Kelly Motorized Trails Project
Proposed Action

November 28, 2011

The Flagstaff Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest is seeking public input on the proposed Kelly Motorized Trails Project (formerly known as the Airport Motorized Trail Project). The goal of this project is to provide motorized recreation opportunities for both single-track (motorcycles) and larger motorized trail users (ATV/UTVs). The project area is generally defined on the north by the southern boundary of Flagstaff Airport, Forest Road 240 on the south, Interstate 17 on the west, and Forest Road 132 on the east (see Figure 1). The anticipated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis document is an Environmental Assessment (EA).

EXISTING CONDITION

Currently, there are a limited number of Forest Service trails available for motorized use to accommodate the growing interest in this type of recreation, including a lack of opportunities for creating trail loops and/or a longer trail riding experience. This shortage, in conjunction with the population growth of Flagstaff and surrounding areas, has resulted in impacts to National Forest resources from unplanned, or "non-system," motorized trail creation and use. In addition, the Travel Management Rule (TMR) decision (September 2011) restricts cross-country motorized vehicle travel and reduces approximately 4,387 miles of road across the Forest, thus further concentrating motorized use on to the designated motorized trail system (discussed below):

Trails Open to All Motorized Vehicles (Motorized Trails)

Trails open to all vehicles (including both highway-legal and non-legal vehicles) total 8.5 miles. This includes the 6.7 miles Casner Mountain Trail and the 1.8 miles Lower Smasher Canyon Trail. *Note*: due to the narrow nature of the Casner Mountain Trail and its location under a power line, Forest visitors wishing to use this trail with full-size four-wheel drive vehicles must first contact the Red Rock District Office to obtain a permit and the gate combination (see the Coconino National Forest website for more information http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coconino/recreation/ohv/recarea/?recid=55262&actid=94). There are no seasonal designations for any of these routes.

The 13,711 acre Cinder Hills Off-Highway Vehicle area is also designated for off-road driving and is managed for two and four wheeled vehicles. This is not a new designation or area through TMR.

Trails Open to Single Track Only (Single Track)

Motorcycle-only trails total 20.5 miles, which includes the existing Fort Valley Motorized Trail System. These trails are for single-track (two-wheeled) motorcycle use. There are no seasonal designations for any of these routes.

Trails Open to Vehicles 50 Inches or Less in Width

Trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width total 9.3 miles. These trails include the existing Munds Park Motorized Trail System. This designation of 50 inches or less was used based on existing gate widths, which would prevent passage from larger OHVs. There are no seasonal designations for any of these routes.

DESIRED CONDITION

The goal of this project is to create a resilient motorized trail system by using a combination of open Level 2 roads, converting roads that are identified to be closed through the TMR decision into trails, adopting segments of user-created routes, and constructing some new trail. Two trailheads would provide access and parking, and would also serve to communicate Forest-relevant information, such as safety messages. The proposed motorized trail system would be approximately 73 miles to allow for a full-day of motorized recreation with loops that do not require street-legal vehicles, and which would accommodate riders of all skill levels. Single track trails would be more concentrated in the northern portion, where some user created single track routes are located, and the larger motorized trails would be more in the southern portion for the same reason.

NEED FOR CHANGE

There is a need to create a resilient, diverse motorized trail system to safely and effectively accommodate the growing demand for off-highway vehicle travel. In addition, there is a need to construct two trailheads with parking areas and informational signage to support the motorized trail system. By creating such a system, the Forest would better protect valuable resources, including sensitive soils, archaeology sites and wildlife habitat, while meeting the Forest Service objective of a multiple-use forest. The Forest began working with local motorized user groups in 2009 to identify an appropriate location; the Kelly project area was chosen based on the low-density of sensitive Forest resources, number of existing user-created trails, durability of features, and distance from private land.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed Kelly Motorized Trail system would be approximately 73 miles, and would provide multiple loop options for both single-track (motorcycles) and larger motorized off-highway vehicles (ATV/UTVs) (see Figure 2). Though designed for motorized use, the trail system would be open to other recreational uses, including hiking and mountain biking. Appropriate signage at trailheads and trail layout would reduce user conflict and safety issues.

The following table depicts the anticipated system with a breakdown of each proposed trail construction method.

Trail Design	**Miles**
Single Track	**37**
• *Road-to-Trail Conversion*	*6*
• *New Construction*	*25*
• *Adoption of User-created Trail*	*6*
Motorized Trails	**36**
• *Road-to-Trail Conversion*	*17*
• *Open Roads (level 2 and below)*	*11*
• *New Construction*	*8*
Total	**73**

In addition, two trailheads are proposed: one within one mile of the Kelly Canyon interchange on Interstate 17 (near Forest Road 700), and another within one mile of Forest Highway 3 (Lake Mary Road)

off of Forest Road 867, near Fay Canyon (see Figure 2). Trailheads would be approximately 30,000 square feet each and would retain a "roaded natural" setting as defined by the Coconino Forest Management Plan for Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes. The trailheads may include vault toilets, informational kiosks, parking barriers, and a hardened surface. Natural and natural-appearing materials would be used in the design of facilities to compliment the character of their landscape settings.

