



News Release Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

For Immediate Release

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Travel Management Project Decision Released from Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

Rhineland, WI September 23, 2008 - Where the public uses wheeled motor vehicles on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) will be changing as the Forest moves one step closer to implementing the Travel Management Project. Considering hundreds of comments received from the public over the past two years, Forest Supervisor Jeanne Higgins has selected a modification of Alternative 3. The modification includes approximately 205 additional miles of road that were evaluated and will be added for use.

“I believe the selected Alternative best meets the needs of the public based on the information currently available to us. Alternative 3 allows for ample access, allows for more All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use as envisioned in the Forest Plan, and provides increased access during the fall hunting season. I also believe the Selected Alternative better protects Forest resources in the long run and provides a balance of both motorized and non-motorized access. My decision does not affect access for administrative purposes. It will not affect our ability to continue to manage the forest, including access for timber harvest and fire suppression. In addition, it does not affect access for snowmobile use.”

The chosen Alternative allows approximately 2,363 miles of roads and 334 miles of trails to be open for public motor vehicle use. The designated roads and trails will be displayed on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM). The first of the annual MVUMs will be available on line and at District Offices for no charge in January 2009. The second MVUM will be available by March 31, 2010. It should be noted that approximately 4,500 miles of road under the jurisdiction of towns, counties and the State will also be available to access the forest. In total the public will have approximately 6,800 miles of road to access the National Forest.

In keeping with national policy, once the MVUM is available, it becomes the responsibility of individuals using motor vehicles on CNNF roads and trails to obtain and follow the policy set forth. Visitors to the CNNF will need to know which roads or trails are available or unavailable for their motor vehicle use. The CNNF intends to focus on education, building awareness, and gathering comments from users the first year after the release of the MVUM.

The Travel Management Project is an ongoing process and the CNNF will continually take people's comments. Any roads suggested by the public to be added or deleted from the MVUM will be evaluated through the same roads analysis process used for the first MVUM. In recognizing that some people may not have heard of the Travel Management Project until now, the CNNF is committed to continue reaching out to as many people as possible to assure they know about the Travel Management Project and the MVUM.

“We heard from people that want more motorized access as well from people who favor non-motorized access,” said Higgins “Access to the National Forest is something that goes hand in hand with being able to use the National Forest. However, the degree and amount of motorized access is of debate and will likely continue to be of debate. I understand this dilemma and want to assure people who use this National Forest that we take this process very seriously and will continue balancing all needs while ensuring the CNNF remains sustainable.”

Off Highway vehicle use has increased dramatically in the past decade. This increase led to an agency-wide recognition that unmanaged recreation, and particularly off highway vehicle use, is one of the Four Threats to National Forests. In response to this threat, the Forest Service published the Travel Management Rule (TMR) in the Federal Register in 2005. TMR requires every National Forest to publish the free Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) that show roads, trails and areas open to wheeled motorized vehicle use.

The complete Decision Notice as well as a list of all the roads that have been evaluated up until this point will be available on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest website at (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/>) by the end of the week, or for more information call Joan Marburger, 715-762-5178.

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