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**Southwestern
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Proposed Action for Managing Motorized Travel

Santa Fe National Forest



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Background

People use motor vehicles to access the Santa Fe National Forest for a number of activities, such as hiking, horseback riding, hunting, camping, sightseeing, viewing wildlife, fishing, and collecting firewood or other forest products. People also use vehicles for administrative and commercial activities such as logging, grazing management, and utility maintenance.

The Forest Service has identified four major threats to the national forests and grasslands: 1) the risk of catastrophic fire, 2) the loss of open space, 3) invasive species, and 4) unmanaged recreation, including the effects of unmanaged off-highway vehicles (OHVs). In response to the latter, on November 9, 2005 the Forest Service published final travel management regulations governing OHVs and other motor vehicles on national forests and grasslands. The new regulations amended Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, parts 212, 251, 261, and removed part 295. These regulations together are referred to as the Travel Management Rule throughout this document. When referenced, the citation has been shortened for convenience. For example, 36 CFR 212.50 will be referenced as section 212.50.

The Travel Management Rule implements Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 regarding the off-road use of motor vehicles on Federal lands. The intent of the Travel Management Rule is to provide motorized access to National Forest System lands in a sustainable manner.

The Travel Management Rule requires that Forests designate a system of roads, trails, and areas open for motor vehicle use by class of vehicle, and if appropriate, by time of year. The designated roads, trails, and areas will be published on a motor vehicle use map, which will be available to the public. After routes and areas are designated and the motor vehicle use map published, motor vehicle use not in accordance with these designations will be prohibited. The Travel Management Rule also addresses the use of vehicles to access campsites and retrieve big game. Under the Travel Management Rule, national forests that do not already restrict motorized travel to designated roads, trails, and areas must do so.

Under the Travel Management Rule, the Santa Fe National Forest will continue to provide access to the Forest for activities like camping, hunting, hiking, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, driving for pleasure, and others. Santa Fe National Forest staff, recognizing that the culture of northern New Mexico is tied closely to the land, understand the importance of maintaining traditional and cultural uses of the Forest. The gathering of forest products such as firewood, vigas, latillas, and piñon nuts, as well as providing access to rangelands, will be

ensured such as through the Forest's permit system or other written authorization as allowed for under the Travel Management Rule.

Terms Used in this Document

A glossary of terms and their sources are located at the end of this document, and the most commonly used terms are defined in this section as well. The term off-highway vehicle (OHV) includes any motor vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain. This, for example, includes pick-up trucks, cars with four-wheel drive, and motorcycles. The Travel Management Rule uses the term OHV, whereas the Santa Fe National Forest Plan refers to "ORVs" (off-road vehicles). OHV and ORV mean the same thing, and this document will use OHV. The use of the term all-terrain vehicle (ATV) refers to a type of off-highway vehicle that travels on three or more low-pressure tires, has handle-bar steering, is less than or equal to 50 inches in width, and has a seat designed to be straddled by the operator. An example of an ATV is shown in Figure 1. Where "forest road" or "forest trail" is used, it means a road or trail wholly or partly within, or adjacent to, and serving the National Forest System that is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources. An "unauthorized" road or trail refers to a road or trail that is not a forest road or trail or a temporary road or trail and that is not included in a forest transportation atlas. Unauthorized routes include user-created routes.



Figure 1. An example of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV).

Location of Project

The Santa Fe National Forest, comprised of over 1.5 million acres, is located in northern New Mexico as shown. The entire Forest is the project area that will be analyzed under the Travel Management Rule.

