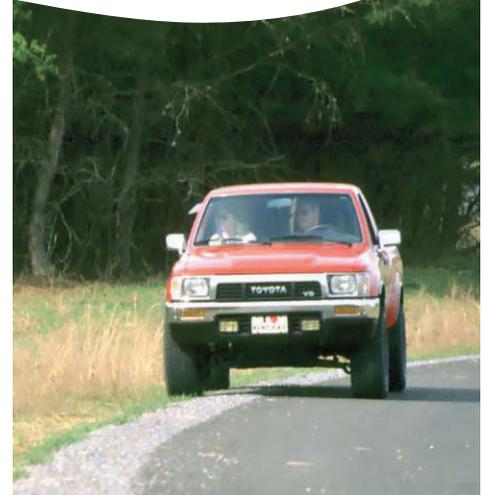
# Travel Tips for Bringing a Motorized Vehicle to One of Alabama's National Forests

The National Forests in Alabama include more than 668,000 acres of public land, which are divided into four separate forests—the Bankhead, Conecuh, Talladega and Tuskegee. These public forests are located in northwest, northeast, west central, east central and southern Alabama. Motorized vehicles are welcome, according to travel rules.

The Forest Service is responding to the increased demands on forest roads, trails and resources. In 2005, the Travel Management Rule was established to clarify motor vehicle use in America's national forests because of increased interest in using and riding vehicles in the great outdoors, particularly OHVs. Previous travel regulations for motor vehicles had to be updated because of recent and dramatic increases in OHV use on national forests, and advances in OHV technology.

Travel management regulations are not new to the Forest Service. While the current Travel Management Rule was published on November 9, 2005; it implements Executive Order 11644, which dates back to February 8, 1972.

As you travel to a national forest to enjoy your public lands, take time to understand the rules for motorized vehicles. Know before you go.



## Q&A

### Why is a Travel Management Rule a Good Thing?

The Travel Management Rule provides management decisions and sustainable access, while limiting environmental impacts on public lands. It identifies which roads, trails and areas are open to which motor vehicles on each national forest. Approved travel routes are identified on Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs), which are available free of charge online or at any of the six Forest Service district offices or the supervisor's office.

### What is an MVUM?

It's a map for motor vehicles. The national Travel Management Rule requires each national forest to develop one. Alabama MVUMs were developed and made publicly available on January 1, 2008. They identify and designate roads, trails and other areas accessible to motor vehicles. There are six ranger districts in Alabama, and each one has its own MVUM.

### Where can I get an MVUM?

Alabama's maps are posted on the internet at [www.fs.fed.us/r8/alabama](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/alabama). Many MVUMs are also available from the national recreation web site at: [www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/ohv\\_maps.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/ohv_maps.shtml)

### If I don't have internet access, how can I get a map?

Single copies of the printed MVUM are available free of charge at the Forest Service offices in Montgomery, Double Springs, Andalusia, Brent, Heflin, Talladega and Tuskegee.

### What does an MVUM show me?

The map shows which roads and trails are designated for motor vehicle use. It also identifies the types of vehicles that are allowed on each route and in each area, plus any seasonal restrictions that might apply to an area. Public roads are sometimes included on the maps for informational purposes, or as locators.

### What will I not see on an MVUM?

On a national forest, some roads and trails exist for special or non-motorized uses, like hiking or emergency access. These roads and trails will not be on the MVUM. The map also does not show topographic lines or streams—only essential travel information. Additional lines on an MVUM map would only add clutter and make it confusing to read.



### Why might I want a visitor map or a topographic map if I have the MVUM?

The MVUM is not intended to show all the features of the forest. Visitor maps provide detailed information about recreation sites and beautiful features in nature. Topographic maps are great navigational tools. In contrast, the single purpose of the MVUM is to identify specific roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicles.

## Contact a National Forest in Alabama

[www.fs.fed.us/r8/alabama](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/alabama)

National Forests in Alabama –  
Forest Supervisor's Office  
2946 Chestnut Street  
Montgomery, AL 36107  
Phone: 334-832-4470

Bankhead National Forest –  
Bankhead Ranger District  
1070 Highway 33  
Double Springs, AL 35553  
Phone: 205-489-5111  
Email: [bkinfo@fs.fed.us](mailto:bkinfo@fs.fed.us)

Conecuh National Forest –  
Conecuh Ranger District  
16375 US Highway 29  
Andalusia, AL 36420  
Phone: 334-222-2555  
Email: [pa\\_alabama@fs.fed.us](mailto:pa_alabama@fs.fed.us)

Talladega National Forest –  
Oakmulgee Ranger District  
9901 Highway 5, Brent, AL 35034  
Phone: 205-926-9765  
Email: [info\\_talladega\\_oakmulgee@fs.fed.us](mailto:info_talladega_oakmulgee@fs.fed.us)

