



File Code: 2300

Date: January 31, 2013

Subject: Opportunity to Comment on the Proposed Action for the Mono Craters Restoration Project

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Mono Lake Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest has prepared a proposed action for the Mono Craters Restoration Project. The purpose of the Mono Craters Restoration Project is to evaluate, restore, and protect about 62 miles of routes that were closed under the 2009 Inyo National Forest Travel Management Record of Decision (ROD), and are not authorized for use by motorized vehicles.

As the responsible official, I am seeking your input early in the planning process in order to identify any concerns or suggestions you may have with the proposed action. Your comments will be considered during project planning and prior to making a decision.

A more detailed proposed action is available in hard copy format or can be viewed on the Inyo National Forest website at http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/project_content.php?project=39609
To obtain a copy of the proposed action please contact:

April Barron
Mammoth Ranger District
P.O. Box 148
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
Ph. (760)924-5532
Email: abarron@fs.fed.us

The proposed action and maps of the project area will be available for viewing at:

- The websites: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/project_content.php?project=39609 or <http://www.fs.usda.gov/land/inyo/landmanagement/projects/?cid=stelprdb5407462>
- The Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center
- The White Mountain Ranger Station
- The June Lake Community Center
- The Lee Vining Community Center



Information about how to comment on the proposed action is provided on the following page. Please contact April Barron at the address above if you have questions about the proposal or commenting procedures.

Public meetings will be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday, Feb. 20 at 6 pm at the Mammoth Lakes Community Center, 1000 Forest Trail in Mammoth Lakes.
- Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 6 pm at the Inyo National Forest Supervisors Office, 351 Pacu Lane (behind the DMV on West Line St) in Bishop.

The project will also be presented at the following public meetings:

- June Lake CAC meeting at the June Lake Community Center at 7:00 pm on February 5, 2013
- Mono Basin RPAC meeting at the Lee Vining Community Center at 6:30 pm on February 13, 2013

Proposed action

The proposed action is to plan and implement a restoration project in the Mono Craters area, which would focus on evaluating and restoring portions of approximately 62 miles of routes that were not designated as part of the Travel Management ROD (2009), and are not authorized for motorized travel. Twelve routes would have restoration activities implemented. Restoration activities would include ripping, vertical mulching, improving barriers, and other activities as recommended by the Interdisciplinary Team. Specific actions are proposed to mitigate impact on natural and cultural resources.

Thirteen routes or route segments (a total of 2.97 miles) that were previously unauthorized would be added to the National Forest's transportation system (NFTS). An additional five routes or route segments (a total of 1.6 miles) would be removed from the system. There is a need to make these small changes to the NFTS in order to provide appropriate and legal access to important recreational opportunities, other permitted activities such as grazing and mining, and other destinations via a designated system of roads and motorized trails which minimize resource effects. Monitoring since the 2009 Travel Management decision has shown that certain routes which were not designated for motorized use in the project area may provide important recreational and administrative access, while limiting potential resource damage in the area. Those are proposed for addition to the system. Conversely, some NFTS roads and trails may have been designated that do not provide recreational benefits, are unused or are duplicative, and may have effects on various resources. Those are proposed for removal from the system.

Proposed activities on specific routes are described in the Attached Table.

Request for Comments

If you have information the Forest Service may not be aware of, or have issues (points of dispute, debate, or disagreement) regarding potential effects of the proposed action, please send those issues in writing to: April Barron, Mammoth Ranger District, P.O. Box 148, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. You may also email comments to abarron@fs.fed.us. A Forest Service interdisciplinary team will consider comments received during this public scoping period to help identify issues, formulate alternatives, and if necessary, revise the Proposed Action.

While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received by March 4, 2013 will be especially useful in the preparation of the environmental assessment.

If you have questions about the proposed project, please contact April Barron at 760-924-5532. Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for your continued interest in the management of National Forest System lands.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sarah Tomsky

SARAH TOMSKY
Deputy District Ranger

Attachment #1. Table showing specific actions proposed on each route.