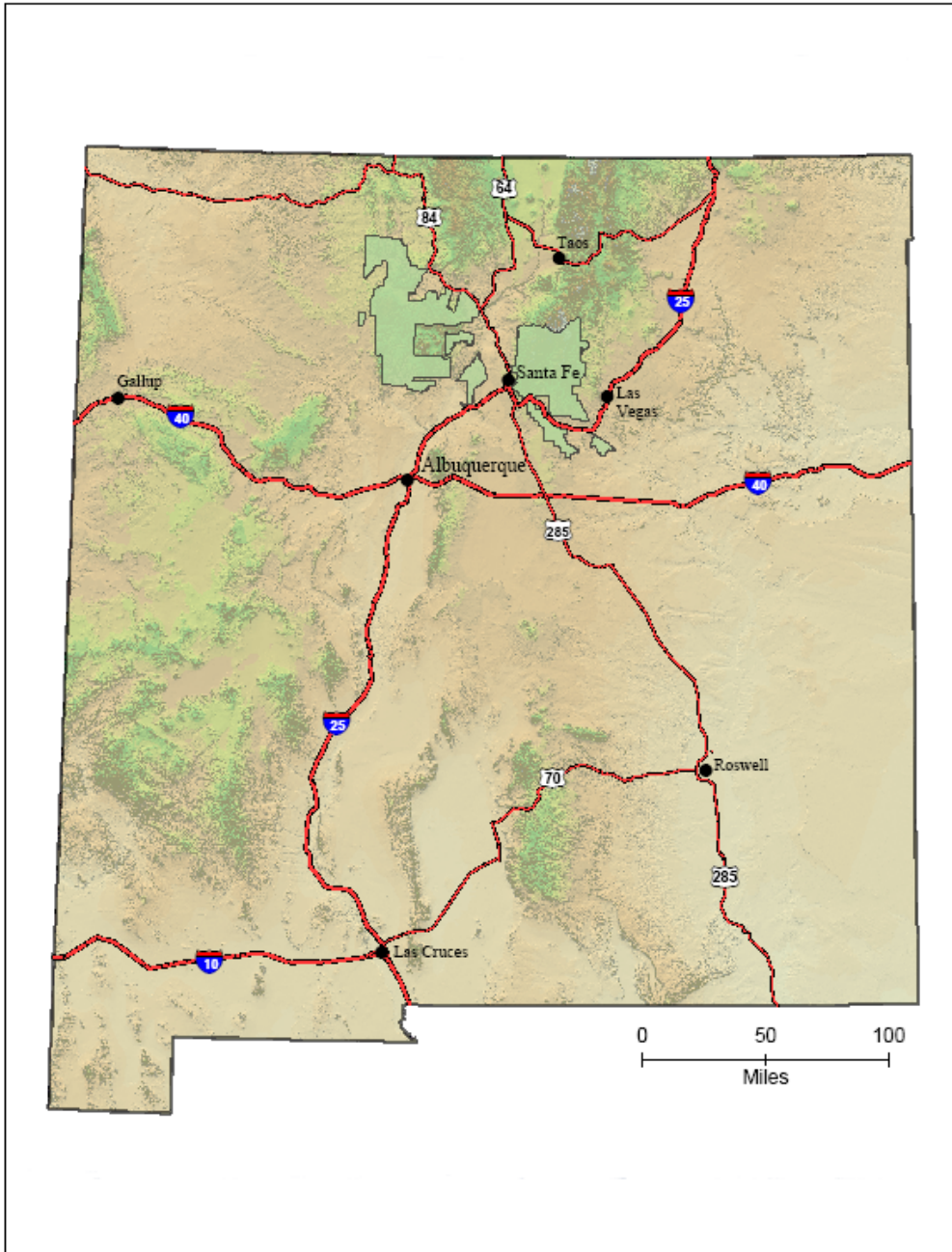


Figure 2. Location of Santa Fe National Forest.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to designate a system of roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use by the public by class of vehicle and time of year on the Santa Fe National Forest. Designating routes and areas open for motorized use implements the Travel Management Rule issued by the Forest Service on November 9, 2005.

On the Santa Fe National Forest, complying with the Travel Management Rule means there is a need for: 1) amended Forest Plan direction consistent with the Rule regarding motorized vehicle use, 2) fewer roads open to motorized travel, 3) more trails specifically designed and managed for motorized use, 4) prohibition of cross-country motorized travel unless in a designated area, 5) reasonable motorized access to dispersed campsites, and 6) reasonable access to retrieve downed game using a motor vehicle.

In addition to complying with the Travel Management Rule, there is a need to counter detrimental effects to natural and cultural resources from roads, trails, and motorized cross-country travel known to be causing resource damage, described beginning on page 10 of this document.

