



**FOREST SERVICE HANDBOOK  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (WO)  
WASHINGTON, DC**

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK**

**CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

**Amendment No.:** 7709.55-2008-x

**Effective Date:**

**Duration:** This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

**Approved:** NAME OF APPROVING OFFICIAL  
Title of Approving Official

**Date Approved:** mm/dd/yyyy

**Posting Instructions:** Amendments are numbered consecutively by handbook number and calendar year. Post by document; remove the entire document and replace it with this amendment. Retain this transmittal as the first page(s) of this document. This is the first amendment to this handbook.

<b>New Document</b>	7709.55_10	12 Pages
<b>Superseded Document(s) by Issuance Number and Effective Date</b>	10 thru 13 (FSH 3/88)	6 Pages

**Digest:**

7709.55 – Changes title from “Transportation Planning Handbook” to “Travel Planning Handbook.”

10 – Removes direction on regional transportation planning in its entirety and replaces it with direction on the travel planning process, consistent with the travel management rule at 36 CFR Part 212 and revised FSM 7710.

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

**Digest--Continued:**

10.2 – Adds objectives for travel planning, including focusing travel planning, avoiding unnecessary inventory, coordinating with federal, state, local, and tribal entities, and obtaining public involvement in the designation process.

10.3 – Adds direction on the six-step process guiding designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use.

10.5 – Adds a cross-reference to the definitions in FSM 7705.

11 – Adds section entitled “Step 1: Compile Existing Travel Management Direction.”

11.1 – Adds direction to compile existing travel management decisions, review state motor vehicle codes and other applicable local law, and coordinate with law enforcement personnel. Provides direction for administrative units and ranger districts with established designations.

11.2 – Adds explanation of the relationship of land management plans to travel management decisions.

11.3 – Adds direction on incorporation of existing travel management decisions into designations made pursuant to 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B.

11.4 – Adds requirement to identify the jurisdiction over forest transportation facilities and to coordinate with federal, state, and local authorities to resolve uncertain or disputed jurisdiction over a forest transportation facility.

12 – Adds direction on information needs for travel analysis and travel management decision-making.

12.1 – Adds requirements for identifying roads, trails, and areas for consideration for designation.

13 – Adds discussion of travel analysis and its relationship to travel management decisions.

14 – Adds direction on conducting necessary environmental analysis and decision-making and on adequate preparatory work for environmental analysis.

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

**Digest--Continued:**

15.1 – Clarifies the scale of a motor vehicle use map (MVUM). Provides the web address for the Motor Vehicle Use Map Production Guide. Adds requirements related to MVUM production. Provides direction on notification of the public about the availability of a MVUM.

15.2 – Adds the requirement to establish road and trail management objectives.

16 – Adds provisions requiring public education and enforcement of designations and monitoring of motor vehicle use.

16.1 – Adds cross-references to EM 7100-15 and FSM 7716.42.

16.2 – Adds direction about the importance of effective enforcement of designations and public education.

16.3 – Adds direction about the link between monitoring and revision of designations.

16.4 – Adds direction on issuing written authorizations for motor vehicle use inconsistent with designations shown on an MVUM.

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

**Table of Contents**

10.2 – Objectives ..... 5  
10.3 – Policy ..... 5  
10.5 – Definitions ..... 7  
**11 – STEP 1: COMPILE EXISTING TRAVEL MANAGEMENT DIRECTION..... 7**  
11.1 – Baseline System..... 7  
11.2 – Land Management Plans..... 7  
11.3 – Existing Travel Management Decisions ..... 8  
11.4 – Jurisdiction Over a Forest Transportation Facility ..... 8  
**12 – STEP 2: ASSEMBLE RESOURCE AND SOCIAL DATA ..... 8**  
12.1 – Identifying Roads, Trails, and Areas for Consideration ..... 9  
**13 – STEP 3: USE TRAVEL ANALYSIS TO IDENTIFY PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE 9**  
**14 – STEP 4: CONDUCT NECESSARY ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND  
DECISION-MAKING ..... 10**  
**15 – STEP 5: IDENTIFY DESIGNATED ROUTES AND AREAS ON AN MVUM ..... 10**  
15.1 – MVUMs..... 10  
15.2 – Road and Trail Management Objectives ..... 11  
**16 – STEP 6: IMPLEMENT, MONITOR, AND REVISE..... 11**  
16.1 – Signs..... 12  
16.2 – Enforcement..... 12  
16.3 – Monitoring ..... 12

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

This chapter provides direction on travel planning for the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use.

