



United States Department of Agriculture

Using Motorized Vehicles

Eldorado National Forest

If you frequently visit the Eldorado National Forest, you have probably noticed an increase in the number of people using motorized vehicles. Nationally, there has been a 600% increase in the number of Off-Highway Vehicles over the past 30 years. Our goal is to find ways to provide quality motorized opportunities while minimizing user conflicts and protecting forest resources.



(Above and right) Designated route sign. (Below) System route marked with post and road number.



What Is Going On?

Forest Supervisor Ramiro Villalvazo has reached a decision to designate roads and trails where wheeled motor vehicles will be allowed to travel. Vehicle travel off of these roads and trails will be prohibited. During the Summer of 2008, the Eldorado National Forest will continue to allow use on the routes shown on the free Motor Vehicle Restrictions map and associated Forest Order. We anticipate that there will be a new map showing the newly designated system of roads and trails by January 1, 2009.

Where Can I Drive My Vehicle?

Beginning August 25, 2005, wheeled motor vehicles are allowed to operate only on the 2,200 miles of system roads and system motorized trails shown on the Motor Vehicle Restrictions Map. The National Forest Transportation System of roads includes paved, graveled and dirt roads. Paved roads are legal assuming the vehicle is licensed to operate on a highway. All other routes have been the interim Forest Order.

Who Does This Apply To?

This applies to all wheeled motorized vehicles including: cars, trucks, four-wheel drives, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), sand buggies, etc.

Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region



April 2008



How Do I Know Where These Routes Are?

- **Map:** The system routes will be displayed on a current Motor Vehicle Restrictions (MVR) map that is available to the public, free of charge. If the road or trail is not shown on the current Motor Vehicle Restrictions map, it is not legal to drive on.
- **Route Markers:** Routes are marked on the ground with a route marker and road or trail number. Paved roads are legal assuming the vehicle is licensed to operate on a highway.
- **Forest map website:**
www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/maps.
 Download a map of the area you will be visiting.

Trail route marker. Look for the symbols that indicate the vehicle types that are allowed on a trail.



(Above) Forest Highway sign – paved roads.



Forest system road markers (left, right and below).



Who Does This Affect?

This affects more than the Off-Highway Vehicle recreationists. If you camp outside of a developed campground or hunt, for example, you will also be affected. You need to be aware of the rules if you intend to travel off of system roads or trails to park.

Dispersed Camping: Visitors can camp free-of-charge just about anywhere in the national forest, unless it is specifically prohibited. Your vehicle, however, must be parked on a route that is signed as open for motorized vehicles (or within a reasonable distance so as not to block the roadway or create a safety hazard). You may not travel beyond gates and barriers.

Some of the “access” routes to remote spots along a river, stream, or lakes are routes created over the years by visitors. If the route leading to a spot is not signed as shown in the pictures or shown on the current Motor Vehicle Use map, it is not open to drive on.

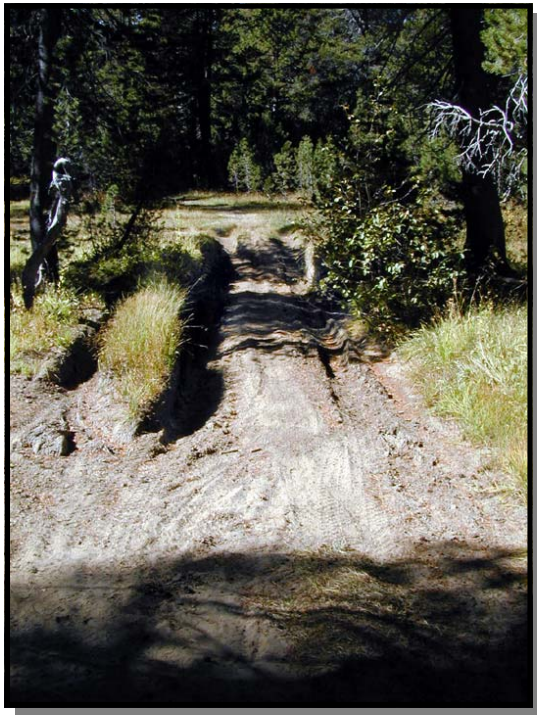
Remember: The California State Vehicle Code still applies in National Forests.

Woodcutters: Access off of system roads is controlled by your woodcutting permit. Please read all the instructions when you purchase your permit.

Hunting: Some visitors hunt or scout by patrolling the backroads in their vehicle. Please stick to the system routes. When you are on foot, keep in mind how far you will have to pack your “critter”. You can still use your non-motorized game cart.

