

## The Malheur National Forest

will soon be seeking public comments on its Access and Travel Management Environmental Assessment (EA).

The EA evaluates a no-action alternative and three action alternatives.

The four alternatives will be displayed in detail on a map covering the entire Malheur National Forest. The EA and associated map showing the alternatives will be available online at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur>

Copies of the EA and map will also be available for review at the following locations:

➔ **Malheur National Forest offices, 7:45 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.**

- **Supervisor's Office**  
431 Patterson Bridge Road  
John Day, OR 97845
- **Emigrant Creek Ranger District,**  
265 Highway 20 South  
Hines, OR 97738
- **Prairie City Ranger District**  
Fire Warehouse  
156 N. Johnson Street  
Prairie City, OR 97869  
(Fridays only)

➔ **Grant County Library**  
507 John Day-Burns Highway  
John Day, OR 97845

➔ **Harney County Library**  
80 West D Street  
Burns, OR 97720

➔ **North Fork John Day Watershed Council**  
695 North Highway 39  
Long Creek, OR 97856

**Comment period** for the EA provides the public an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to the Forest making a decision. The 30-day comment period starts with the legal notice in the Blue Mountain Eagle and Burns Times Herald. Those who provide substantive comments by the close of the comment period will be eligible to appeal the decision. The appeal must state how the decision violates law, regulation, policy, or how the responsible official failed to consider substantive comments.

When the Access and Travel Management EA is available for comments, information on how to provide comments will be provided to the public.

For more information about the project, please contact Rick Vetter or Lori Bailey, Environmental Coordinators, at (541)573-4300.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service • Pacific Northwest Region

## Malheur National Forest

### Access and Travel Management Update July 2011



The Malheur National Forest is complying with the 2005 Travel Management Rule by preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for its Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM). It is expected to be released in the next few months for public comment. Comments provided will help shape the Decision and may provide for additional motorized vehicle travel opportunities, such as motorized trails systems, in the future.

The Access and Travel Management analysis was initiated in 2010. Public comments received during the scoping process were used in developing alternatives for the EA. The Travel Management Decision, expected to be released this winter would restrict unregulated cross-country travel, identify areas where motorized travel would be allowed off of designated roads and trails as well as allow for motorized access for dispersed camping.

**Important facts:**

- Currently, approximately 5,800 miles of road and 38 miles of trail are designated open and are available to motorized travel on the Malheur National Forest.
- Access for firewood gathering would continue to be allowed as outlined in the terms and conditions of the Personal Use Firewood Permit. Access for emergency operations, special uses, range allotments, and mining claims would continue to be designated through permits and operating plans.
- Unregulated cross-country travel would be restricted as ordered by the final 2005 National Travel Rule.
- Roads are not being closed under this ATM project to meet road density standards. Road closures to meet road density standards for wildlife and/or other resource objectives may occur during site specific



project planning which is an ongoing activity on the Forest and part of NEPA.

- Forest officials recognize that there are roads that have been closed through previous NEPA decisions or Code of Federal Regulation Closure Orders that may not be apparent to the visiting public due to signs, gates, or berms being vandalized and/or displaced. As a result, visitors to the Forest have continued to drive on some of these closed roads.
- The Decision will address resource management concerns, while continuing to provide access to places across the Forest that visitors enjoy. The Access and Travel Management Plan will protect salmon, steelhead, and trout streams, and enhance wildlife habitat.
- Once the Decision is issued, the agency will publish and distribute Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) which will be updated annually. These maps will be free to the public and will aid visitors with identifying the designated motorized road and trail system on the Forest.
- The Motor Vehicle Use Maps will identify all roads that are designated open to motorized travel, thus helping the public to assist us with protecting big game habitat as well as fisheries habitat by utilizing only those roads intended for motorized travel.
- Information regarding Access and Travel Management Planning is available on the Malheur NF's website: [www.fs.usda.gov/malheur](http://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur).

**Key Messages**

The Malheur National Forest Access and Travel Management Plan:

- Would not close any of the 5,800 miles of road and 38 miles of trail currently available for motorized travel on the Forest.
- Would designate areas for motorized travel and allow for motorized access for dispersed camping.
- Would be developed based on public input.
- Would address resource management concerns, helping to restore watersheds.
- Would improve protection for salmon, steelhead, and trout streams.
- Would improve conditions for a variety of wildlife.
- Would be adjusted over time as monitoring identifies changes that would improve the Plan.

**Again, the Decision would not close any roads or trails that are currently designated open for motorized travel, and permitted uses including firewood would continue to be allowed as outlined in the terms and conditions of the Personal Use Firewood Permit.**

Access for other emergency operations, special uses, range allotments, and mining claims would continue to be designated through permits and operating plans.