- “Route” is the route number as shown in the 2009 Travel Management ROD.
- “Map Key” is the identifier to find the route location on the maps – accessible on the website
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/land/inyo/landmanagement/projects/?cid=stelprdb5407462> or hard copy at ranger stations or by request.
- “Existing Condition/Need for Change” explains the need for an action
- “Proposed Action” summarizes work proposed on the route

Mono Craters Restoration Proposed Action Table			
Route	Map Key	Existing Condition/Need for Change	Proposed Action
01S122	Detail Map A	The portion of this route between its intersection with Route U-01S223 and its intersection with 01S127 is covered with cobble, is almost impassable, and not receiving use. This is a duplicate route to 01S233, which would be added to the system.	Remove this portion of the route from National Forest’s Transportation System (NFTS). Block this portion of the route with barricades.
U-01S223	Detail Map A	Provides an alternative to Route 01S122, a segment of which would be closed under this proposed action. The existing road block has been vandalized and there has been OHV incursion. The tread is compacted and is incised/entrenched in landscape.	Add route to the NFTS.
01S138	Detail Map B	This authorized route is not used and is recovering on the northern end. It leads to Route 01S141A, which would be closed under this proposed action.	Remove route from the NFTS.
01S138A	Detail Map B	This authorized route is rarely used and was blocked on its west side. The western part of the route is closed, making the authorized segment a dead-end route.	Remove route from the NFTS.
01S141	Detail Map B	This segment of an authorized route connects Route 01S21 to	Close western segment of route.

Mono Craters Restoration Proposed Action Table			
Route	Map Key	Existing Condition/Need for Change	Proposed Action
		<p>01S141A, which would be closed under this proposed action. Route 01S21 would remain open.</p> <p>Drivers are using this route to access camping spots and are causing resource damage.</p>	
01S141A	Detail Map B	Drivers are using this authorized route to access camping spots and are causing resource damage.	Remove route from the NFTS.
U-N10051	Detail Map B	<p>The tread is compacted and route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.</p> <p>The tread is incised/entrenched in the landscape.</p> <p>This route is highly visible from Highway 120 and Mono Mills Interpretive Site.</p>	<p>Vertical mulching, ripping</p> <p>Block and disguise entrance at junction with Highway 120.</p>
U-N165	Detail Map B	Because routes 01S141A, 01S138, and a segment of 01S141, would be closed for resource protection under this proposed action, Route U-N165 is needed to allow drivers to continue north onto Route 01S21C.	Add this route to the NFTS.
U-01N110	B2	<p>The route is very visible from Picnic Grounds Road.</p> <p>The route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.</p>	Vertical mulching
U-N272	B6	The barricade is not effective, route is still being used.	<p>Reinforce barricade, disguise</p> <p>Vertical mulching</p>
U-01S208	C6	There is high compaction of tread.	<p>Vertical mulching</p> <p>Block and disguise.</p>

Mono Craters Restoration Proposed Action Table			
Route	Map Key	Existing Condition/Need for Change	Proposed Action
		This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.	
U-01S209	C6	<p>This route has been heavily used in the past. There is no evidence of recent use, but the route is easily accessed.</p> <p>The tread is highly compacted and the route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.</p> <p>This route is visible from nearby routes.</p> <p><i>Lupinus duranii</i> is present.</p>	Vertical mulching, ripping
U-N276	C6	<p>Tread is highly compacted.</p> <p>This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.</p> <p>Route is heavily used.</p>	Add route to the NFTS.
U-01S323	C7	Tread is compacted and route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.	Vertical mulching for the first 150 feet
U-01S537E	C7	<p>This unauthorized route is highly visible from a nearby and heavily used authorized route (01S35).</p> <p>Barricade on northern section of the route is blocking entrance to sheep bedding ground.</p>	<p>Vertical mulching on south ends of the road where it intersects with Route 01S35</p> <p>Move barricade to give permittee access to bedding ground on the north end.</p>
U-01S537W	C7	This unauthorized route is highly visible from a nearby and heavily used authorized route (01S35).	Vertical mulching on south ends of the road where it intersects with Route 01S35
U-N10085	C7	This is a primary route used by drivers in the summer months, and is on the winter Over Snow	Add route to the NFTS.

