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## CHAPTER I - PURPOSE AND NEED

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This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Motorized Vehicle Use on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (RRSNF) has been prepared as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing NEPA provisions (40 CFR 1500), the National Forest Management Act and its accompanying regulations, as well as applicable Forest Service Manuals, Handbooks and other higher-level direction.

This Chapter describes the Purpose and Need for this action. This includes: (1) background and legal framework for this proposal; (2) describing the scope and scale of the Proposed Action and alternatives; (3) summarizing the Rogue River-Siskiyou Land and Resource Management Plan direction; and (4) identifying the decisions to be made. This Chapter also includes a section on the public involvement process and the identification and development of issues that frame the analysis for this process.

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### A. BACKGROUND AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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Recreation is an important value and use of the Forest. Motorized and non-motorized recreation visitors share an interest in enjoying outdoor recreation in a natural environment.

On November 9, 2005, the *Final Rule for Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use* (hereafter referred to as Travel Management Rule) was published in the Federal Register; affecting 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295. The Rule revises several regulations to require designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use on National Forests and National Grasslands, and became effective in December 2005.

#### **Highlights of the Travel Management Rule:**

- Each National Forest or Ranger District will designate those roads, trails, and areas open to motorized vehicles.
- Designation will include class of vehicle and, if appropriate, season of use for motor vehicles.
- Once the designation process is complete with publication of a Motorized Vehicle Use Map, the rule will prohibit motor vehicle use off the designated system or use that is inconsistent with the designations.
- Designation decisions are to be made locally, with public input and in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments.

#### **The Travel Management Rule Provides:**

- Better opportunities for sustainable motorized recreation and access to the National Forest System
- Better protection of natural and cultural resources
- Increased public safety
- Reduced user conflicts

Key portions of the rule are shown in Figure I-1. The Travel Management Rule requires designation of those roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicle use by the public on National Forests. Designations would be made by class of vehicle and, if appropriate, by time of year. The final rule prohibits the use of motor vehicles by the public off the designated system (i.e. use of motor vehicles on routes and in areas that are not designated). Persons exempt from the final rule prohibitions would be those with a permit specifically authorizing access. Examples include access to private property, a mining claim or a communication site.

**Figure I-1. Key Excerpts from the 2005 Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 Subpart B)**

**§ 212.1 Definitions**

*Designated road, trail, or area.* A National Forest System road, a National Forest System trail, or an area on National Forest System lands that is designated for motor vehicle use pursuant to § 212.51 on a motor vehicle use map.

*Motor vehicle.* Any vehicle which is self-propelled, other than: (1) A vehicle operated on rails; and (2) Any wheelchair or mobility device, including one that is battery powered, that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, and that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area.

**§ 212.50 Purpose, scope, and definitions**

(a) *Purpose.* This subpart provides for a system of National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands that are designated for motor vehicle use. After these roads, trails, and areas are designated, motor vehicle use, including the class of vehicle and time of year, not in accordance with these designations is prohibited by 36 CFR 261.13. Motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails and outside designated areas is prohibited by 36 CFR 261.13.

(b) *Scope.* The responsible official may incorporate previous administrative decisions regarding travel management made under other authorities, including designations and prohibitions of motor vehicle use, in designating National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands for motor vehicle use under this subpart.

(c) For definitions of terms used in this subpart, refer to § 212.1 in subpart A of this part.

**§ 212.51 Designation of roads, trails, and areas**

(a) *General.* Motor vehicle use on National Forest System roads, on National Forest System trails, and in areas on National Forest System lands shall be designated by vehicle class and, if appropriate, by time of year by the responsible official on administrative units or Ranger Districts of the National Forest System, provided that **the following vehicles and uses are exempted from these designations:**

- (1) Aircraft;
- (2) Watercraft;
- (3) Over-snow vehicles (see § 212.81);
- (4) Limited administrative use by the Forest Service;
- (5) Use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes;
- (6) Authorized use of any combat or combat support vehicle for national defense purposes;
- (7) Law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit; and
- (8) Motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulations.

(b) *Motor vehicle use for dispersed camping or big game retrieval.* In designating routes, the responsible official may include in the designation the limited use of motor vehicles within a specified distance of certain designated routes, and if appropriate within specified time periods, solely for the purposes of dispersed camping or retrieval of a downed big game animal by an individual who has legally taken that animal.

Former Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth prioritized actions to keep America's Forest and Grasslands healthy by restoring and rehabilitating damaged areas. One of four main ways is to manage impacts of motorized recreation vehicles by restricting use to designated roads, trails, or areas. In conjunction with the release of the 2005 Travel Management Rule; Chief Bosworth committed to implementing this rule by the end of December 2009. **This project is part of that commitment.**

36 CFR 212.55 contain general and specific criteria for the responsible official to consider in designating roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use. These criteria are largely taken from Executive Order 11644 (as amended by EO 11989). Since the language of the Executive Order addresses trails and areas (rather than roads), the criteria for designating roads and trails differ from each other.

