



National Policy Summary Analysis

Proposed Revisions to the Travel Management Rule

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service is preparing to revise the Travel Management Rule found at 36 CFR 212. These regulations provide direction for designation of roads, trails, and areas for public motor vehicle use. Executive Order 14408, *Removing Unnecessary and Counterproductive Restrictions on Access to Federal Lands*, signed on May 29, 2026, directs USDA to initiate rulemaking to revise these regulations.

The Travel Management Rule (TMR) was created in 2005 to provide a clear and consistent approach for managing public motor vehicle use on national forests and grasslands. Subpart A of the rule explains who can use certain roads and trails, what rights the federal government has over them, the rules for managing them responsibly, private access rights, easement and cost sharing requirements, and how the National Forest Transportation System should be run. Subparts B and C describe how the Forest Service decides which roads, trails, and areas are officially open to motor vehicles, including over-snow vehicles and e-bikes. Once a forest or ranger district puts out an official map showing where motor vehicles are allowed, people can only drive in those designated places. All other roads, trails, and areas are off-limits to public motorized use.

The USDA will publish a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for this proposed rule, tentatively scheduled for fall 2026.

What parts of the TMR could change?

Potential changes to the TMR may include the following:

- Simplified process for designating motor vehicle use: A key component of the current TMR is its requirement to consider specific criteria, often referred to as “minimization criteria,” in designating roads, trails and areas for motor vehicle use. Executive Order 14408 emphasizes removing minimization criteria from regulations and replacing them with a designation framework grounded in existing statutory authorities. In the absence of these criteria, designations under a new rule would be analyzed under National Environmental Policy Act requirements.
- Direction for establishing and updating vehicle use maps: The USDA must amend the TMR to fully implement Section 127 of the EXPLORE Act, which requires the agency to develop and periodically update motor vehicle use maps across all Forest Service units. The EXPLORE Act also directs the Forest Service to seek to create additional opportunities for motorized and non-motorized access.
- Provisions for additional access: New exemptions from prohibited motorized uses could be added for Class 1 e-bikes and low powered, electric Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices, such as adaptive devices for persons with disabilities. Expanding the exemptions to include these devices will increase access, especially for people with mobility disabilities.
- Streamlined transportation guidance: Subpart A would likely be removed. Direction from Subpart A would be eliminated if no longer needed or would be moved to agency regulations, as appropriate.

Additional changes may be considered as the agency endeavors to modernize and improve the TMR. While the revised regulations will apply nationwide, the agency will retain and emphasize local decision-making for travel management decisions.

What are the implications for Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations?

Travel management planning can have a substantial direct effect on Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations (ANC). Tribes and ANCs have long demonstrated and maintained a vested interest in public motorized access. Treaty rights, historic access, subsistence uses and other lawful activities authorized by treaty, statute, regulation or written authorization, are exempt under the TMR. Access for these and other tribal activities and interests are not subject to restrictions shown on public motor vehicle use maps.

The proposed action would not authorize any specific ground-disturbing activities or projects, nor would it propose any increase in the overall amounts of trails or roads constructed. Existing motor vehicle use designations would remain unchanged until updated by local units under the revised regulations. However, revisions to the TMR will change the process that is used to determine where motorized use is appropriate, and it is likely that motor vehicle designations will be updated more frequently under the revised rule. Any future changes to motorized use on the ground would be

subject to analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Given the potential effects on Tribes and ANCs, the Forest Service is notifying Tribes of the opportunity to consult on this proposed rule.

Who may I contact to ask questions about the proposed rule?

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How can Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations request consultation on the proposed rule?

Tribal governments and ANCs may request consultation with national, regional, and local Forest Service consulting officials. Please contact the Office of Tribal Relations for assistance. The Office of Tribal Relations will coordinate consultation requests received at
SM.FS.otrtribalcon@usda.gov.

Where can I find more information?

A copy of this summary analysis is available on the Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations website at
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/tribal-relations/national-consultation>.

For any other questions or comments, please email:
SM.FS.otrtribalcon@usda.gov.