Mono Craters Restoration Proposed Action Table			
Route	Map Key	Existing Condition/Need for Change	Proposed Action
		Vehicle (OSV) trail system.	
U-N2730	C7	This small spur goes to a camping spot used by climbers going to nearby boulders.	Add route to the NFTS.
U-N311	C7	This route provides access to Route U-N2730, a spur road where a popular campsite is located. Route U-N2730 would be added to the NFTS under this proposed action.	Add route to the NFTS south of Route U-N2730.
U-N310	C7	The tread is incised/entrenched in landscape. Tread is compacted. Route is being used as a bypass around a bad section of Route 01S37A.	Add route to the NFTS.
U-N325	C8	Tread is compacted. Portion of route north of Route 02S106 is a marked snowmobile route.	Add portion of this route north of Route 02S106 to the NFTS.
U-N434	C8	Tread is highly compacted and route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks. This route is being heavily used by the public as a turnout from Highway 395. Another unauthorized route connects this route to an NFTS route. There is an electrical box present which will need to be used and maintained in the future. The box belongs to Verizon.	Native mulching Erect barricade, disguise Vertical mulching on the northeast section of the route. Leave the southwest portion open to maintain Verizon's access to the electrical box.
U-01N139	D3, D4, E4	The area is wide-open and sparsely vegetated, making blockage difficult. The east end of the route is highly visible from Highway	Vertical mulching, rake out wheel tracks along the entire length of the route Add log barriers along

Mono Craters Restoration Proposed Action Table			
Route	Map Key	Existing Condition/Need for Change	Proposed Action
		<p>120.</p> <p>The tread is incised/entrenched in landscape.</p> <p>This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.</p> <p>Lupinus duranii is present where the route parallels Highway 120.</p>	<p>south side of Highway 120.</p>
High trespass area between Routes 01N26 and 01S18	D4	<p>Users have driven all over this area with no one single access point. Because the area is wide open and sparsely vegetated, it is difficult to keep drivers out.</p> <p>Vehicles are accessing the tops of the craters by using the unauthorized section of Route 01S18.</p>	<p>Make a defined turn-around at the end of the routes to communicate to drivers that the road ends there.</p> <p>From the authorized end of Route 01S18, obliterate the first 150 feet of the unauthorized section.</p>
U-02S252	D8	<p>This unauthorized route is used in place of the authorized route which has too steep a grade for most vehicles to get up.</p>	<p>Add route to the NFTS.</p>
U-N328	D8	<p>Tread is moderately compacted and route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.</p> <p>Route is blocked but OHV users are bypassing the blockade in order to reach a lookout.</p>	<p>Reinforce blockade, bring in boulders to block route.</p> <p>Vertical mulching</p>
U-N147	E3	<p>This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.</p> <p>The tread is incised/entrenched in the landscape.</p> <p>This route is being used as a</p>	<p>Add route to the NFTS.</p>

Mono Craters Restoration Proposed Action Table			
Route	Map Key	Existing Condition/Need for Change	Proposed Action
		turn-around on a sandy, dead-end road.	
U-N148	E3	This road is the entrance to a well-established camp site/fire ring. This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.	Add route to the NFTS.
U-01N145	E4, F4	This route begins on BLM land and would become a dead end if closed. This route is not heavily used and is recovering. This route is on an old railway bed.	Make turn-around at the east end of this route at the boundary with BLM land.
U-N151	E4	The tread is compacted and route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.	Erect barrier, native mulching, ripping and disguise
U-N153	E4	The tread is compacted and route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks. This route is part of a turn-out from Highway 120.	Add route to the NFTS.
U-N482	E5, F5	This route leads to a water tank and trough.	Place barricade on far end of water tank and not directly on the main route to allow access by permittee.
U-N529	E6, E7	The tread is incised/entrenched in landscape. This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.	Vertical mulching
U-01S355	E6, E7	This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.	Add route to the NFTS.

Mono Craters Restoration Proposed Action Table			
Route	Map Key	Existing Condition/Need for Change	Proposed Action
		<p>Tread is incised/entrenched in landscape.</p> <p>Users cut through barrier to access route.</p> <p>U.S. Pumice Mine Company needs this route to access a mining site on their private property.</p>	
U-N192	F5	This route does not have vegetation growing in the wheel tracks.	<p>Block entrance, native mulch, hand raking</p> <p>Rake at points of blockage, including a 30-meter buffer.</p>
U-N579	H7	Route is not blocked and is still visible	<p>Erect barricade, disguise</p> <p>Vertical mulching</p>