



## Flathead National Forest

## Media Release

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### Spotted Bear Ranger District Hosts Open House on Motorized Travel

The Spotted Bear District of the Flathead National Forest will host an open house on **Thursday, February 22**, 5-8pm, at the North Valley Community Center in Columbia Falls to share information about the US Forest Service 2005 Travel Management Rule and ask for input about implementation on the Spotted Bear District.

In 2005, the US Forest Service implemented a national rule regarding travel management to provide sustainable access for motor vehicles, including off-highway vehicles, on all national forests and grasslands. This rule was needed to accommodate increasing numbers and capabilities of off-highway vehicles, while protecting natural resources, promote safety and minimize conflicts. The national rule allows for local decision making on National Forest Systems lands.

The rule requires each national forest to formally designate those roads, trails and areas where motorized travel is permitted, and to show them on a motor vehicle use map. Specific schedules were assigned across Montana to allow for the rule to be fully implemented in the region by 2009. On the Flathead National Forest, the Spotted Bear District is implementing the rule in 2007. The other ranger districts on the forest will follow by implementing in 2008 and 2009.

The Spotted Bear Ranger District will begin the process by reviewing the existing motorized roads and trails on the district. Over-snow vehicle use will not be addressed by this process.

The public is encouraged to attend the open house on February 22 to discuss the national rule and implementation on the Spotted Bear Ranger District with district personnel, including Spotted Bear District Ranger Deb Mucklow. A draft motor vehicle use map will be available.

Comments regarding this process should be communicated to the district by March 23, 2007. For more information, please contact District Ranger Mucklow or Project Leader Dale Luhman at 387-3800.

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