Existing user-created routes that do not result in resource damage were incorporated into the proposed designed system when feasible. Remaining social trails within the project area would be rehabilitated using a variety of techniques, including ripping all or portions of the trail, or allowing natural healing to occur by placing obstructions around the trail. All rehabilitation techniques would follow appropriate resource protection measures. Road-to-trail conversion would be accomplished by re-designation in the case of motorized trails, and obliteration/rehabilitation of a road while leaving a trail tread using a portion of the old roadbed for single track trails.

The proposed motorized trail system was developed to best avoid sensitive archaeological, wildlife and plant resources, as well as private developed land. Habitat for the threatened Mexican spotted owl is present; however trails were designed to avoid impacts to the species. Cattle guards are proposed for those areas where the trails cross range allotment fencing to accommodate the infrastructure. This proposed motorized trail system would provide connections to the existing Munds Park motorized trail system; however no improvements to the Munds Park system are proposed through this project.

Best management practices (BMPs) for trail construction as identified in the Forest Service Trails Handbook and Specifications for Construction and Maintenance of Trails as well as design features to protect Forest resources would be incorporated into trail design and construction. In addition, pre-construction surveys for Forest Service sensitive plant species, noxious/invasive weeds, and archaeological sites would be conducted prior to trail construction. This will provide for optimum detection and protection of sensitive plant and heritage resources.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT

We encourage your participation in our scoping process. Both map figures are also available on the Coconino National Forest website under "Kelly Motorized Trails Project" at http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=36911. If you have project specific questions and/or comments regarding this proposed action, please contact Erin Phelps, Writer/Editor, on the Flagstaff Ranger District by regular mail to 5075 N. Highway 89, Flagstaff, AZ 86004; by fax at 928.527.8288; by phone at 928.527.8240; or by email to comments-southwestern-coconino-flagstaff@fs.fed.us. Comments may also be hand delivered to the Flagstaff District Office at the address above between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday excluding holidays. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this project and will be available for public inspection. To be the most helpful in the planning process, **please provide your comments by January 4, 2012.**

Those who respond to this invitation for comments will be notified when the Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project is available for review. In the event you do not choose to comment, but would still like a copy of the EA, please contact Erin Phelps at 928.527.8240 or ephelps@fs.fed.us.

