

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

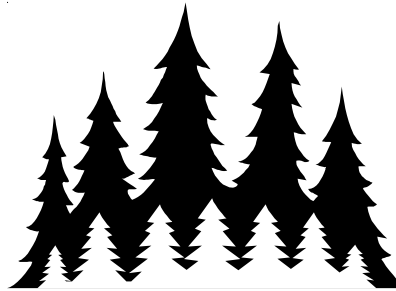
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United
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Service



A Letter from the Forest Supervisor...

During the summer and fall of 2007, the Forest's travel management proposal was widely discussed among the many people who have an interest in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF). It is apparent that motorized access and the use of motorized vehicles on the WWNF are important to many forest users. We have developed this Newsletter to provide information about the progress and the next steps in the travel management decision-making process.

We would like to thank everyone who provided comments during the scoping period. Between mid-May and November 16, we received over 500 site-specific comment letters and maps, approximately 1,500 e-mails, over 2,000 "form letters," and several petitions. Your comments are helping us understand your interest, current travel uses, and desires for travel management on the forest.

We read each comment and tried to determine what changes or modifications, if any, the commenter would like to the proposed action. The comments were also used to help us identify the most significant issues. These issues, which are summarized on the following page, will act as a guide in designing alternatives. We will soon begin developing alternatives to the proposed action. We anticipate having the alternatives developed by mid-summer 2008.

Once the alternatives are developed, their many effects on the physical and human (social and economic) environment will be analyzed. The issues, description of the alternatives, and the results of the effects analysis will be documented in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). We expect to publish the DEIS for public review and comment in early 2009. Additional public meetings will be held during the formal DEIS review period. A final decision on the travel management plan will not be made until all comments on the DEIS are reviewed, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement has been completed.

Thank you for engaging in the travel management planning process. We look forward to your continued involvement and participation.

Steve Ellis, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor

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Significant Issues that will be Used to Guide Development of Alternatives

Your letters, comments, maps and other site-specific information have been read and analyzed by our Forest Interdisciplinary Team to identify the issues, concerns, and opportunities related to the proposed action. This is a summary of significant issues that will act as a guideline in alternative development.

Recreational Experience

We received many comments relating to the variety of activities and the type of **recreation experience** people are looking for on the National Forest. Both motorized and non-motorized recreational users voiced the desire to preserve their outdoor heritage for future generations. The key question related to recreation experience is how to provide a balance of motorized and non-motorized uses in a variety of settings.



Resource Protection

The need to protect **natural resources** was another concern. The challenge we face is how to best manage motorized use on the National Forest and still protect wildlife and fisheries habitat, threatened and endangered species, water quality and prevent the spread of noxious weeds.

Access

In addition, to the concerns around recreational experiences, we received many questions about motorized **access** on the Wallowa-Whitman for people with disabilities, emergency and law enforcement activities, firefighting efforts, administrative use, private land access, mining operations and firewood gathering. The challenge we heard is the need to design a travel management plan that provides appropriate access and direction to meet the needs of the many users of the forest.



Social and Economic

There is a concern that travel management decisions may affect the **economy** of local communities where recreation activities contribute to local tourism. The ability to recreate, and access to recreation activities, is often considered a primary benefit for those who live in communities near the forest.

Implementation

The public felt that **implementation** was a key issue to the success of the plan and that if the final plan wasn't easy to understand and didn't provide a variety of motorized opportunities, it would be difficult to enforce. The public is concerned the change in motorized access on the Wallowa-Whitman from an "open" forest to a motorized system designed to permit use only on designated routes and areas, has the potential to create a challenge for enforcement of the new plan.