The Travel Management Rule makes a key clarification of the Executive Order in this section. The Executive Order says "areas and trails *shall be located to minimize*" damage to soils, harassment of wildlife, conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses, etc. The rule says "the responsible official *shall consider effects on the following, with the objective of minimizing.*" The preamble explains:

*The Department believes this language is consistent with EO 11644 and better expresses its intent. It is the intent of EO 11644 that motor vehicle use of trails and areas on Federal lands be managed to address environmental and other impacts, but that motor vehicle use on Federal lands continue in appropriate locations. An extreme interpretation of "minimize" would preclude any use at all, since impacts always can be reduced further by preventing them altogether. Such an interpretation would not reflect the full context of EO 11644 or other laws and policies related to multiple use of National Forest System lands.*

### **Designation Process for the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest**

To meet these regulations, the RRSNF began the first steps of the 4-year designation process in spring of 2006 and is targeting completion in December of 2009. Following the environmental analysis process, the RRSNF will produce a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) displaying roads, trails and areas open for motorized use across the approximately 1.8 million acres of Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest lands in Southern Oregon.

The process of inventory, designation, and public participation is guided by a national protocol. This national protocol is known as the "OHV Route Inventory and Designation Guide" which was developed by a Forest Service Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Implementation Team.

#### **Major steps in the process include:**

1. Compile existing travel management direction
2. Assemble resource and social data
3. Use travel analysis to identify proposals for change
4. Environmental analysis and decision making
5. Publish motor vehicle use map
6. Implement, monitor, and revise

This document and process are associated with Step 4, to result in Step 5. Preliminary analyses (Steps 1 through 3) are discussed in Chapter II. Step 6 would occur after a decision is made.

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## **B. LOCATION AND SETTING**

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Located in southwestern Oregon and extending into California, the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest ranges from the crest of the Cascades Mountains west into the Siskiyou Mountains, nearly to the Pacific Ocean. The Forest covers approximately 1.8 million acres; portions of the Applegate and Illinois River drainages extend into northern California. The Rogue River drains over 75 percent of the Forest's land area.

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest features a Supervisor's Office located in Medford, OR and five Ranger District Offices including: High Cascades, Siskiyou Mountains, Wild Rivers, Gold Beach, and Powers. Field offices remain in the communities of Prospect, Butte Falls, Ashland, Ruch, Grants Pass, Cave Junction, Brookings, Gold Beach, and Powers. The Forest also is home of the J. Herbert Stone Nursery located near Central Point.

The Rogue River National Forest (until 1932 called the Crater National Forest) was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. The name Rogue River commemorates the Takelma Indians, whose defense of their homeland led early day French-Canadian trappers to call them les Coquins, "the Rogues". The Siskiyou Forest Reserve was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905, and the Reserve was designated as the Siskiyou National Forest in 1907. The name Siskiyou is a Cree Indian word for bob-tailed horse (bestowed in 1828 by French Canadians working for the Hudson Bay Company).

The Forest itself is composed of two distinct geological provinces: The Cascade Range and the Klamath Mountains. The Cascade Range is dominated by snow capped volcanic peaks such as 9,495 foot Mt. McLoughlin located within the Sky Lakes Wilderness on the High Cascades Ranger District. The Klamath area embodies the most complex soils, geology, landscape, and plant communities in the Pacific Northwest. World-class wild rivers, biological diversity, remarkable fisheries resources, and complex watersheds define the Klamath.

The Rogue River-Siskiyou is one of the most floristically diverse National Forests in the country with some extraordinary botanical resources, and is home to incredible wild and scenic rivers, isolated wilderness, outstanding fisheries and wildlife resources, and breath-taking landscapes of mountains, meadows, streams, and lakes. Recreational opportunities abound on the Forest, from white water rafting to wilderness camping, from lake and stream fishing to winter snowmobiling. Hundreds of miles of trails welcome users of all types and abilities - wheelchairs, horses, bicycles, motorcycles, snow-mobiles, cross-country and downhill skiers, and hikers.

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## **C. SCOPE AND SCALE**

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The prohibition on use of motor vehicles off of designated routes or areas will become effective when the MVUM is published. The need to move quickly to complete the designation process was recognized early and broad spectrums of interest groups support this goal. In order to expedite designation and avoid process gridlock, route and area designation was guided by the following considerations:

- **For the RRSNF, this project and its analysis has focused on the change from the current situation.** A tightly focused process was enacted; this includes a focused site-specific proposal that does not aim to solve all travel management issues at once. For example, this process does not analyze all existing system roads nor make recommendations on road decommissioning. This process does not aim to comply with 36 CFR 212 Subpart A (§212.5); other site-specific analyses and projects will undertake this compliance requirement. This project's focus is on the designation of motorized use for roads, trails and areas.
- A complete inventory of user-created routes was determined to not be necessary. Only the information needed to evaluate proposed changes in travel management direction was gathered.
- There is no requirement to reconsider decisions made prior to the Travel Management Rule. An analysis of the transportation system was used to identify narrowly tailored proposals to change travel management direction, and conduct environmental analysis only when and where necessary. A decision to construct a route, add a route to the Forest transportation system, or change authorization of or prohibitions on motor vehicle use on a route or in an area is subject to environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The administrative action of displaying a designated route or area as open on a Motor Vehicle Use Map is not.