Public Involvement

Shortly after issuance of the Travel Management Rule in late 2005, the Santa Fe National Forest initiated a public forestwide travel analysis, continuing its public involvement on travel planning through late 2007. The intent of the travel analysis process was to understand how the public uses the Forest and to determine the minimum road system necessary to provide safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands. The information from this process, along with internal analysis, formed the basis of the minimum road system, existing and desired conditions, and proposed action. The Travel Analysis Process report, available on the Forest's website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/travelmgt/index.html>), summarizes the process.

Meetings

During the travel analysis process, the Santa Fe National Forest met with governments, tribes, pueblos, groups, and individuals from communities around the Forest. Meetings were publicized by a number of methods: in paid advertisements, in newspaper articles, on the radio, by posting flyers in communities, in email announcements, and via the Forest's website. The format of these meetings varied from formal public meetings, to field trips with various interest groups, to telephone calls, to meetings with small groups or individuals at ranger stations or in the supervisor's office.

The content of the meetings also varied. In 2005 and 2006, Forest staff asked the public to look at broad landscapes and describe how and where they used the Forest, whether for motorized use or for finding solitude without motorized access. In addition, these meetings described the travel management process, including travel analysis. In 2007, the Forest Service's meetings focused on maps. The Forest displayed maps of the criteria considered in the designation of a road system, and again asked people to mark on the maps where they like to go and how they use the Forest.

A number of groups or individuals sponsored their own meetings, and invited Forest Service employees to attend. As it did during the open public meetings, Forest Service staff answered questions, gathered information, and listened to concerns about the current and future transportation systems.

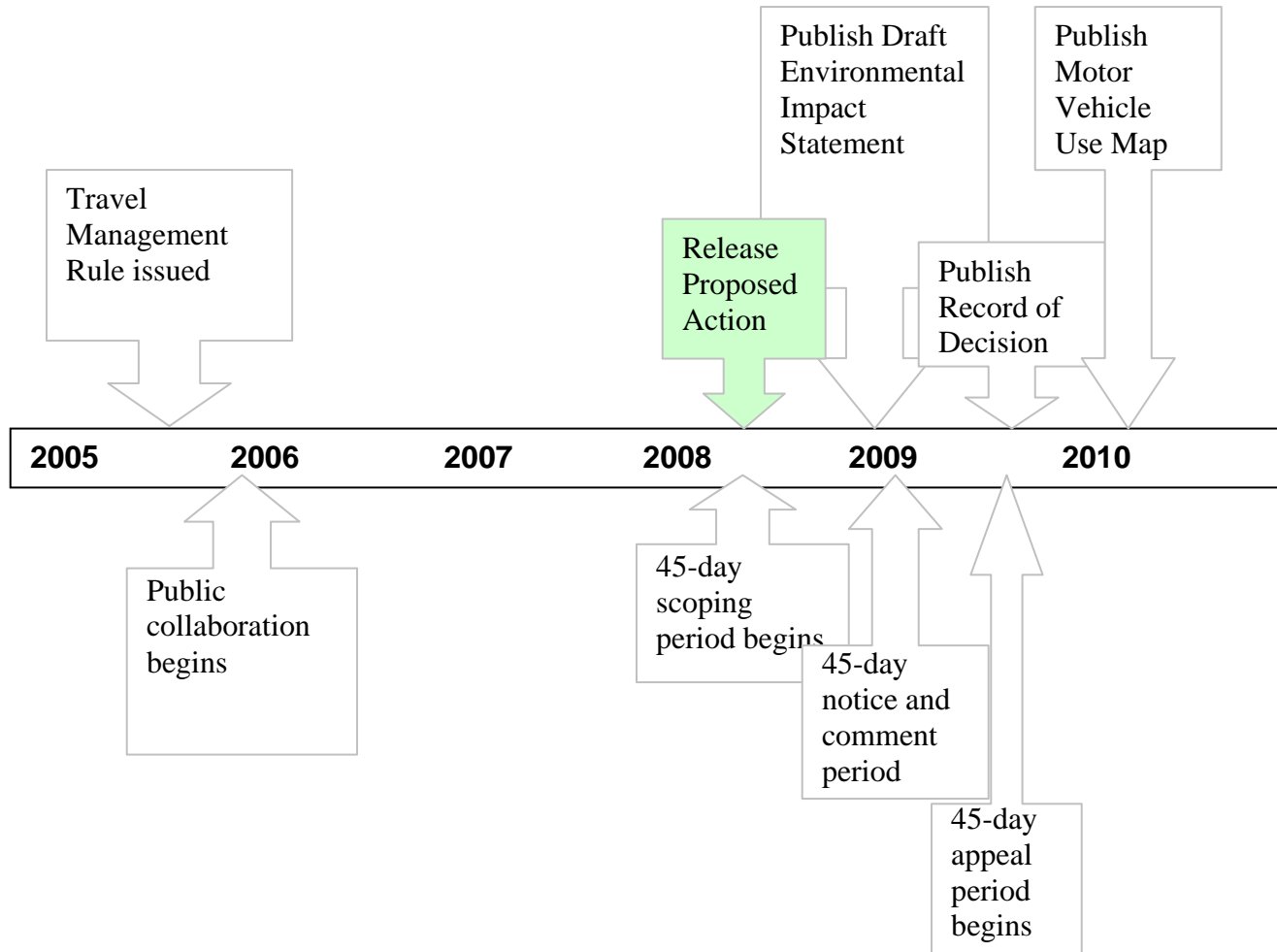
The timeline on the next page depicts where the Santa Fe National Forest's Travel Management Rule planning process is at this point.

