



PROPOSED ACCESS RULE

OVERVIEW

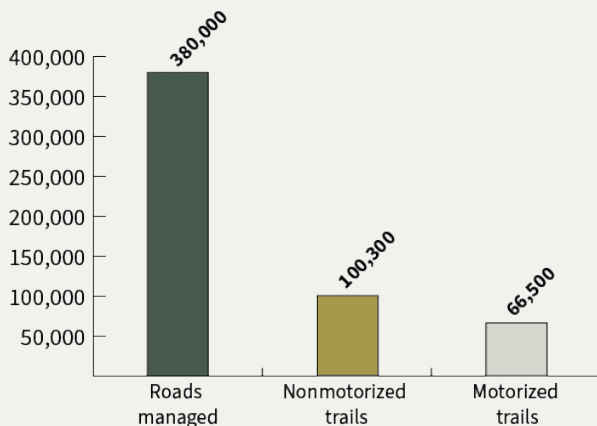
In August 2026, the Forest Service began preparing an environmental impact statement for amending the existing 20-year-old Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212), now known as the Access Rule. The proposed rule would establish a uniform national policy favoring increased public access for all Americans to their national forests, while leaving designation and closure decisions to local ranger districts and forests based on documented conditions and needs.

The revisions will expand outdoor recreation access, strengthen rural economies, maintain safe and sustainable transportation systems, and support working lands.

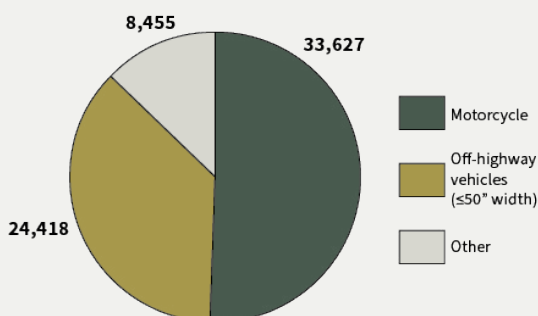
ROAD AND TRAIL STATS

Forest Service roads and trails provide access to more than 164 million visitors per year.

Miles of Roads and Trails



Miles of Motorized Trails



KEY CHANGES

- **Access as a default:** Roads, trails, airfields, trailheads, and other access routes and points would be considered open to appropriate public use unless closure or restriction is required. Seasonal restrictions could be applied.
- **Annual review:** Units would be required to review any closed or highly restricted trails, roads, airfields, trailheads, and other access routes annually to see if greater access is warranted.
- **Considering new access:** Units would be required to consider new roads, trails, airfields, trailheads, and other access routes and points where appropriate to increase access and allow Americans to enjoy their adventure in the forests through increased dispersion.
- **Airfield management:** The rule would update how the Forest Service manages airfields and lands for aircraft landing and takeoff.
- **Limited off-route use:** The rule would set conditions for authorizing limited off-route motor vehicle use for activities such as retrieving downed big game animals, collecting firewood, dispersed camping, and over-snow recreation.
- **E-bike clarification:** Class 1 e-bikes generally would be authorized on trails where bicycles are allowed with local ranger districts having the ability to set specific access rules that might differentiate on certain trails depending on needs and community input.
- **Mobility access:** Low-powered electric mobility devices could be used by people with mobility disabilities, consistent with accessibility requirements.

BOTTOM LINE

The proposed Access Rule will streamline designations and mapping processes, modernize the agency's travel planning process, and improve response times to recreation and other access needs. It also reduces regulatory burden, helping local officials make decisions more clearly. Planning will be retained at the forest or grassland level and include consideration of local conditions, resources, and community needs.

The revised regulations support the Administration's focus on increasing access and recreational opportunities on public lands, as well as Executive Order 14408, signed in May 2026, that directed agencies to revise regulations based on previous travel management Executive orders and replace minimization criteria with a new framework based on existing law.