## **10.2 – Objectives**

1. Tightly focus decisions related to the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use. Reconsideration of the entire forest transportation system is not required or appropriate (FSM 7715.1).
2. For many administrative units, designation of routes and areas for motor vehicle use will result in a shift from cross-country motor vehicle use to a system of routes and possibly areas designated for motor vehicle use. For other administrative units, route and area designation will simply confirm travel management decisions that have already been made.
3. Avoid unnecessary inventory.
4. Coordinate with federal, state, county and other local entities and tribal governments, and obtain public involvement as required in the designation process (36 CFR 212.52(a); FSM 7715.3). When coordination with other governmental entities and public involvement are required, involve them early and throughout the designation process to engender trust, credibility, and coordination and to provide an integrated system of designated routes and areas.

## **10.3 – Policy**

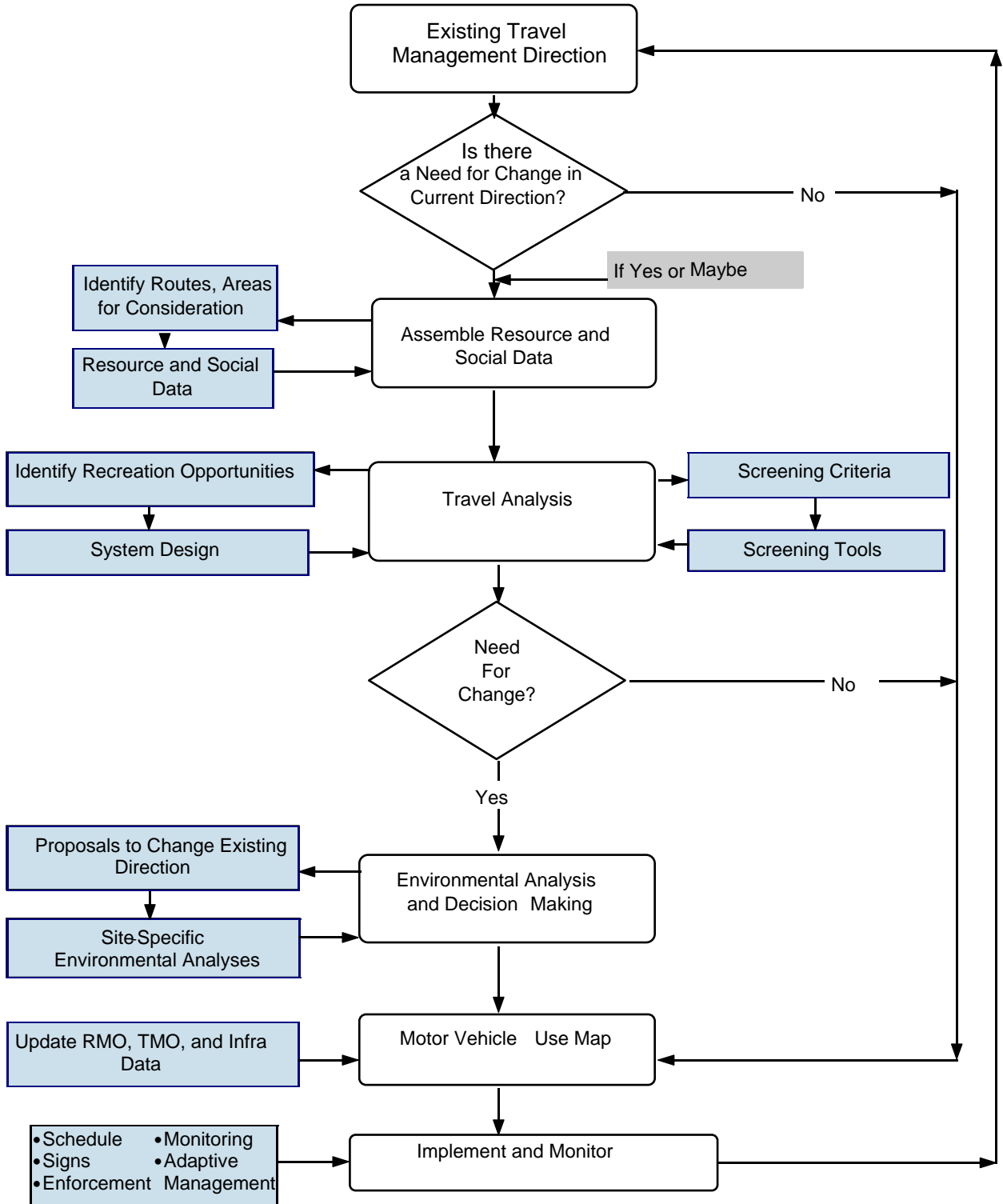
Use the following six-step process to guide designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use under 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B (see ex. 01).

