

COLLABORATION OVERVIEW

Additional Information about the Travel Management Collaborative Process

Background

Visitors to National Forests and Grasslands share a common interest in the enjoyment of outdoor recreation in a natural setting. The Forest Service currently manages more than 300,000 miles of roads nationwide, including 2158 miles of roads on the Coronado National Forest, to provide visitors with motorized access to recreational amenities, motorized access to those who use National Forest Service lands under special authorizations, such as grazing or operation and maintenance of communication sites, and administrative access to agencies for fire and land management activities.

Over the years, there has been an increased use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) on Federal lands. Forest Service motorized travel regulations issued before the increase in OHV use and advances in OHV technology were outdated; so in 2005, the Forest Service published final travel management regulations (Travel Management Rule; Federal Register Vol. 70, No. 216; Nov. 9, 2005, pages 68264 through 68291).

The Travel Management Rule clarifies current Forest Service policy regarding motor-vehicle use and provides management direction that allows sustainable access by motor vehicles, including OHVs, on National Forests and Grasslands. It requires that each National Forest and Grassland designate roads, motorized trails, and areas that are open to public motor vehicle use by class of vehicle and, if appropriate, by time of year. The Travel Management Rule requires National Forests to document their motorized transportation systems on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) that is available to the public free of charge and updated annually.

The Coronado National Forest published an MVUM for each of its five Ranger Districts in May of 2011. The MVUMs reflect the current designated system of roads, motorized trails, and areas on each Ranger District. Because these MVUMs make no changes to the existing designated road system, no public input or analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was required. The Forest is now considering changes to the designated road system and will consider public input and perform a NEPA analysis before changes are made. Any changes made will be reflected in the next set of MVUMs published.

Coronado National Forest Travel Management Planning Process to Date

Since 2006, the Coronado National Forest's (Forest) Travel Management Planning (TMP) process has included several opportunities for public involvement. Three open-house meetings related to the Forest Plan Revision (one each in Safford, Sierra Vista, and Douglas Districts) provided opportunities for public input on the TMP process. A fourth meeting, held in Tucson in March 2009, focused entirely on the Santa Catalina Ranger District's TMP. In February and March of 2012, the Safford Ranger District, the Douglas Ranger District, and the Sierra Vista Ranger District held public meetings. There are plans to hold additional public meeting on

Douglas and Safford in April 2012. All meetings gave interested members of the public opportunities to view maps showing existing motorized-use direction in the Forest Plan and to provide input regarding unique recreation opportunities, specific vehicle-class opportunities, access to significant-use locations, dispersed camping opportunities, and environmental and/or safety concerns related to specific roads. The Forest Supervisor also informed 12 Native American tribes in writing about the travel management planning process and advised them of their opportunity to comment.

How Previous Public Input Was Used in the Travel Management Planning Process

After the public meetings, the Forest's internal Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) met to consider recommendations for changes to the current designated transportation system based on a science-based roads analysis and input from a broad spectrum of citizens and groups as well as state and federal agencies. The ID Team's analysis identified the minimum road system needed for each District (as set forth in the Travel Management Rule) and provided recommendations for changes to the designated road system. These changes were documented in Transportation Analysis Plans and maps.

Each District's Transportation Analysis Plan resulted in a proposed action (proposed changes to the designated road system) for that District. Stakeholders have been asked to comment on the proposed actions.

Public input received in regard to travel management was considered in the development of the Transportation Analysis Plans and the corresponding proposed actions. The Coronado National Forest is very appreciative of the public's contribution.

Status of the Travel Management Planning Process for each District

Santa Catalina Ranger District:

- Public input solicited during transportation analysis planning process and Transportation Analysis Plan completed
- Public notified of proposed action in a Scoping Notice (See http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=29215)
- Public scoping comments solicited, received, and considered in impacts analysis disclosed in draft Environmental Assessment (EA)
- EA released to public for 30-day review and comment period (See link above)
- Public comments on EA being compiled and analyzed

Nogales Ranger District:

- Public input was considered during transportation analysis planning process and Transportation Analysis Plan completed
- Public notified of proposed action in a Scoping Notice (See http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=29223)

- Public scoping comments solicited, received and analyzed for future impacts analysis and disclosure in a draft EA
- Additional changes to scope of project shared with public in an amended Scoping Notice and the Scoping comment period was extended (See link above)

Safford and Sierra Vista Ranger Districts:

- Public input was considered during transportation analysis planning process and Transportation Analysis Plans completed
- Public notified of proposed actions in separate Scoping Notices (See http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=36561 for the Safford scoping notice, and http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=36560) for the Sierra Vista scoping notice)
- Public scoping comments solicited and being received and reviewed to identify issues and concerns
- Additional changes to scope of project on the Sierra Vista District will be shared with public in an amended Scoping Notice and the Scoping comment period will be extended

Douglas Ranger District

- Public input considered during transportation analysis planning process and Transportation Analysis Plan completed
- Public notified of proposed action in a Scoping Notice (See http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=36555)
- Public scoping comments solicited, received and analyzed for future impacts analysis and disclosure in a draft EA

What is Next?