#### **NEPA Strategy for the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest**

For the RRSNF, this project and its environmental analysis is documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The strategy for the context and scale for conducting NEPA includes one Proposed Action at the scale of entire respective Forests, including Forest Plan Amendments.

The Forest Supervisor is the Line Officer/Responsible Official for the forthcoming decision(s); the RRSNF has conducted analysis with one process and one interdisciplinary team planning effort for the entire Forest. Much of the analysis was done from the Forest perspective and utilized Forest-level staff and specialists on the Interdisciplinary Team.

Specific analysis has focused on the areas represented by the four Motorized Vehicle Use Maps, e.g., High Cascades Ranger District, Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District, Wild Rivers Ranger District, and the Gold Beach and Powers Ranger Districts. Specific development of proposals, and evaluation and analysis has involved District Rangers and their respective resource staff and specialists.

## **D. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION**

The *purpose* for action is to enact the Travel Management Rule. Motorized use is popular and an important form of recreation for many individuals, families, and groups. A designated and managed system is *needed* to provide this use. Increased demand for motorized use, lack of designated areas/routes, and the inconsistent direction contained in the Forest Plans, has led to resource damage and social impacts, user conflicts, and safety concerns.

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## E. PROPOSED ACTION

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**The following is a summary of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action (Alternative 3) is discussed in detail in Chapter II.**

Based on the stated purpose and need for action and as a result of the recent analysis of the transportation system, the Forest proposes to:

- Identify approximately 3,470 miles of road where mixed use would be allowed. Mixed use is defined as designation of a National Forest System (NFS) road for use by both highway-legal and non-highway-legal motor vehicles;
- Construct motorized trails to provide loop route opportunities (approximately 2 miles);
- Convert approximately 23 miles of NFS roads to motorized trails;
- Identify two areas where off-road motorized use is allowed. This includes continued use of the Woodruff area near Prospect and the development of an additional area near Willow Lake. Both areas are located on the High Cascades Ranger District;
- Prohibit motorized public access on approximately 31<sup>1</sup> miles of roads and 35 miles of trail currently open in order to minimize or reduce resource damage, and
- Enact Forest Plan amendments to allow consistency with the Travel Management Rule and change currently inconsistent Forest Plan direction. The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest is guided by two separate Forest Plans.

This proposal focuses on the analysis of specific wheeled motorized vehicle routes and areas. The Proposed Action is being carried forward in accordance with the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR Part 212 Subpart B).

In accordance with the rule and following a decision on this proposal, the Forest would publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) identifying all Forest roads, trails and areas that are designated open for motor vehicle use by the public. The MVUM shall specify the classes of vehicles and, if appropriate, the times of year for which use is authorized. The MVUM would be updated and published annually (or more frequently if needed) when changes to the Forest's transportation system are made. Future decisions associated with changes to the MVUM may trigger the need for documentation of additional environmental analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> PLEASE NOTE: acreages and mileages presented throughout this document are approximate, whether noted as such or not. They may have been rounded to the nearest whole number, or minor mapping adjustments may have caused slight differences. Any minor differences do not affect the analysis.

## F. DECISION FRAMEWORK

The Forest Supervisor will make a number of decisions to achieve the Purpose and Need and address the identified issues and to improve the overall health of the land. He may select any alternative, or a combination of the alternatives. The decisions to be made include whether or not to:

- prohibit public motorized use on certain roads,
- convert certain currently closed roads to motorized trails,
- construct/reconstruct motorized trails,
- allow motorized mixed use on certain paved roads,
- prohibit motorized use on certain trails,
- restrict motorized mixed use on certain roads,
- eliminate motorized cross country travel, or
- enact Forest-wide Land and Resource Management Plan amendments to enable consistency with the Travel Management Rule and Standards and Guidelines.

Although State and private lands are included within the analysis area (the entire RRSNF), the decision to be made is only for National Forest System lands and Forest System roads and trails. No decision will be made for State and County roads, and other roads not under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service.

No decision is necessary to continue motorized use of NFS roads and trails where it is currently authorized or otherwise not prohibited. This decision does not affect management direction set through laws, regulations, executive orders, national and regional Forest Service policy, or other separate amendments to the Rogue River or Siskiyou National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans.

## G. MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

Land management direction for the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest is contained in two Land and Resource Management Plans; one for the Siskiyou National Forest (1989) and the other for the Rogue River National Forest (1990) as amended by *The Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, and now commonly known as the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP).

This ROD, jointly signed by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, amended the Rogue River and Siskiyou National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans and other existing plans within the range of the northern spotted owl. This amendment, which became effective on May 20, 1994, provided additional goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for resource management.

A Land Management Plan (or Forest Plan) is a dynamic management plan that provides integrated direction reflecting decisions, plans, and assessments made at various scales and times. It describes desired future conditions, goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines--collectively referred to as "management direction"--for a specific National Forest. Changes in management direction are incorporated in proposed amendments to the plan that add, delete, and modify items of programmatic direction.

Forest Plan goals and desired future conditions provide a vision to move toward and consider in future landscape assessments and site-specific projects. Standards and Guidelines provide reasonable assurance that adequate environmental safeguards are considered and incorporated in future site-specific projects.

