

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Eldorado National Forest

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New Eldorado National Forest Wheeled Motorized Vehicle Travel Regulations

Placerville, CA..... Beginning Thursday, August 25, 2005, visitors to the Eldorado National Forest can expect a change in where they can use their wheeled motorized vehicles. Forest Supervisor John Berry is implementing a Federal District Court Order that requires visitors to travel only on the 2,200 miles of Eldorado National Forest system roads and trails. These routes are displayed on a map available at forest offices free-of-charge.

“It is important that people planning to visit the Eldorado National Forest know about this change,” said Berry. “Travel will only be allowed on the officially identified system of roads and trails. Driving wheeled motorized vehicles off these roads and trails will not be allowed without a permit.”

Berry signed a separate forest order that implements the court’s direction. The forest order will be in effect until an environmental impact statement is completed to designate a system of motorized roads and trails. The designated system will be created out of an inventory of existing system roads and trails and non-system routes. The EIS is scheduled to begin this fall and to be completed in December 2006.

Additional information about wheeled motorized vehicle travel in the Eldorado National Forest is available on the Eldorado National Forest website: www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado.

Travel on approximately 700 miles of non-system routes will be prohibited while the EIS is in progress. Many of these routes were created over the years by visitors and are not part of the Forest system of roads and trails. The non-system routes may be considered in the EIS as possible additions to the designated system of wheeled motorized roads and trails.

Open roads and trails are shown on the free wheeled motorized vehicle map. While open routes will also be signed on the ground, the Forest Service says it will enforce the Forest order based on the open roads and trails displayed on the map.

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“Most people will find that the routes they normally travel on are still open,” said Berry. “People who camp outside of campgrounds will be affected by the coming change in travel routes. We will continue to allow camping outside campgrounds, however, in some cases people may have to carry their camping gear from their parked vehicle to their campsite.”

Berry said it will be especially important for hunters to prepare for this change in travel regulations.

“It is not unusual for hunters to travel off main roads to their favorite “hunter’s” camp,” said Berry. “Under the court order, hunters will need to check with the wheeled motorized route map before they venture out.”

Woodcutters will be allowed to gather wood according to the terms of their fuelwood gathering permit, which allows them to drive off a road to gather fuelwood.

Maps and other information are available at all Eldorado National Forest offices and entrance stations.