Now that Transportation Analysis Plans and proposed actions have been developed, the Forest Service is inviting public input and collaboration on the next phase of the travel management process. To ensure interested stakeholders and the public have an opportunity to provide input to potential changes in the Forest's designated road system and are well-informed about the process, Forest Supervisor Jim Upchurch, the District Rangers, and Forest Service staff have asked the Udall Foundation's U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (the U.S. Institute), an independent and impartial agency of the federal government, to design a balanced, fair, collaborative process.

Why a Collaboration?

The Forest has learned, throughout the travel management process, that there are conflicting opinions on what the minimum road system should be. The goal of the Collaboration is to bring diverse interests together to obtain input and work toward consensus on an alternative to the proposed action for each Ranger District.

Why participate? This is an opportunity for the public to review what has been proposed so far and discuss their needs with the Forest Service. It also is an opportunity for a representative group of stakeholders to work together collaboratively to develop consensus on an alternative designated route system for each Ranger District for the Forest Service to analyze under NEPA. A fifteen-person “Collaborative Alternative Team” (CAT) representing a wide range of stakeholder interests will be identified at the forest-wide kickoff workshop to serve as the consensus-building body for the five District workshops.

Input and Consensus

The starting point for the collaboration will be each District’s proposed action. The Forest has identified the following six areas that can be addressed in the collaborative process (the decision space). At upcoming collaboration workshops, members of the public and the CAT may review the proposed actions and discuss their needs with the Forest Service. If CAT members reach consensus within the decision space, the Forest Service will consider the recommendations as an alternative to be included in the draft Environmental Assessment. Looking at the routes in a District’s proposed action, members of the public will have an opportunity for input, and CAT members will be given an opportunity for input and to work toward consensus on the following:

- (1) adding specific unauthorized roads to the National Forest Service (NSF) roads database, thereby, legitimizing their use as part of the District motorized travel system;
- (2) removing specific NFS roads from the NFS roads database (i.e., decommissioning);
- (3) closing or otherwise obliterating unauthorized roads by the use of signing, physical barriers and other methods that deny access for motorized use;
- (4) revising designated uses, seasonal closures, and/or maintenance levels (MLs) assigned to NFS roads (e.g., from “open to the public” to “administrative use only”);
- (5) adding or converting roads to motorized or non-motorized trails; and/or
- (6) designating roads or removing corridors where motorized travel will be allowed within a set distance of certain designated routes for the sole purpose of dispersed camping.

At District workshops, among the routes in the proposed action, CAT members’ route preferences will be organized into three “buckets” (what we are calling the “three bucket” approach):

- 1) Routes all CAT members agree with (consensus)
- 2) Routes all CAT members agree to with modification or mitigation (consensus)

- 3) Routes about which CAT members disagree/ where consensus cannot be reached (and therefore about which decisions will have to be made by the District Ranger)

Routes all CAT members participating at a workshop agree with or agree to with modification or mitigation will go into the collaboratively-developed alternative. Facilitated discussion will help CAT members discuss routes about which they disagree and negotiate to achieve consensus on some of those routes. Then those routes also will go into the collaboratively-developed alternative. For any routes about which there is still disagreement by the end of the workshop, the respective District Ranger will decide whether to include them in the alternative.

The Collaboration Process

The collaboration process will include meetings with tribal representatives, an initial forest-wide kickoff workshop, workshops in each District, and a forest-wide summary meeting to share results of the collaboration and next steps. Each workshop will include an overview of the process, interactive maps, poster and map sessions, and opportunities for sharing your travel management needs/concerns on the Forest.

Below is the list of public meetings we have scheduled:

Ranger District	Meeting Date	Meeting Time	Location	Location Address
Forest Wide	January 28 (Saturday)	12:30-4:30	Tucson Interagency Fire Center	2646 E. Commerce Center Place, Tucson AZ
Safford*	February 23 (Thursday)	5:30-9:30	Graham County Building	921 W Thatcher Blvd, Safford AZ
Nogales*	February 28 (Tuesday)	5:30-9:30	Esplendor Hotel	1069 Camino Caralampi, Rio Rico AZ
Santa Catalina*	March 8 (Thursday)	5:30-9:30	Sheraton Hotel	5151 E Grant Rd, Tucson AZ
Sierra Vista*	March 13 (Tuesday)	5:30-9:30	Windemere Hotel	2047 S Hwy 92, Sierra Vista AZ
Douglas*	March 29 (Thursday)	5:30-9:30	City of Douglas Visitor Center	345 16 th St, Douglas AZ
Forest Wide	April 21 (Saturday)	12:30-4:30	Inn Suites	475 N. Granada Ave., Tucson AZ

*At the meetings on the districts, the schedule of activities includes a poster and map public review session from 5:30 to 6:00, followed by the CAT team session from 6:15-9:30.

Who to Contact with Questions or to Get Involved in the Collaborative Process

If you have questions about the collaboration, contact Debra Drecksel at the U.S. Institute (drecksel@ecr.gov; 520-901-8558). For more information about the U.S. Institute, please visit www.ecr.gov.