When a Forest Plan is first written, a programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) and Forest Plan document incorporating applicable law, regulation, and policy and direction from the Regional Guide is prepared, and a record of decision (ROD) signed. All future actions are to be carried out within the constraints of the Forest Plan. Any changes to the Forest Plan are made in the form of an amendment.

Pursuant to CEQ 1502.20, this DEIS is tiered to the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Siskiyou and Rogue River National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plans as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*. The Proposed Action and alternatives described in this analysis for the entire Forest, occurs within the following land allocations.

## 1. Northwest Forest Plan (1994)

The ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan specifically incorporates seven land allocation categories, as set forth below (from Northwest Forest Plan ROD pages 6, 7):

**Congressionally Reserved Areas** are lands that have been reserved by acts of Congress for specific land allocation purposes. The ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan does not alter any of these congressionally mandated land allocations. As applicable to the RRSNF, included in this category are National Parks and Monuments, Wilderness, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

**Late-Successional Reserves**, in combination with the other allocations and standards and guidelines, are designed to maintain a functional, interactive, late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystem. They are designed to serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth related species including the northern spotted owl.

**Adaptive Management Areas (AMAs)** are areas designed to develop and test new management approaches to integrate and achieve ecological, economic, and other social and community objectives. The Forest Service and BLM work with other organizations, government entities and private landowners in accomplishing those objectives. Each area has a different emphasis to its prescription, such as maximizing the amount of late-successional forests, improving riparian conditions through silvicultural treatments, and maintaining a predictable flow of harvestable timber and other forest products. A portion of the timber harvest comes from this land.

**Managed Late-Successional Areas** are lands either (1) mapped managed pair areas; or (2) unmapped protection buffers. Managed pair areas are delineated for known northern spotted owl activity centers. Protection buffers are designed to protect certain rare and locally endemic species.

**Administratively Withdrawn Areas** are identified in current Forest and District plans and include recreational and visual areas, back country, and other areas not scheduled for timber harvest.

**Riparian Reserves** are areas along all streams, wetlands, ponds, lakes, and unstable or potentially unstable areas where the conservation of aquatic and riparian-dependent terrestrial resources receives primary emphasis. The main purpose of the reserves is to protect the health of the aquatic system and its dependent species; the reserves also provide incidental benefits to upland species. These reserves help maintain and restore riparian structures and functions, benefit fish and riparian-dependent non-fish species, enhance habitat conservation for organisms dependent on the transition zone between upslope and riparian areas, improve travel and dispersal corridors for terrestrial animals and plants, and provide for greater connectivity of late-successional forest habitat.

**Matrix** is the federal land outside the six categories of designated areas set forth above. It is also the area in which most timber harvest and other silvicultural activities are conducted. However, the matrix does contain non-forested areas as well as forested areas that may be technically unsuited for timber production.

## **2. Siskiyou Land and Resource Management Plan (1989)**

The National Forest System land within the Siskiyou National Forest was assigned to fourteen management areas, each with different management goals, resource potential and limitations. Except for Congressionally established or special administrative boundaries, the management area boundaries are not firm lines and do not always follow easily found topographic features, such as major ridges. The boundaries represent a transition from one set of opportunities and constraints to another with management direction established for each. The boundaries are flexible to assure the values identified are protected, and to incorporate additional information gained from further on-the-ground reconnaissance and project-level planning.

The Forest-wide management direction (LRMP IV 20 through 64) including the Standards and Guidelines, apply to all management areas unless specifically excepted in the management area prescription. The Standards and Guidelines of individual management area prescriptions are only to define exceptions to, or additions to the Forest-wide direction. The following Figure contains a listing of the 14 management prescriptions for the Siskiyou portion of the Forest.

**Figure I-2. Management Area Prescriptions - Siskiyou National Forest 1989**

- 1 Wilderness
- 2 Wild River
- 3 Research Natural Area
- 4 Botanical
- 5 Unique Interest
- 6 Backcountry Recreation
- 7 Supplemental Resource
- 8 Designated Wildlife Habitat
- 9 Special Wildlife Site
- 10 Scenic/Recreation River
- 11 Riparian
- 12 Retention Visual
- 13 Partial Retention Visual
- 14 General Forest

from SNF LRMP IV-14

### **3. Rogue River Land and Resource Management Plan (1990)**

The National Forest System land within the Rogue River National Forest was assigned to twenty-four management areas, each with different management goals, resource potential and limitations, and each with an accompanying Management Strategy. Each Area has different resource goals, opportunities, Standards and Guidelines. In essence, it is a unit of land to be managed to achieve a desired future condition. This is accomplished by the application of its corresponding Management Strategy, or “prescription”

**Figure I-3. Management Areas - Rogue River National Forest 1990**

- Wilderness (13)
- Wild River (10)
- Research Natural Area (25)
- Botanical Area (12)
- Special Interest Area (5)
- Developed Recreation (4)
- Backcountry Non-motorized (3)
- Restricted Watershed (22)
- Spotted Owl Habitat (19)
- Old-Growth (15)
- Restricted Riparian (26)
- Scenic River (11)
- Foreground Retention (6)

- Foreground Partial Retention (7)
- Middle Ground Retention (8)
- Mature (16)
- Middleground Partial Retention (9)
- Big-game Winter Range (14)
- Managed Watershed (23)
- Timber Suitable 2 (21)
- Timber Suitable 1 (20)
- Primary Range (17)
- Secondary Range (18)
- Minimum Management (1)

from RRNF LRMP 4-31

## **H. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The goals of the public involvement efforts were to contact and involve members of the public, user and interest groups, local community groups, elected officials, Forest Service employees, and other federal/state or local agencies to share information and involve people in a timely manner on the development of the Forest’s Motorized Vehicle Use designation process. The priority for the Forest Service was to provide proactive communications and involvement in travel management planning.

