

NATIONAL FORESTS-OUR TRAILS ARE IN TROUBLE

Fact Sheet

- *“We believe that off-highway vehicles are a legitimate use of the National Forest System. But it’s a use that should be managed carefully. That’s what our new rule for OHV use on national forest system lands is all about: providing access that can be used and enjoyed into the future. And if we want to sustain that use, then we’ve got to work together.”* Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth.
- Consider the following statement from the Final Rule, page 68285/6; *“The overall network of routes designated for motor vehicle use would then expand. These designated routes will form a more stable base for long-term management and will receive increased maintenance, through agency resources and cooperative relationships, thereby expanding opportunities for motor vehicle users”*.
- Many National Forests are planning to close up to 60% of the existing trails & roads to motorized use.
- Based on a replacement cost of \$34,000 per mile, these trails, proposed for closure, have an estimated value of tens of billions of dollars.
- Removal or decommissioning of a Forest trail in the past has cost between \$3500 & \$22,000 per mile. Current proposed closures would at a minimum cost \$400 million, which could easily maintain most existing Forest motorized trails for decades.
- Based on Forest User Visitor Numbers Studies over 23% of people in the US enjoy Off Highway Vehicle recreation.
 - They conservatively spend millions of dollars per year in rural communities near each existing National Forest multiple use trail system.
 - They spend far more than this each year in their home areas through purchase of OHV’s, recreation vehicles & supplies.
- Total footprint of all existing motorized trails in a typical National Forest is less than one tenth of one percent (0.1%)
- Motorized trails allow all types of recreation, so every dollar spent on their maintenance benefits everyone, instead of a few.
- Motorized trails provide access for the disabled & our aging population.
- Most existing multiple use trail systems have been maintained by motorized volunteers for decades in partnership with their local Forest.
- Through OHV trail funds, motorized users provide up to 30% more funding for trail maintenance than all non-motorized groups combined.
- The massive proposed closures of multiple use trails in many Forests will concentrate use, increase impacts, reduce user satisfaction, increase maintenance costs & discourage volunteers.
- Off Highway Vehicles are used to gain access for all kinds of other recreation including camping, hiking, fishing, horse riding, hunting, rock climbing, boating & more.

Please call ###-###-#### to find out more about the Forest Plan for the trails in your area.

This fact sheet courtesy of www.TrailsInTrouble.org

References:

USFS Recreation Statistics Update1, Update Report No. 3, October, 2004

Cordell, H. Ken, et al. 2004. Outdoor Recreation for 21st Century America. State College, PA: Venture Publishing Inc. 293 p.

USFS National Visitor Use Monitoring 2004

USFS Infra database

USFS OHV Rule 2005

National Forest Service Road Decommissioning: An attempt to read through the numbers (Field Notes)

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