Exceptions: The restriction of motor vehicles to system roads and trails does not apply to:

- ◆ Snowmobiles
- ◆ Watercraft
- ◆ Aircraft
- ◆ Non-motorized use (equestrian, mountain bikes)
- ◆ Uses authorized by permit.



Many non-system routes lack water drainage which can lead to damage to the road, adjacent vegetation, or other resources.



(Above) Some trails have been created by use. If there is no sign on the route showing it as a system route, it is closed. (Left) No Motor Vehicles route marker typically used to indicate a closure area.

Where Can't I Drive?

- ◆ **Cross-Country travel** is prohibited.
- ◆ **User-created routes:** Over the years, visitors have created their own routes, or “opened” routes the Forest Service previously closed to prevent environmental damage. These routes are closed. The Forest Service has identified more than 600 miles of these user-created routes on this forest alone.
- ◆ **Gates/barriers:** Vehicles are not allowed to travel beyond gates or barriers.
- ◆ **Private land:** Use of roads on private land requires the permission of the landowner.
- ◆ **Restoration areas:** The Forest Service is charged with managing our natural resources. Areas that contain resource damage, such as erosion, stream sedimentation, damage to archeological sites and meadows, from motor vehicle use or other forest uses will and are being restored or rehabilitated, and closed, regardless of the Eldorado Motorized Route Designation Process.



Restoration areas. (Above) An example of a completed restoration project. This treatment was implemented in the Lyons Creek area on the Pacific Ranger District. (Left) Restoration area sign.



District restoration/rehabilitation projects that have already been planned to prevent or repair resource degradation will be on-going. These projects are a priority for the forest. Thus, if you see roads or trails being blocked or obliterated, a restoration project is being implemented, with proper environmental analysis and documentation.

Travel Management Process

Each National Forest in California is designating their route system using the five-step process.

On the Eldorado . . .

Step 1: Inventory-The process started in 2002 with a complete inventory of all routes that existed. This included "user created routes" that were made by people traveling off road. All these "user created" routes, along with system trails and roads were displayed on the initial inventory maps.

Step 2: Interim Forest Order -The Eldorado's Step 2 order was the judge's court ruling. An interim Forest Order was implemented on August 25, 2005 allowing wheeled motorized travel only on "system" roads and "system" motorized trails as displayed on the free Motorized Vehicle Use map. This step is intended to stop the proliferation of additional "user-created" routes.

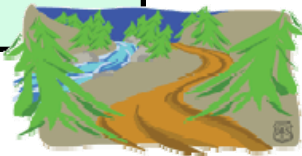
Step 3: Develop Proposed Route System - In Step 3, the Forest Service worked with interested public to develop a proposed designated route system. This was the starting point for the environmental analysis.

Step 4: NEPA Process - Once a proposed designated route system was identified, the Forest Service completed an environmental analysis as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The environmental impacts of the proposed system was analyzed and displayed along with alternatives that were developed through public input. This step ended with a decision by the Forest Supervisor on April 2, 2008.

Step 5: Motor Vehicle Use Map - the last step is to prepare a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), which will require people to stay on the newly designated routes. The MVUM will show the roads and trails motor vehicles are allowed to travel on. This map will be updated yearly to reflect any changes to the backbone system that was created through the Step 4 decision.

Project Contact Information: Travel Management Project

100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667
Hotline/Voicemail: (530) 295-5666
Email: eldoradoroutes@fs.fed.us



TREAD LIGHTLY PLEDGE

Travel & recreate with minimum impact.

Respect the environment and the rights of others.

Educate yourself. Plan and prepare before you go.

Allow for future use of the outdoors. By leaving it better than you found it.

Discover the rewards of responsible recreation.



OFFICE LOCATIONS:

Placerville Ranger District

7 ½ miles east of Placerville
on Highway 50 - Cedar Grove exit #54
4260 Eight Mile Road
Camino, CA 95709
(530) 644-2324

Pacific Ranger District

16 miles east of Placerville
on Highway 50 - Mill Run Road
7887 Highway 50
Pollock Pines, CA 95726
(530) 647-5415

Amador Ranger District

17 miles east of Jackson
on Highway 88
26820 Silver Drive
Pioneer, CA 95666
(209) 295-4251

Georgetown Ranger District

3 miles east of Georgetown
on Wentworth Springs Road
7600 Wentworth Springs Road
Georgetown, CA 95634
(530) 333-4312

Supervisor's Office

Placerville Drive/Forni Road exit,
(behind the Midas store.)
100 Forni Road
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 622-5061