### **Community Interest and Involvement**

Forest Service personnel held open house public meetings in Oregon beginning on June 4 in Medford, at the Rogue Regency Inn & Suites; June 5 in Grants Pass, at the Grants Pass Interagency Office-Wild Rivers Ranger District Office; June 7 in Gold Beach, at the Event Center on the Beach-Curry County Fairgrounds; and ending on June 20 in Myrtle Point, at the OSU Extension Service Coos County. The objective of each meeting was to inform local residents of the travel management project, and provide an opportunity for them to visit with Forest Service staff to ask questions and learn about the timeline for implementation. These open houses were listening sessions, and an occasion for motorized and non-motorized users alike to get involved early, as the Forest Service started to gather information for the project.

Letters were sent to members of the public who had voiced an interest in the project, and flyers were available at the Supervisor's Office and throughout the five districts of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, which invited all interested publics to attend these meetings. In addition, a press release was issued, and information was available and posted on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest website.

### **Individual and Group Briefings**

From June 2007 to October 2008, individual briefings by Forest Service personnel were offered to groups interested in learning more about the project, including both motorized and non-motorized points of view. Throughout the project planning efforts, the Project Team Leader, Forest Public Affairs Officer and the Forest's Project Planners and Analysts were responsible for responding directly to public inquiries by telephone or in person.

The Travel Management team met with RRSNF personnel and presented the Travel Management Rule at District all-employee meetings, as well as to District Rangers, Staff Officers, and at Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Leadership Team meeting updates.

### **Interagency and Elected Official Briefings**

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest held discussion and dialogue with neighboring Forests and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) District Offices including: the Umpqua, Fremont-Winema, Six Rivers, and Klamath National Forest(s); as well as Roseburg, Coos Bay, Lakeview and Medford BLM Districts.

Periodic meetings and telephone call briefings of the project efforts and status were held with local elected officials including County Commissioners, and with local Congressional staffs. In addition, letters from the Forest Service with information about travel management planning were sent to the Oregon Department of Forestry, Douglas Forest Protection Association and Coos Forest Protection Association.

### **Tribal Relations**

Under the Forest Service's government-to-government consultation responsibilities, the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest shared information with seven federally recognized sovereign Indian tribes regarding the upcoming Travel Management Planning efforts. Tribal-government representatives and Tribal members from the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde Community of Oregon, Coquille Indian Tribe, Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians, The Klamath Tribes, Quartz Valley Indian Reservation, and Smith River Rancheria were invited to participate in the project, attend the open house meetings and visit the web site for additional information.

## **Communication Tools**

In May 2007 the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest's Internet Website for Travel Management "went live". This site contains information that allows individuals and groups to learn more about the project efforts and how to become involved. It helps to improve communications and expand public interest about the project. Maps illustrating the Proposed Action were made available at the Ranger Districts or Supervisor's Office, and on the Forest Website: [www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/projects/travel](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/projects/travel)

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest has established and maintained communication materials on the travel management process since the project's inception. This includes producing news releases for local media (see below), briefing papers for Congressional staffs and County Commissioners, and information sheets available for public handouts at the front desks of the Supervisor's Office and Districts. These communication materials explain and inform the public about the project's background, timeline, and a variety of opportunities for public involvement throughout the project.

The Forest Public Affairs Officer distributed news releases to the Medford Mail Tribune, Ashland Daily Tidings, Grants Pass Daily Courier, Curry Coastal Pilot, Curry County Reporter, Coos Bay World and the Myrtle Point Herald newspapers. Local radio and television stations were also included to notify the community of any public meetings and to inform individuals and groups regarding project updates. Telephone calls from the Public Affairs Officer and project Team Leader were also made to individual reporters.

## **1. Scoping Process**

Scoping is the name for the process used to determine the extent of the environmental analysis to be conducted. It is used early in the NEPA process to identify (1) the issues to be addressed, (2) the depth of analysis required, (3) alternatives to the Proposed Action, and (4) potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action. This DEIS has been developed with extensive public participation. The public involvement requirements of NEPA (40 CFR 1501.7) have been employed in order to develop and publish a DEIS for release to an informed public.

In August 2008, the formal process under NEPA was initiated. A scoping letter and Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was mailed to all interested publics having been involved in the initial sensing process, describing the Proposed Action and Purpose and Need for the Project.

In addition, Scoping Letters were sent to other agencies such as Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Parks and Recreation, Medford Water Commission, U.S. Geological Survey, Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, NOAA Fisheries, Bureau of Land Management, and various city and county government entities in southwest Oregon and northwest California.

