

Motorized Access for Dispersed Camping

Mendocino National Forest

Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Mendocino, Tehama & Trinity Counties, California

Proposed Action

This proposal consists of adding about 77 currently undesignated routes to the existing Mendocino National Forest trail system. These routes would be managed as motorized trails to provide access to about 73 dispersed camp sites. The routes are located in various areas across the Forest. Refer to Appendix A for a detailed list of routes and the dispersed camp sites to which they would provide access.

This proposal is a modified version of the tentative proposal that was presented for public comment in November 2006. Several of the proposed access routes were dropped for various reasons:

- Some dispersed camps were determined to already have motorized access via a currently designated route;
- Some routes were dropped because the camps they accessed were located in areas not suitable for motorized access due to law, regulation, policy, or Forest Plan direction.
- Some routes were erroneously included in the November.

This proposal also includes an access route to one camp (inventoried route #SW284 to dispersed camp site # UA218) that was omitted from the November 2006 version.

Purpose and Need for Action

Mendocino National Forest has a long history of allowing dispersed camping by the general public. Dispersed camping is the practice of setting up camp in an area that has not been developed as a campground facility.

The availability of dispersed camping opportunities benefits both the visiting public and Forest Service managers alike. It provides visitors an opportunity to have a more secluded, self-reliant, unregimented camping experience. It also provides additional camping capacity beyond that provided by developed campgrounds during periods of high demand, such as during hunting season or holiday weekends. This extra capacity costs the Forest Service relatively little because there are no improvements to maintain, and resource impacts are generally light.

Some dispersed camping is dependent on foot or horseback access, and some is dependent on motor vehicle access. This proposal responds to a need to maintain motor vehicle access to certain dispersed campsites that are known to have been historically accessed by motor vehicles.

A substantial number of known dispersed camp sites are not located directly adjacent to a currently designated road or motorized trail. Rather, they are accessed mostly by short, spur routes that have been created and maintained primarily by the passage of campers' vehicles. Such 'user-created' routes have not previously been formally designated for public motorized use through inclusion in the Forest's road or trail systems.

The recent regulatory changes noted above have created a need to formally designate certain of these user-created routes for motorized use. Otherwise, continued future motor vehicle use would be illegal under the new regulations.

Not all user-created routes to known dispersed campsites are included in this proposal. The routes included have been screened to eliminate any with unacceptable resource impacts related to either the route itself or to the campsite it accesses.

This proposal implements the following Forest Plan direction:

- It contributes to the following Forest Goal:
 - Recreation – Provide a full range of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities at levels meeting projected demand and within the physical limits and resource capabilities of the Forest.

Appendix A – Proposal Details

Motorized Access for Dispersed Camping

Tables 1 and 2 list the routes that would be added to the Mendocino National Forest trail system under this proposal. Table 2 lists routes that would be added only on a contingency basis – the nature of the contingency is noted for each route.

The trail management objective for these trails would be to provide access for high clearance vehicles for dispersed camping. All non-commercial vehicle classes would be permitted, but low clearance vehicles would be discouraged. The season of use would be year-long.

The routes are organized in the tables according to the map where their location can be found (refer to Dispersed Camp Access map package). Please note that there is not necessarily one Route ID per Camp ID. Some camp sites are accessed by more than one inventoried route, and some inventoried routes access more than one camp site.

Table 1 – Routes to be added to Mendocino NF designated trail system						
Route ID	Camp ID	Length (feet)	Map Name	Legal Location¹		
				Section	Township	Range
NE485	DC070	633	Alder Springs	13	21	8
NE494	DC075	422	Alder Springs	12	21	8
NE496	DC072	754	Alder Springs	13	21	8
NE602	DC080	1,142	Alder Springs	19, 20	21	7
RD017	DC073	140	Alder Springs	8	21	7
RD018	DC074	147	Alder Springs	8	21	7
RD019	DC071	78	Alder Springs	13	21	8
NE1445	DC064	708	Ball Mountain	5	23	8
RD016	DC091	205	Ball Mountain	16	24	8
RD012	DC045	165	Bartlett Mountain	33	16	9
RD013	DC055	1,184	Bartlett Mountain	17	15	8
SW235	UA314	552	Bartlett Mountain	17	15	8
SW236	UA314	278	Bartlett Mountain	17	15	8
SW575	UA316	395	Bartlett Mountain	20	15	8
SW577-1	DC055	157	Bartlett Mountain	17	15	8
SW582	UA306	2,108	Bartlett Mountain	26	16	9
SE617	DC086	1,515	Bartlett Springs	19	16	7
24N105	UA021	474	Buck Rock	12	24	10
NE1124	UA021	1,243	Buck Rock	12	24	10
NE1125	UA021	338	Buck Rock	12	24	10