Talladega National Forest –  
Shoal Creek Ranger District  
45 Highway 281, Heflin, AL 36264  
Phone: 256-463-2272  
Email: [shoal\\_creek@fs.fed.us](mailto:shoal_creek@fs.fed.us)

Talladega National Forest –  
Talladega Ranger District  
1001 North Street (Highway 21 North)  
Talladega, AL 35160  
Phone: 256-362-2909  
Email: [pa\\_alabama@fs.fed.us](mailto:pa_alabama@fs.fed.us)

Tuskegee National Forest –  
Tuskegee Ranger District  
125 National Forest Road 949  
Tuskegee, AL 36083  
Phone: 334-727-2652  
Email: [pa\\_alabama@fs.fed.us](mailto:pa_alabama@fs.fed.us)

# Know Before You Go...



Stay Safe, Legal and on the Trail

## Irresponsible OHV

riding can cause tremendous damage to sensitive areas as well as pose safety risks for the rider and other forest visitors. Please follow these rules when riding OHVs, and tread lightly through Alabama's national forests.

- Travel only in areas open to all-terrain (ATV) vehicles. (Refer to your MVUM.)
- Minimize wheel spin when climbing hills or brake-sliding during descent.
- Drive over obstacles to avoid widening the path.
- Slow down when sight lines are poor.
- Cross streams only at designated fording points, where a trail crosses the stream.
- Comply with all signs, and respect the barriers.
- When using a tree as a winch anchor, use a wide tree strap to avoid damaging the trunk of the tree.
- Listening to headphones or ear buds can make it difficult to hear and communicate with other recreationists. In some areas it is illegal to operate ATVs with both ears covered.
- Don't mix riding with alcohol or drugs.



## Q&A

### What is considered a motor vehicle?

Motorcycles, ATVs, four-wheel-drive vehicles and passenger vehicles are all considered motor vehicles.

### What is meant by vehicle class?

Vehicles are classified. Examples are: highway-legal motor vehicles, motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width, all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles.

### What is a highway-legal vehicle and how can I make my vehicle highway-legal?

A highway-legal vehicle is any motor vehicle that is licensed or certified under state law for general operation on public roads in the state. Operators of highway-legal vehicles are subject to state traffic laws. To determine if your vehicle is highway-legal, contact the state police or state DMV where you ride.

### What are road maintenance levels? How do they affect open roads and closed roads?

Forest Service roads are divided into five maintenance levels:

*Level 1:* Closed to vehicular traffic but may be available and suitable for non-motorized uses.

*Level 2:* Open to high clearance vehicles.

*Level 3:* Open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. Roads in this maintenance level are typically low speed with single lanes and turnouts.

*Level 4:* Open and maintained to

a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate travel speeds. Most roads are double-lane and aggregate surfaced. However, some roads may be single-lane. Some roads may be paved or dust abated.

*Level 5:* Open and providing a high degree of user comfort and convenience. These roads are normally double-lane and paved.

### What is the fine for a roads violation?

Violations of 36 CFR 261.13 are subject of a fine up to \$5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment (18 U.S.C. 3571(e)).

### How far can I park from a designated route?

A visitor may park a motor vehicle on the side of a road when it is safe to do so without causing damage to forest resources or facilities; unless prohibited by state law, a traffic sign or an order. Parking is allowed within one vehicle length, or within a specified distance (up to 30 feet) from the edge of the road surface.

### Can I park along the side of the road with my RV, fifth wheel or pop-up camper to camp?

No. The National Forests in Alabama do not have dispersed camping areas.

### How does the Travel Management Rule affect activities like firewood gathering, mushrooming and hunting?

Where these activities are permitted, access can be achieved through non-motorized methods. Remember, when motor vehicle use is consistent with the motor vehicle use map, the use is legal. In other places, motor vehicle access might be allowed for activities that are

regulated by a permit, such as firewood gathering, even if access is not shown on the MVUM.

### Is a wheelchair a motor vehicle?

A wheelchair or mobility device is not considered to be a motor vehicle. This includes devices that are battery powered, that are suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area and are designed exclusively to give a mobility-impaired person locomotion.

### Does the MVUM also show mechanized and non-motorized trail uses?

The MVUM shows only Forest Service trails that are designated for motor vehicle use.

### Will the MVUM display roads that access Wildlife Management Areas?

Yes, if the Forest Service has jurisdiction and primary maintenance responsibility for the access road.

### What criteria is the Forest Service using to decide if roads are to be removed?

Proposed changes to the forest transportation system may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws.

### How can I become involved in the decision process to change or eliminate Forest Service roads?

The public will be invited to participate in the decision process. Advance notice will be given to allow for public comments that are consistent with agency procedures under NEPA. Check the legal section in the local newspapers for public comment notifications.

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