The Scoping process for this project officially began with the issuance of a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement published in the Federal Register on August 26 2008 (FR page 50299-50301). A Scoping Letter was sent to approximately 700 individuals, businesses, and organizations on August 27, 2008.

Government-to-Government consultation letters were mailed on August 18, 2008 to Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community, the Klamath Tribes, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Smith River Rancheria, Coquille Tribal Council, and to the Quartz Valley Indian Tribe.

## **2. Significant Issues**

Issues are defined in this environmental analysis as points of discussion, debate, or dispute about the environmental effects of a proposal. Significant Issues as used in this environmental analysis are those that are used to formulate alternatives or drive alternative themes, evaluate alternatives, affect the design of component proposals, prescribe mitigation measures, and/or describe important and variable environmental effects. They are significant because of the extent of their geographic consequence, the duration of the effects, or the intensity of interest or resource conflict.

NEPA requires Federal agencies to focus analysis and documentation on the Significant Issues related to the Proposed Action. The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT), with Responsible Official involvement and approval, has identified the following as Significant Issues associated with the motorized use proposals presented in this analysis. This list is presented in a format that intends to ask the question “what action may have what effect, on what resource or value?”

Each Significant Issue statement contains a reference (Chapter and Section of this document, in parenthesis) for where in the document a description or discussion of the effects of each alternative considered in detail is located, relevant to the stated issue. Indicators are developed in Chapter III of this DEIS, as well as current condition background and consequences of each alternative analyzed in detail. A summary of the consequences of each alternative considered in detail in relation to these issues is contained at the end of Chapter II, Alternatives (Table II-12).

### *Water Quality and Erosion*

**Will motorized vehicle use on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (especially motorized trails) affect water quality via erosion or sediment delivery to streams or riparian areas? (III, C, 1)**

### *Botanical Areas and Special Plant Habitats*

**Will motorized vehicle use on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest affect Botanical Areas and/or special botanical habitats such as serpentine terrain, meadows, fens, and bogs? (III, C, 2)**

### *Public Safety*

**Will motorized vehicle use on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest create use conflicts or affect public safety? (III, C, 3)**

## *Motorized Opportunities*

**Will proposed actions create a lack of motorized recreation opportunities, especially loops, connecting routes, and destinations, or create a loss of current opportunities? (III, C, 4)**

## *Roadless Character within Inventoried Roadless Areas*

**Will motorized vehicle use on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (especially motorized trails) affect roadless character within Inventoried Roadless Areas? (III, C, 5)**

### **3. Other Issues**

Other Issues as used in this environmental analysis are those that have been determined to be relevant, are used to disclose consequences, may affect design of component actions, may prescribe mitigation measures, or whose disclosure of environmental effects are required by law or policy. Other Issues as used in this environmental analysis differ from Significant Issues in that they often describe minor and/or non-variable consequences.

This list is limited to those issues that specifically identify potential effects that may result from implementation of elements of the Proposed Action; their corresponding effects are documented in this DEIS. Issues that are related to satisfying Federal, State, and local requirements and standards (e.g., Threatened and Endangered species or air quality) are also included.

This list is also presented in a format that intends to ask the question “what action may have what effect, on what resource or value?” Each Other Issue statement also contains a reference (Chapter and Section of this document, in parenthesis) for where in the document a description or discussion of the effects of each alternative considered in detail is located, relevant to the stated issue. The consequences of each alternative considered in detail, in relation to these issues are also summarized at the end of Chapter II, Alternatives (Table II-13).

#### **Soils - Site Productivity**

**Will motorized vehicle use affect soils or site productivity? (III, D, 1)**

#### **Aquatic Conservation Strategy**

**Will motorized vehicle use affect attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives associated with the Northwest Forest Plan? (III, D, 2)**

#### **Air Quality - Vehicle Emissions**

**Will motorized vehicle use affect air quality or human health via vehicle emissions? (III, D, 3)**

#### **Air Quality - Dust and Asbestos**

**Will motorized vehicle use affect air quality or human health via dust or naturally occurring asbestos? (III, D, 4)**

## Fire Risk

**Will motorized vehicle use affect the risk of human caused fires or affect access for fire suppression? (III, D, 5)**

## Federally Listed and Forest Service Sensitive Plants

**Will motorized vehicle use on (especially motorized trails) affect rare, sensitive or federally listed botanical species? (III, D, 6)**

## Invasive Non-native Plants

**Will motorized vehicle use on (especially motorized trails) affect the spread of invasive non-native plants? (III, D, 7)**

## Invasive Pathogens

**Will motorized vehicle use (especially motorized trails) affect the spread of invasive pathogens, e.g., *Phytophthora lateralis* and *Phytophthora ramorum*? (III, D, 8)**

## Terrestrial Wildlife Listed Species

**Will motorized vehicle use affect wildlife species federally listed as Threatened or Forest Service Sensitive species? (III, D, 9)**

## Management Indicator Species

**Will motorized vehicle use affect species identified as LRMP Management Indicator Species, especially deer and elk within Big Game Winter Range areas? (III, D, 10)**