Figure 1: Project Vicinity Map

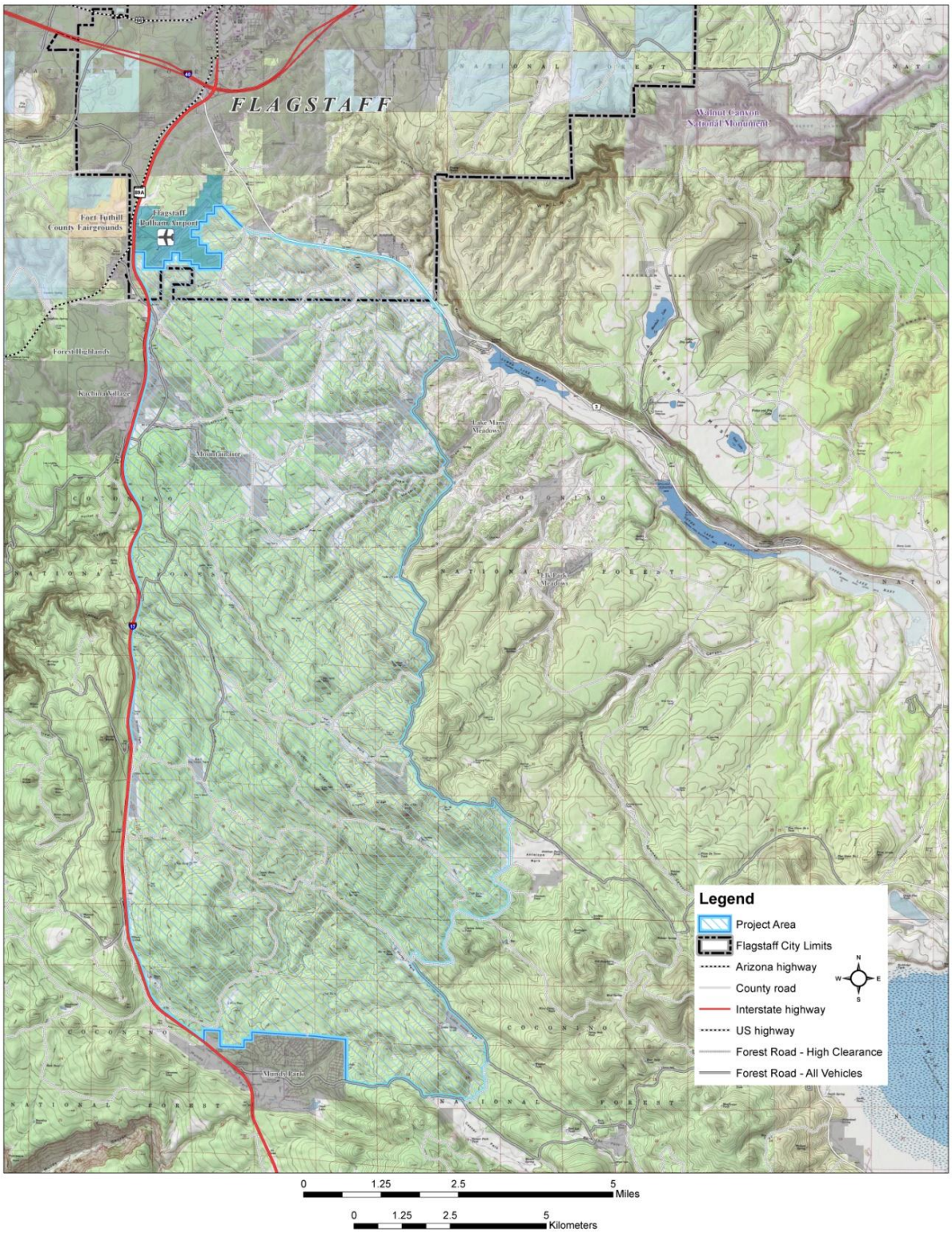
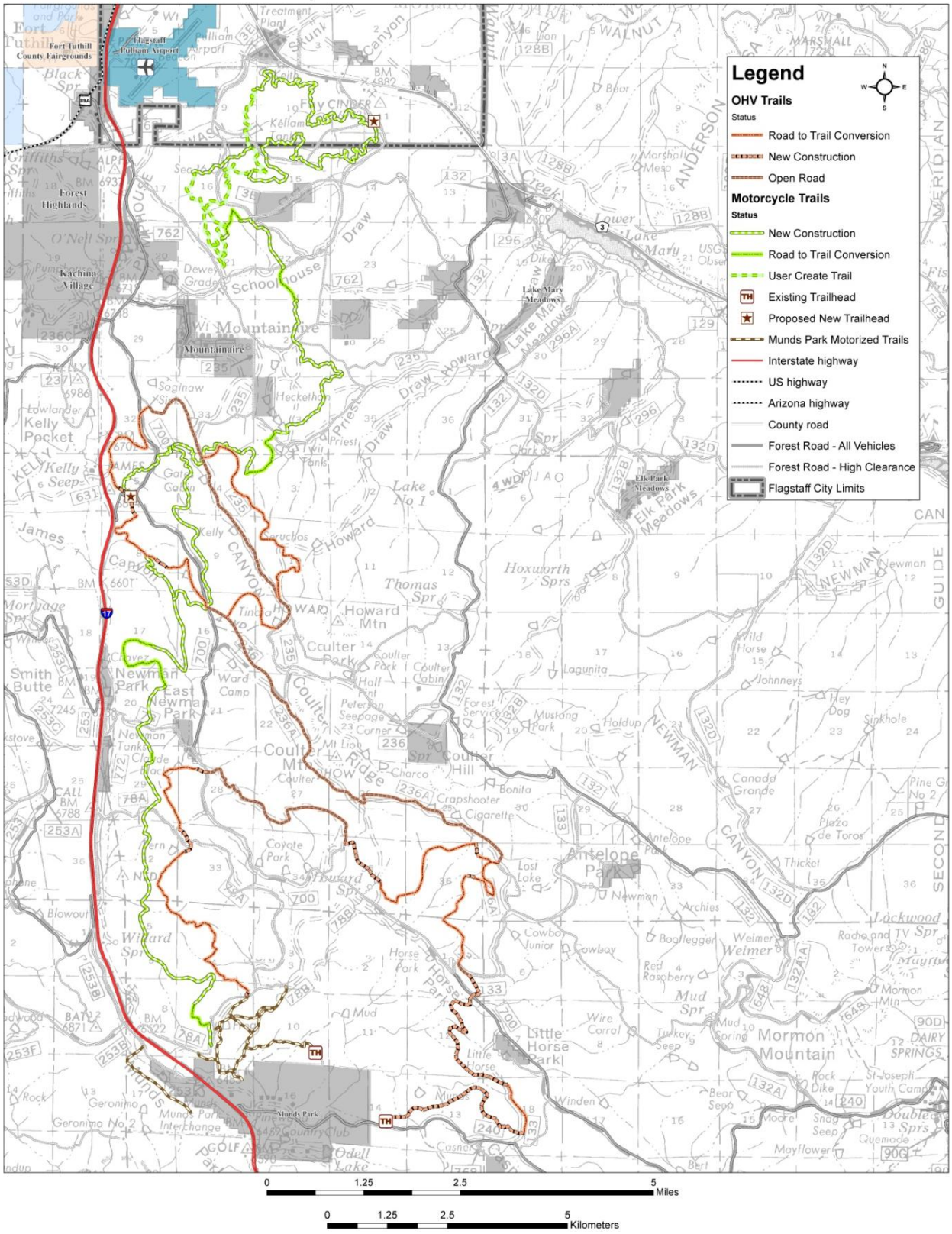
Figure 2: Proposed Kelly Motorized Trail System