



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Malheur  
National  
Forest

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File Code: 1950-1

Date: October 26, 2010

Dear Interested Public:

The Malheur National Forest is proposing to implement the 2005 Travel Management Rule by preparing an environmental assessment to restrict motorized cross country travel on the Malheur National Forest and the portion of the Ochoco National Forest managed by the Malheur National Forest. The purpose of this scoping letter is to inform you of the process and to request your comments on this project.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In November 2005, the U.S. Forest Service published in the Federal Register the "Final Travel Management Rule," which directs all National Forests and Grasslands to designate a system of roads, trails and areas for motorized vehicle use (36 CFR 212.51(a)). The Travel Management Rule (Rule) provides a consistent framework for motor vehicle use on national forests and grasslands. The Rule requires the Malheur National Forest to publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) that would show where and under what conditions designated motorized access would be allowed for all motor vehicles (36 CFR 212.56). The Rule also establishes specific codes under federal regulations (CFRs) to allow a consistent nationwide approach of allowing motorized access on National Forests and Grasslands only as shown on the Motor Vehicle Use Map.

In accordance with 36 CFR 212.50(b) I have decided to incorporate past travel management decisions into the project and focus this proposal on unregulated motorized cross county travel (excluding over-snow vehicles (36 CFR 212.51(a))). No new decisions would be made with this project on existing routes, designations of vehicle class or season of use.

### **PROPOSED ACTION**

This proposal encompasses 1,709,029 acres and includes the entire Malheur National Forest and those lands of the Ochoco National Forest administered by the Malheur National Forest. Maps of the proposal can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/malheur/recreation/travel-management/index.shtml>.

The Proposed Action would:

- Prohibit motorized travel outside of those existing designated routes (roads and trails) and areas - where it is not already restricted or prohibited by law, regulation, policy, order, Forest Plan direction, or site-specific decision. Motorized cross county (off-road) travel would be prohibited across 1,337,770 acres on the Malheur National Forest where it is not already prohibited.



- Allow motorized cross country travel within 300 feet (lateral slope distance) of the centerline of a designated open route for the purpose of dispersed camping when resource damage caused by motor vehicle use can be avoided. In some areas, motorized access for dispersed camping would be subject to "special provisions". Proposed "special provision" areas would allow motorized access only for the purpose of accessing designated, defined or existing dispersed campsites.
- Amend the Malheur and Ochoco Forest Plans to restrict motorized travel to designated routes and areas on the Malheur NF and those lands of the Ochoco National Forest administered by the Malheur National Forest.

### OPEN HOUSE

Please join me at an Open House to better understand the Travel Management Rule on the Malheur National Forest and how it might affect you:

**Harney County Community Center**  
Wednesday, November 3, 2010  
6-8 pm  
484 North Broadway  
Burns, Oregon

**Federal Building - Forest Service Office**  
Thursday, November 4, 2010  
6-8 pm  
431 Patterson Bridge Road  
John Day, Oregon

### PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR COMMENTS BY DECEMBER 3, 2010

Written comments should be submitted to me, the responsible official at: Doug Gochnour, Forest Supervisor, Malheur National Forest, P.O. Box 909, John Day, OR 97845. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments can be faxed to 541-575-3002.

Electronic comments should be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format, or portable document format only and sent to [comments-pacificnorthwest-malheur@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-malheur@fs.fed.us). The proposed action is also available on the Malheur National Forest web page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/malheur/recreation/travel-management/index.shtml>. If you have a need for further information about this project please contact Rick Vetter, phone (541) 573-4369.

Thank you for taking time to comment on this project – your suggestions for improving the project are appreciated.

Sincerely,



DOUG GOCHNOUR  
Forest Supervisor