## Other Special or Rare and Uncommon Terrestrial Wildlife

**Will motorized vehicle use affect other special or rare and uncommon terrestrial wildlife species or neotropical birds? (III, D, 11)**

## Fisheries and Aquatic Species

**Will motorized vehicle use affect fish (native and anadromous) or other aquatic species? (III, D, 12)**

## Visuals

**Will motorized vehicle use affect scenic quality or affect attainment of visual quality objectives? (III, D, 13)**

## Sound Level

**Will motorized use physically affect human hearing or affect human solitude? (III, D, 14)**

## Enforcement

**Will proposed actions affect the Agency's' ability to enforce public compliance with laws? (III, D, 15)**

## Cultural Resources

**Will motorized vehicle use affect heritage or cultural resources or Native American values? (III, D, 16)**

## Climate Change

**Will motorized vehicle use affect climate change (greenhouse gas emissions and carbon cycling) and will global climate change affect this use? (III, D, 17)**

## 4. Out of Scope Issues

There were several issues identified during scoping as being non-significant and “out of the scope” of this environmental analysis. These issues include those that are not or cannot be addressed or solved in this project-level analysis, issues already decided by law, regulation, or other higher level decisions, issues irrelevant to the decision to be made, and/or issues that are conjectural or not supported by scientific evidence. These issues are listed along with a rationale for their being determined “out of scope”, as follows.

### **Criticism of 2005 Rule and Forest Service Travel Management Policies**

The implication in this statement has no direct application to the NEPA process being conducted for travel management under the Travel Management Rule. The Forest Service has responsibility to enact actions under public law (in this case, Travel Management) and does not take a position on the appropriateness of the laws themselves. While all citizens are entitled to their opinion, criticism of the laws is not germane to this analysis.

### **Must analyze all roads and trails to determine the most efficient system per 36 CFR 212 subpart A**

36 CFR §212.5 requires that a responsible official identify the minimum road system for safe and efficient travel. Note that this requirement does not include trails. This regulation also requires a science-based roads analysis.

As stated throughout this process, identification or “rightsizing” of the entire road system is neither a goal nor part of the analysis conducted for designation of motorized vehicle use on the RRSNF. The purpose of the Travel Management Rule is to designate a system of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use (other than over-snow vehicle use) and end unmanaged cross-country motor vehicle use.

The rule is not intended to require reevaluation of the entire Forest transportation system. This process does not analyze all existing system roads nor make recommendations on road decommissioning. Other site-specific analyses and projects will undertake this compliance requirement. This project's focus is on the identification of motorized use for roads, trails and areas.

### **Must rely on roads analysis**

A science based roads analysis was conducted and documented in 2004 for the Forest. It was used to inform the analysis for this process. A complete inventory of user-created routes was determined to not be necessary. Only the information needed to evaluate proposed changes in travel management direction was gathered. A formal report on the minimum road system was not prepared.

### **Consider the cumulative effects of all Forest Service and federal agency motorized use closures**

Some commenters feel that motorized recreational opportunity has been and will be drastically reduced throughout the region. They suggest the Proposed Action continues the trend of eliminating opportunity for vehicle-based recreation. Additional closures are being proposed by land managers across the region and nation. They feel that the cumulative loss of motorized recreational opportunity should be brought into the analysis and incorporated into the decision making process. Significance criteria could include number of miles closed, number of acres closed or other similar quantifiers.

This issue is considered out of scope because this issue cannot be solved with a single project analysis for one Forest. The context for this analysis is the entire RRSNF. The analysis will include a brief description of the current travel management activities on adjacent public lands. This analysis cannot account or foresee all ongoing travel management planning projects on all public lands in the region or nation.

### **Analyze social, economic (cost/benefit) issues associated with motorized recreation**

NEPA does not require Federal agencies to prepare cost-benefit analyses as part of an Environmental Impact Statement (40 CFR 1502.23). The factors related to social issues (in addition to environmental resources) that are relevant to this analysis have been included in the analysis in this Draft EIS.

### **Must analyze the adverse effects on adjacent private land values**

There are many factors related to the economic or personal value of private lands. There is no meaningfully quantifiable way to predict the effect of motorized use on private land values. This analysis is specific to the actions and alternatives being proposed that are within the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

### **Must analyze costs of enforcement, monitoring, signage, gating, staff time, maps, mitigation (restoration of damaged sites)**

While there will be discussion in the analysis on enforcement, the overall costs of the current condition or of the alternatives or the decision is not considered to be in scope of the analysis. Enacting the Travel Management Rule is Forest Service policy and direction. A relative comparison of effects regarding enforcement will be made but a detailed cost accounting of elements like these will not be made.

### **Must analyze effects on grazing and minerals**

Commenters asked for analysis of the effects on grazing, mining and other special uses. This issue is out of scope because there would be no effects resultant of any Action Alternative under this process; special uses, permitted actions and other authorized actions would continue as is the situation currently. The MVUM would not specify these special authorizations for motorized uses.

