



Using Motorized Vehicles Eldorado National Forest



If you frequently visit the Eldorado National Forest, you have probably noticed an increase in the number of people using motorized vehicles. Our goal is to find ways to provide quality motorized opportunities while minimizing user conflicts and protecting forest resources.

What Is Going On?

In 2008, 1,847 miles of system roads and motorized trails on the Eldorado were designated for wheeled motor vehicle travel. Vehicle travel off these designated roads and trails is prohibited.

Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM)

The Motor Vehicle Use Map is a free map available at any of the Eldorado National Forest offices and on our forest website (see below). This map shows the roads and trails in the Eldorado National Forest that are designated for motor vehicle use, the type of vehicle that can be operated on the routes, and identifies which routes are restricted during the seasonal closure.

Seasonal Road Closure

All **dirt roads and trails** are closed to motor vehicle use between January 1 and March 31. The **seasonal closure** may be extended if roads or trails are wet and susceptible to damage. This closure is intended to protect water quality and prevent rutting and damage to these roads and trails. Be sure to call (530) 622-5061 or refer to the Eldorado National Forest web site (see below) for the latest road closure status prior to driving on any non-paved road.

Approximately 600 miles of paved and gravel roads are not affected by the closure. The Rock Creek area near Georgetown has its own seasonal closure policy and procedures.

Who Does This Apply To?

This applies to all wheeled motorized vehicles including: cars, trucks, four-wheel drives, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), sand buggies, etc.



(Above and right) Designated route sign.
(Below) System route marked with post and road number.



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Who Does This Affect?

This affects more than the Off-Highway Vehicle recreationists. If you camp outside of a developed campground or hunt, for example, you will also be affected. It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules if you intend to travel or park off of system roads or trails.

Dispersed Camping: Visitors can camp free-of-charge just about anywhere in the national forest, unless it is specifically prohibited. Some of the “access” routes to remote spots along a river, stream, or lakes are routes that were created over the years by visitors. If the route leading to a spot does not have a sign as shown above or is not on the current Motor Vehicle Use Map, it is not open to drive on.

Parking along roads designated or authorized for public travel is permitted within one vehicle length from the edge of the road surface.

Hunting: Some visitors look for game or scout hunting areas by patrolling the backroads in their vehicle. Please stick to the designated routes. When you are on foot, keep in mind how far you will have to pack your “game”. You can still use your non-motorized game cart.

Remember: The California State Vehicle Code still applies in National Forests.

Woodcutters: Periodically throughout the woodcutting season, the Eldorado National Forest may identify concentrations of fuelwood not accessible from the roads designated on your Motor Vehicle Use Map. In order to facilitate the removal of fuelwood from these identified areas, Ranger Districts may establish “Fuelwood Cutting Areas”. As these areas are established, routes will be signed open and maps will be available from Ranger District Offices or from the Eldorado National Forest website. Contact the Ranger District offices or visit our web site for information about current fuelwood cutting areas.

During the wet season, some roads may be too wet to travel on without causing resource damage. The Eldorado National Forest will implement road closure orders during these periods. These closure orders will supersede any road use authorized by your wood permit.

Be sure to call (530) 622-5061 or refer to the Eldorado National Forest web site for latest road closure status prior to driving on any un-surfaced road.

How Do I Know Where These Open Routes Are Located?

- **Map:** The designated routes are displayed on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) that is available to the public, free-of-charge. If the road or trail is not shown on the current Motor Vehicle Use Map, it is not legal to drive on. The MVUM also shows the types of vehicles which are allowed on a road or trail, and any seasonal restrictions that might apply.
- **Route Markers:** Road or trail markers at the beginning of routes will help you to locate yourself on the map and to determine if motor vehicle use is allowed on that route. Paved roads are legal to drive on as long as the vehicle is licensed to operate on a highway.
- **Vehicle Travel web page:** www.fs.usda.gov/goto/enf/vehicletavel . Download a map of the area you will be visiting.



Trail route marker. Look for the **symbols** that indicate the vehicle types that are allowed on a trail.



(Above) Forest Highway sign – paved roads.



Forest system road markers (above, right and below).





Many non-system routes lack water drainage which can cause damage to the road, adjacent vegetation, and other resources.



(Above) Some trails have been created by vehicle use. A route is closed to vehicle use if there is no sign on the route showing it as a system route and it is not shown on the MVUM map. (Left) No Motor Vehicles route marker used to indicate a closure area.

Where Can't I Drive?

- ◆ **Motorized travel off a designated road or trail** is prohibited.
- ◆ **Routes not on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM):** Motor vehicles are only allowed to travel on roads or trails shown on the MVUM map.
- ◆ **Un-authorized routes:** Over the years, visitors have created their own routes, or "opened" routes the Forest Service previously closed to prevent environmental damage. These routes are closed.
- ◆ **Gates/barriers:** Vehicles are not allowed to travel beyond gates or barriers.
- ◆ **Private land:** Use of roads on private land requires the permission of the landowner.

Restoration Areas:

Throughout the forest areas that have been damages are being restored. The nature of the damage may include: soil erosion, stream sedimentation, or damage to archaeological sites and meadows. Repairing these sites is a Forest Service priority. Blocked roads or trails means a restoration project is underway.



(Above) An example of a completed restoration project. This treatment was implemented in the Lyons Creek area on the Pacific Ranger District. (Left) Restoration area sign.

TREAD LIGHTLY PLEDGE

Travel & recreate with minimum impact.

Respect the environment and the rights of others.

Educate yourself. Plan and prepare before you go.

Allow for future use of the outdoors. By leaving it better than you found it.

Discover the rewards of responsible recreation.



Where Do We Go From Here?

Now that the backbone of designated roads and trails is in place, attention is moving on to identifying the dispersed camping, parking areas, or specific travel routes most important to visitors to analyze next. The four Eldorado National Forest District Rangers will review suggestions from forest visitors as to changes or improvements to the designated system. The District Rangers will then analyze the suggestions to the extent that they have staff and resources available.

Suggestions are welcome by visitor contact through the district recreation staff. The more specific people can be during their discussions about which routes or trails need attention, the more helpful the information will be to the District Ranger.

Exceptions: The restriction of motor vehicles to system roads and trails does not apply to:

- ◆ Snowmobiles
- ◆ Watercraft
- ◆ Aircraft
- ◆ Non-motorized use (equestrian, mountain bikes)
- ◆ Uses authorized.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Placerville Pacific Ranger Districts

7 ½ miles east of Placerville
on Highway 50 – Cedar Grove exit
#54
4260 Eight Mile Road
Camino, CA 95709
(530) 644-2324

Amador Ranger District

17 miles east of Jackson
on Highway 88
26820 Silver Drive
Pioneer, CA 95666
(209) 259-3774

Georgetown Ranger District

3 miles east of Georgetown
on Wentworth Springs Road
7600 Wentworth Springs Road
Georgetown, CA 95634
(530) 333-4312

Supervisor's Office

Placerville Drive/Forni Road exit,
(behind the Midas store.)
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 622-5061