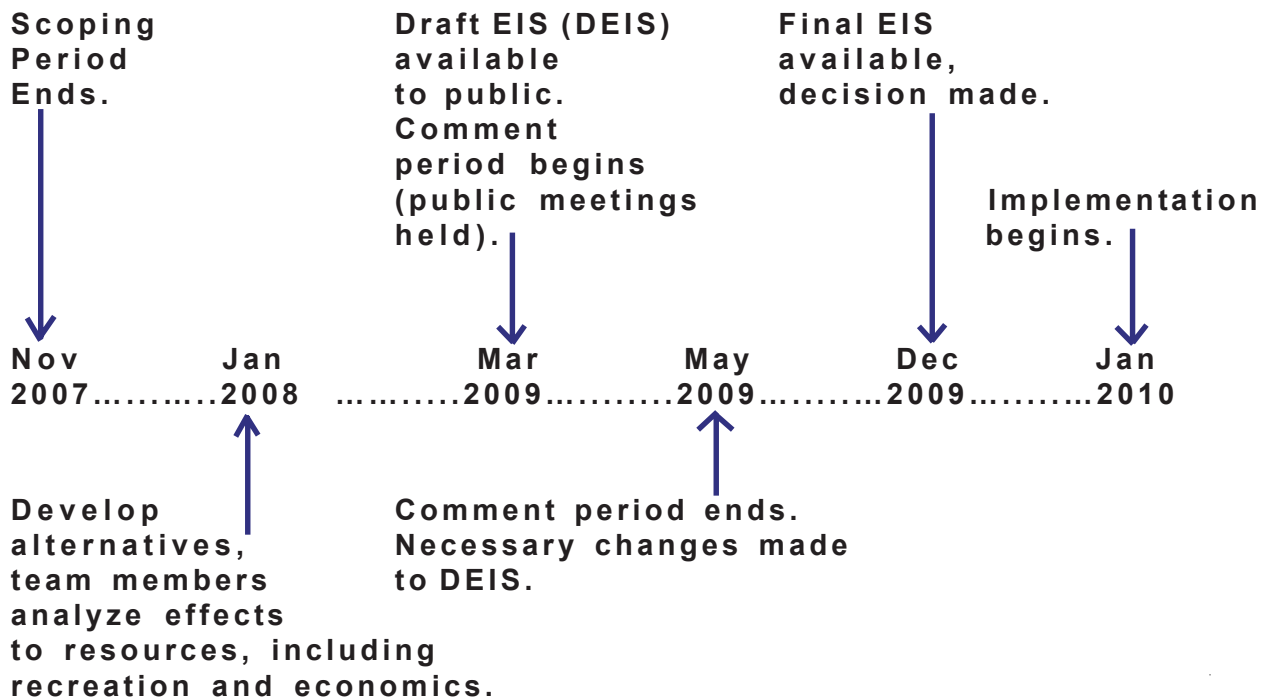
Next Steps

The significant issues identified from your comments will be used to formulate alternatives to the proposed action, prescribe mitigation measures, and to analyze and disclose the possible effects the proposed action and the alternatives may have on the physical and human (social and economic) environment. Consultation with Federal and State agencies, local governments and affected tribes has begun and will continue throughout the planning process. The following timeline details our process and the next opportunity for public comment.

Below: ATV users on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Facing page, middle: Baker County residents and USFS employees begin a meeting regarding Travel Management concerns. Bottom: Fall traffic going to Dutch Flat Trailhead.



Current Timeline



Response Requested



We will be updating our mailing lists and providing information on the travel management plan both electronically and by hardcopy.

To remain on the mailing list and to continue to receive updates, please send an e-mail to: wwnf_travel_mgt_plan@fs.fed.us, answering the following questions:

Do you prefer mail or e-mail correspondence?

Based on your answer above provide an legible e-mail or mailing address.

If there are no changes, please simply notify us of you preference to stay on the mailing list.

Thank you in advance.

Do you want more information? Go To:

**The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Homepage at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/>**

Once on the homepage, scan down to the middle of the page underneath 'Enjoy your National Forest,' there is a travel management link with an ATV icon.

This web page offers a wealth of information including:

- Current updates
- Frequently asked questions
- Strategies and processes
- Maps and proposed action plans
- Timelines
- A link to the National OHV program site.

You can also e-mail comments to wwnf_travel_mgt_plan@fs.fed.us

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Attn: Travel Management
La Grande Ranger District
3502 Highway 30
La Grande, OR 97850

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