### **How does RS 2477 fit in with this process?**

Revised Statute 2477 is a law from 1866, providing (granting) right of way across public lands. These rights often predate the establishment of the National Forest. Comments were received that expressed concern that rights (particularly access for mining) were being precluded, based on an assumption that roads potentially qualifying as RS 2477, were being closed.

As noted above, this project is not evaluating the entire Forest Transportation System, nor is it making recommendations for road closing or decommissioning. Rights granted under this statute are not being affected or changed. For the RRSNF, no specific routes were identified as qualifying for RS 2477. The MVUM would designate roads available for public motorized use. Other (special) uses are not being precluded. Because there is no change (no effect) this issue is considered out of scope.

### **Mountain bike enthusiasts create bike trails that can be used by motorcycles**

This statement reflects a real situation that can occur on the National Forest; however there are no situations where trails created by mountain bikes are being proposed to be authorized as motorized trails. If existing mountain bike trails were being used by motorized vehicles on routes not designated in the MVUM, this would be an unauthorized and illegal use. It is not in scope to this process because unauthorized or illegal use is not being analyzed.

### **Consider requirements of PL 105-359 (outdoor recreation by persons with disabilities)**

Commenters ask what about motorized use for older Americans in poor health or with disabilities? While this law is generically applicable to this process, it is not specifically a design criteria or issue that is analyzed. Federal laws, regulations, and policies do not require areas that prohibit motorized vehicle use to make exceptions because a person has a disability.

### **Analyze effects on other semi-primitive unroaded areas**

This issue is in reference to areas without roads, typically 1,000 acres or greater, that may possess special natural character. These areas are not part of Inventoried Roadless Areas, as discussed in Appendix C of each Land and Resource Management Plan for the Rogue River and Siskiyou National Forest.

This issue is out of scope because 1) there are no motorized uses being proposed in semi-primitive areas that do not already exist, and 2) there is no requirement to identify and analyze these types of areas.

### **Why is motorized over-snow use not being analyzed?**

Over snow use is part of 36 CFR 212 subpart C. There is no requirement to analyze this type use under the Travel Management Rule (Subpart B) § 212.51; Designation of roads, trails, and areas (also see § 212.81). The reason it is not being done and considered out of scope to this process is because of the differences in the purpose and need and environmental effects associated with over-snow use. This use could be specifically analyzed with another separate process in the future, if there is a need.

**There are inconsistencies from latest process maps and data to earlier or previously existing maps and data**

This statement is considered out of scope because while there may be differences, the process begun in 2006 for the Forest has strived for accuracy and many elements of previous mapping and data have been updated, even among versions within this process. The public is asked to assume that data and maps presented in the DEIS represent the latest and most accurate information available and have employed the principles of the Data Quality Act (PL106-554).

**OHV grant money used to conduct the travel management process represents a conflict of interest.**

The Forest made a request for state grant money from Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department (OHV grant funding) in January 2008. These funds are to be used for motorized use planning. There is no commitment, agreement or guarantee associated with these funds to provide any quantity or type of motorized or OHV uses. They simply are used to supplement federal appropriated funding to support planning. Funds were needed because there has been no specially appropriated funds to conduct an analysis of the transportation system for this designation process; Forest funding sources include Forest roads and trails appropriated funds, which are the same funds that are used for administration and maintenance of existing access facilities.

As part of the designation process, advice was provided by the Forest Service that suggested that a mix of appropriated funding could be used to conduct this process. This advice is applicable for federally appropriated funds from Congress; there is no prohibition on a Forest requesting grant monies to supplement the motorized-use planning process. State grants associated with this process allow an approximate 50/50 match with appropriated funds.

**NEPA Process: Separate EISs, one for RRNF and SNF**

Comments received during scoping suggested that the designation process be separated between the Rogue River and Siskiyou portion of the National Forest. This could facilitate the separate Forest Plans that may need to be amended, and there are some resource issues that are specific to each Forest (e.g., Port-Orford-Cedar root disease). This was considered but was abandoned due to the additional cost of two separate processes. These costs would include separate NEPA public involvement processes and resultant decisions. This comment is out of scope because the current process has clearly stated its parameters for conducting the process, beginning with the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register.

**Federal funding for recreation and maintenance**

Comments received expressed concern for the lack of recreation facility maintenance and road maintenance. Concern was expressed that motorized use is receiving more attention than non-motorized uses. Concern was expressed that this lack of funding should not be used as a criterion for forthcoming decisions for Travel Management.

All of these funding related comments are considered out of scope to this designation process. The MVUM is designed to be a cost efficient way to designate use and funding associated with administration of designated uses (or lack thereof) will not be a decision criterion for these use designations.

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## I. PERMITS

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In accordance with 40 CFR 1502.25 (b), the Environmental Impact Statement is to list all Federal permits, licenses, or other entitlements that must be obtained in implementing the proposal. Throughout the planning process, no additional Federal, State or County permits, licenses, or other entitlements were identified as requirements for implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives.

The Travel Management Rule prohibits the use of motor vehicles by the public off the designated system as well as use of motor vehicles on routes and in areas that are not designated. Persons exempt from the final rule prohibitions would be those with a permit specifically authorizing access. Special uses, permitted actions and other authorized actions would continue as is currently. The MVUM would not specify these special authorizations for motorized uses.

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