1. Compile existing travel management direction.
2. Assemble resource and social data.
3. Use travel analysis to identify proposals for change.
4. Conduct appropriate environmental analysis and decision-making.
5. Identify designated routes and areas on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM).
6. Implement, monitor, and revise.

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
 CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

**10.3 – Exhibit 01**

**TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**



**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

## **10.5 – Definitions**

See FSM 7705 for definitions of terms used in this chapter.

## **11 – STEP 1: COMPILE EXISTING TRAVEL MANAGEMENT DIRECTION**

Existing travel management direction for each administrative unit or ranger district reflects its history of travel planning, occupancy and use, road and trail construction, and past decisions, including those contained in the applicable land management plan.

### **11.1 – Baseline System**

1. Consolidate existing direction on travel management for the area under consideration into a single location. This step should not create new direction. Rather, this step involves compiling past decisions that guide motor vehicle use, including maps, travel atlases, road and trail management objectives (FSM 7714), maintenance records, and monitoring reports for National Forest System (NFS) roads and NFS trails on the administrative unit or ranger district.
2. Carefully review state motor vehicle codes and other applicable local law regarding motor vehicle operation, licensing and registration, safety, and motorized mixed use. Consult with Law Enforcement and Investigations Staff and coordinate with affected state and local law enforcement agencies involved in traffic enforcement for the affected area. Traffic on NFS roads is subject to state traffic laws except when in conflict with designations established under 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B, or with the rules at 36 CFR Part 261. Whether motorized mixed use is allowed on an NFS road is determined by state traffic law or local ordinances, unless it conflicts with the designation for that road established under 36 CFR 212.51.
3. If existing travel management decisions for an administrative unit or a ranger district restrict motor vehicle use (other than over-snow vehicle use and other exempted uses) to the designated system, the existing decisions may, with public notice but no further analysis or decision-making, be identified on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM).

### **11.2 – Land Management Plans**

1. Land management plans are strategic documents. They establish desired conditions and objectives, identify the suitability of land for various uses, and describe guidelines for resource protection (FSM 1920). Approval of a plan, plan amendment, or plan revision typically does not include a final decision designating roads, trails, or areas for motor vehicle use or otherwise restricting motor vehicle use. Rather, the land management plan provides information and guidance for travel management decisions.

## **FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

2. Travel management decisions are made at the project level. They must be consistent with land management plans (FSM 7712.2).
  
3. Some land management plans prepared under the 1982 planning rule include travel management decisions as plan standards. The responsible official generally should avoid including travel management decisions in land management plans prepared or revised under current planning regulations (36 CFR Part 219, Subpart A). If travel management decisions are approved simultaneously with a plan, plan amendment, or plan revision, the travel management decisions must be accompanied by appropriate environmental analysis. Travel management decisions incorporated in land management plan standards under the 1982 planning rule are part of the existing travel management direction for an administrative unit or a ranger district.

### **11.3 – Existing Travel Management Decisions**

1. The regulations at 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B, do not require reconsideration of previous travel management decisions.
  
2. Many administrative units or ranger districts have NFS roads and NFS trails that are in effect already designated for the uses for which they are currently managed. All administrative units or ranger districts, for example, have NFS roads managed as open to highway-legal vehicles (generally NFS roads classified at Operational Maintenance Levels 2 through 5). These roads are in effect already designated for use by highway-legal vehicles.

