

# NEWS RELEASE



United States  
Department of Agriculture  
**Forest Service**

## Clearwater National Forest

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Summary of comments available for review**

*Orofino, Idaho*—A comprehensive summary of nearly 4500 comments related to the Clearwater National Forest’s travel management proposal is now available on the Forest’s website <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater/>.

Individuals desiring a quicker read may want to peruse the two-page summary which provides highlights of the method used to process comments and the results.

The Clearwater National Forest issued the travel management proposed action in November 2008. The proposal was developed in response to the agency’s travel management rule which requires all national forests to formally designate roads, trails and areas where motorized travel will be permitted, and to display those routes on a motor vehicle use map.

Clearwater National Forest Supervisor Tom Reilly thanked people for their responses. “People definitely feel passionate about their preferred mode of travel and special places on the Clearwater National Forest,” he stated. “It is going to be a real challenge to designate a travel system that satisfies all users and complies with Forest Plan direction.”

Reilly said commenters generally seemed to have one common goal: They want the Clearwater National Forest to provide opportunities for quality recreation experiences. “This becomes challenging when there are such varied opinions about what constitutes a ‘quality’ recreation experience,” he added.

Comments spanned the gamut from “remove all motorized restrictions” to “do not allow motorized recreation on federal lands.”

He said people are particularly divided about what level of motorized and bicycle use is appropriate in recommended wilderness.

The Forest proposed to restrict motorized uses, including snowmobiles, and mountain bikes, from proposed additions to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness as well as the proposed Mallard-Larkins and Great Burn Wildernesses. That prompted thousands of letters of support and thousands of letters of disapproval. Reilly said those who supported the proposal believe proposed restrictions are necessary to preserve the wilderness character of those lands until Congress acts upon the agency's wilderness recommendations. Those who disapproved of the proposal believe the Forest Service shouldn't enact restrictions prior to Congressional designation.

Reilly said the second hot-button issue was the proposed restriction of 178 miles of trails on the North Fork Ranger District to motorcycles. Again, many supported the proposal because they believe it best protects remote areas with unique fish and wildlife habitat. Motorized users generally banded together to express disapproval of the proposal. They said the motorcycle opportunity currently provided in the remote North Fork country is unique, and that more miles of all types of motorized trails are necessary to accommodate the increasing number of motorized users.

The Forest is using information from public comments to craft a range of travel management options that will be released for public review and comment near the end of the year. A final decision is expected in 2009.

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