¹ Mount Diablo Baseline & Meridian

Table 1 – Routes to be added to Mendocino NF designated trail system						
Route ID	Camp ID	Length (feet)	Map Name	Legal Location¹		
				Section	Township	Range
NW735	DC024	1,292	Buck Rock	5	23	10
NW749	UA028	1,112	Buck Rock	23	24	10
NW760	UA022	617	Buck Rock	9	24	10
NW761	DC014	101	Buck Rock	9	24	10
NW762	UA018	124	Buck Rock	9	24	10
NW776	DC032	1,478	Buck Rock	5	24	10
RD001	DC013	100	Buck Rock	9	24	10
RD010	DC042	109	Elk Mountain	5	16	9
RD011	DC043	174	Elk Mountain	4	16	9
SW024	DC038	346	Elk Mountain	30	17	9
SW574-2	UA296	1,118	Elk Mountain	14	16	10
NE142A	DC084	438	Felkner Hill	25	20	7
SE540	UA266	488	Fouts Springs	36	17	8
NW073	UA160	530	Hull Mountain	11, 14	19	10
NW630	UA117	927	Hull Mountain	12, 13	20	10
NW635	DC059	709	Hull Mountain	12	20	10
NW579	DC051	427	Kneecap Ridge	34	20	9
NW580	DC050	332	Kneecap Ridge	3	19	9
RD020	DC009	205	Leech Lake Mountain	35	25	11
NW759-1	UA024	378	Leech Lake Mountain	12	24	11
NW787	DC008	580	Leech Lake Mountain	27	25	11
NE1150	UA050	454	Log Springs	21	23	9
NE1154	DC114	1,045	Log Springs	28	23	9
NE1155	UA049	392	Log Springs	24	23	9

Table 1 – Routes to be added to Mendocino NF designated trail system						
Route ID	Camp ID	Length (feet)	Map Name	Legal Location¹		
				Section	Township	Range
NE1156	DC111	426	Log Springs	24	23	9
RD004	DC108	198	Log Springs	28	23	8
RD014	DC113	161	Log Springs	11	23	9
NE708	UA062	388	Mendocino Pass	12	22	10
RD002	DC031	145	Mendocino Pass	11	22	10
NE564	UA069	2,437	Plaskett Meadows	24, 25	22	9
NE585	DC057	383	Plaskett Meadows	26	21	9
NE587	UA096	964	Plaskett Meadows	23	21	9
NE654	DC057	625	Plaskett Meadows	26	21	9
NE655	DC057	421	Plaskett Meadows	26	21	9
NE656	DC057	969	Plaskett Meadows	26	21	9
RD006	UA072	213	Plaskett Meadows	31	22	8
NW700	UA071	530	Plaskett Ridge	29	22	10
RD003	DC061	214	Plaskett Ridge	32	22	9
RD007	DC037	125	Potato Hill	14	17	9
SE227	UA293/ UA294	1,747	Potato Hill	4	16	8
SW292	UA224	656	Potato Hill	7	17	8
RD008	UA206	492	Potter Valley	32	18	10
NE1314	DC100	555	Riley Ridge	20	24	9
NE1337	DC094	395	Riley Ridge	23	24	8
NE1339	DC095	416	Riley Ridge	24	24	8

Table 1 – Routes to be added to Mendocino NF designated trail system						
Route ID	Camp ID	Length (feet)	Map Name	Legal Location¹		
				Section	Township	Range
NE1341	UA027	416	Riley Ridge	14	24	8
NE1342	UA027	565	Riley Ridge	14	24	8
NE1620	DC097	202	Riley Ridge	36	24	8
NE1625	DC093	509	Riley Ridge	27	24	8
RD005	DC098	160	Riley Ridge	36	24	8
NE451	DC083	218	Saint John Mountain	23	19	8
NE452	DC083	292	Saint John Mountain	23	19	8

Each of the following routes would be added to the Forest’s trail system only if the described contingency is resolved.

Table 2 - Contingent Routes						
Route ID	Camp ID	Length (feet)	Map Name	Legal Location		
				Section	Township	Range
RD009	DC036	128	Elk Mountain	2	17	10
	Contingency – Site location is close to private land – need to verify that it is on National Forest land before providing public access.					
RD015	DC103	254	Hall Ridge	5	22	7
	Contingency – May be located close enough to road 23N05 that additional motorized trail access would not be necessary.					
End of 22N08A	DC030	<100	Mendocino Pass	12	22	10
	Contingency – May be adequately accessed by road 22N08A; needs GPS ² location to verify.					
SW284	UA218	1,575	Potato Hill	4	17	8
	Contingency – Needs heritage resource review and clearance.					

² Global Positioning System – satellite based system for determining geographic location of features.

Table 2 - Contingent Routes						
Route ID	Camp ID	Length (feet)	Map Name	Legal Location		
				Section	Town- ship	Range
NE373	UA176/ UA178	2,175	Saint John Mountain	2, 3	18	7
	Contingency – need GPS location of route and Snow Mountain Wilderness boundary to determine whether certain segments of route are in or out of the wilderness. If they are in, the route cannot be added to the motorized trail system.					