### **11.4 – Jurisdiction Over a Forest Transportation Facility**

1. Identify jurisdiction over forest transportation facilities. The designation process applies only to NFS roads and NFS trails. Some forest roads and forest trails are state, county, or municipal routes authorized by legally documented rights-of-way. While the Forest Service may have some authority to regulate use of these roads and trails to protect NFS lands, these routes are not subject to designation under 36 CFR 212.51.
  
2. When jurisdiction over a forest transportation facility is uncertain, coordinate with federal, state, county, and local public road authorities and consult with the local Office of the General Counsel. Legal research and title searches may sometimes be necessary to establish jurisdiction over a forest transportation facility.

## **12 – STEP 2: ASSEMBLE RESOURCE AND SOCIAL DATA**

1. Travel analysis and travel management decisions require information about use patterns, natural resource conditions, user demand, and social and economic interactions. Gather only the information necessary to make informed travel management decisions. Travel management decisions do not require an inventory of unauthorized routes.



**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

2. The public is a valuable source of information. Public participation at this stage may include sharing information about unauthorized routes, joint collection of resource data, and collaborative learning about natural resource impacts. An open public process can increase understanding about travel management issues and set the stage for successful decision-making.

### **12.1 – Identifying Roads, Trails, and Areas for Consideration**

1. The baseline for travel analysis and decisions related to the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use includes a complete and accurate inventory of NFS roads and NFS trails and areas on NFS lands that are managed for motor vehicle use. This inventory must include maps, as well as information on the authorized uses and characteristics of each route. Much of this information should be contained in the applicable forest transportation atlas.
2. Administrative units should establish a process for identifying any unauthorized routes that should be considered in travel analysis. Appropriate consideration should be given to unauthorized routes, based on their potential contribution to the forest transportation system.

### **13 – STEP 3: USE TRAVEL ANALYSIS TO IDENTIFY PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE**

1. The first two steps of the travel planning process overlap with the first three steps of the travel analysis process (FSH 7709.55, ch. 20). Responsible officials should conduct the planning process to prevent duplication of effort. These two six-step processes are not intended to be rigid. Responsible officials should design these processes to meet local needs.
2. Travel analysis (FSH 7709.55, ch. 20) provides a comprehensive view of the road and trail network across a broad landscape. Some travel management issues (such as response to visitor demand, open road density, and other wildlife issues) should be considered at a broad scale, while other issues (such as potential conflicts among uses on a particular trail and mitigation measures for a particular stream crossing) are best evaluated at a smaller scale. Travel analysis is often the point where broad-scale issues can be identified. Site-specific issues are addressed at the project level (FSH 7709.55, sec. 14).
3. Travel analysis should form the basis for proposed actions related to the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use. Some of these proposed actions will be evaluated through environmental analysis. Examples include proposals to add unauthorized routes to the forest transportation system, proposals to establish or change prohibitions or restrictions on motor vehicle use, and proposals to change motor vehicle use on NFS roads and NFS trails. Travel analysis does not itself produce these decisions.

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

**14 – STEP 4: CONDUCT NECESSARY ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DECISION-MAKING**

1. Proposed changes to the forest transportation system may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws. Forest Service NEPA procedures are found in 36 CFR Part 220 and FSH 1909.15.
2. If motor vehicle use is not restricted to a designated system, propose such a restriction and conduct appropriate environmental analysis and documentation.
3. Review existing travel or roads analysis and conduct any necessary travel analysis before conducting environmental analysis of a proposal to change current travel management direction. Avoid duplication by incorporating relevant information from travel analysis into site-specific environmental analysis, documentation, and decision-making.

**15 – STEP 5: IDENTIFY DESIGNATED ROUTES AND AREAS ON AN MVUM**

**15.1 – MVUMs**

1. Publication of a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) (36 CFR 212.56) completes the designation process. The prohibition on motor vehicle use off the designated system (36 CFR 261.13) goes into effect and is enforceable when designated routes and areas are identified on an MVUM.
2. An MVUM must cover an entire administrative unit or ranger district (36 CFR 212.1). If environmental analysis in step 4 is conducted at a smaller scale (such as at the scale of a watershed), do not publish an MVUM until designation supported by appropriate documentation is complete for the entire ranger district or administrative unit.
3. Link trails data in the Forest Service's Infrastructure database to geographic information system spatial data as described in the Motor Vehicle Use Map Production Guide, and use those data to produce an MVUM. This guide is available on the intranet at <http://gis.gsc.wo.fs.fed.us/wo/mvum/index.php>.
4. An MVUM for an administrative unit or a ranger district may be displayed on more than one sheet of paper. If the MVUM covers a broad geographic area or the route density is high, a single page may not be sufficient to display the detail necessary to identify designated routes and areas. An MVUM may include as many pages at whatever scale is necessary to identify sufficiently the designated roads, trails, and areas of the administrative unit or ranger district.

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

5. An MVUM must meet requirements established by the Washington Office Director of Engineering (FSM 7710.42). These requirements are identified in the Motor Vehicle Use Map Production Guide.
6. The following methods may be used individually or in combination to notify the public of the availability of an MVUM:
  - a. Publishing a notice in the local newspaper;
  - b. Posting a notice at the ranger district office;
  - c. Posting a notice at the headquarters of the administrative unit;
  - d. Posting a notice at the local post office or local places of business; and/or
  - e. Posting a notice on the appropriate Forest Service website.

## **15.2 – Road and Trail Management Objectives**

1. Road management objectives (RMOs) (FSM 7714 and 7731) and trail management objectives (TMOs) (FSM 2353.12) document direction for day-to-day management of an NFS road or an NFS trail based on travel management decisions. Therefore, establishing RMOs and TMOs is not a separate travel management process and does not involve additional decision-making. Adjustments to RMOs and TMOs may be required subsequent to travel management decisions.
2. An RMO documents the intended purpose of an NFS road. An RMO enumerates design, operation, and maintenance criteria and documents traffic management strategies for each vehicle class allowed on an NFS road (FSM 7731). An RMO also documents forest orders and permits associated with the road.
3. A TMO documents the five Trail Fundamentals, Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classifications, and travel management strategies as they apply to an NFS trail.

## **16 – STEP 6: IMPLEMENT, MONITOR, AND REVISE**

Implementation of travel management decisions requires effective public education, enforcement, and monitoring. Results and information from all of these initiatives help determine whether designations should be revised.

**FSH 7709.55 – TRAVEL PLANNING HANDBOOK  
CHAPTER 10 – TRAVEL PLANNING FOR DESIGNATIONS**

## **16.1 – Signs**

Guidance on signing is found in EM 7100-15, “Sign and Poster Guidelines for the Forest Service.” Signs should complement and be consistent with the applicable MVUM (FSM 7716.42).

## **16.2 – Enforcement**

Enforcement of 36 CFR 261.13 and 36 CFR 261.14 should be targeted and effective, with a sufficient field presence by qualified forest protection officers, law enforcement officers, and other agency law enforcement personnel, consistent with availability of resources. Public education, route design, and traffic management strategies can complement law enforcement and reduce the number of violations.

## **16.3 – Monitoring**

1. Monitoring involves the following types of activities:
  - a. Implementation Monitoring. Evaluating consistency with the applicable land management plan and compliance with travel management decisions, including any required mitigation measures.
  - b. Validation Monitoring. Verifying assumptions and models used in travel analysis and environmental analysis. Use applicable criteria established in 36 CFR 212.55 as a basis for identifying effects to monitor (FSM 7717.1, para. 2).
  - c. Effectiveness Monitoring. Evaluating the effectiveness of management and enforcement actions in achieving the desired outcomes of travel management decisions, including restricting motor vehicle use to designated routes and areas.
  - d. Program Monitoring. Tracking and evaluating whether the long-term objectives of travel management for the administrative unit or ranger district have been achieved.
2. Monitoring can help responsible officials identify the need to change or make new travel management decisions. Changes to the system of designated routes and areas may include constructing new routes, removing designations, or changing designated vehicle classes or seasons of use. Revisions to designations are governed by 36 CFR 212.54. In most cases, these changes (including connected actions and cumulative effects) can be addressed on a site-specific basis and will not trigger reconsideration of decisions governing the entire system of designated roads, trails, and areas on an administrative unit or a ranger district.