The decision about which routes are designated is planned for 2009. Until the decision is made, the public is welcome to comment and make suggestions about routes and alternatives. The National Environmental Policy Act process affords two formal comment periods: 1) scoping, and 2) notice and comment. Both will be at least 45 days long. The purpose of the scoping period is to help determine the scope of issues to be addressed and to help identify the significant issues related to the proposed action. The notice and comment period is the public's opportunity to comment on the Forest Service's environmental analysis contained in the draft environmental impact statement. Providing a comment during the notice and comment period also gives a person standing to appeal the final decision.

Comments from the Public

The Santa Fe National Forest received over 1,000 individually written comments during the travel analysis process, and approximately as many petitions. Forest Service staff read every comment, and grouped the comments into categories to more easily consider and incorporate them in the preparation of the proposed action. Appendix 1 lists the comments the Forest received.

Estimated Timeline for Travel Management Planning on the Santa Fe National Forest



Existing and Desired Conditions

Descriptions of the existing and desired conditions follow for Forest Travel Policy, Motorized Roads and Trails, Motorized Areas, Motor Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping, Motor Vehicle Use for Big Game Retrieval, and Motorized Travel Exemptions. *Existing Condition* describes the current management situation and environmental conditions for each topic. *Desired Condition* describes the goals and visions, including regulations, for each topic.

Forest Travel Policy

Existing Direction

Existing direction refers to the Forest's travel policy, represented by what is currently allowable in the Santa Fe National Forest Plan and its amendments, managed as open or closed to motorized use, or by what is closed through closure orders. Existing condition is where people are driving on the Forest, and is described in subsequent sections.

The Santa Fe National Forest has approximately 1,684,536 acres within its proclaimed boundary. Of this, 131,110 acres are owned by entities other than the Forest Service. National Forest System lands within the proclaimed boundary total approximately 1,553,426 acres. In the discussion of direction that follows, forest plan direction refers only to National Forest System lands, except for open road density. The discussion of open road density includes private lands, as described in the Travel Analysis Process report and Appendix 2.

Maps 1 and 2 depict the Forest's existing travel direction.

Cross-Country Motorized Travel

The Forest Plan currently allows cross-country travel on approximately 53 percent (821,664 acres) of the Forest (Forest Plan, pp. 52, 99, 103, 107, 113, 118, 121, 158, 163, 166, 171). On approximately 16 percent (246,225 acres) of the Forest, travel on open roads (but not off-road) is allowed (Forest Plan, pp. 136, 141, 144, 151, 153, and ORV Map). The Forest Plan prohibits cross-country motor vehicle use on 31 percent (484,305 acres) of the Forest by designating them as non-motorized areas (Forest Plan, pp. 146, 156) or because they are federally designated wilderness areas (290,512 acres).

The Forest Plan does not specify any areas designated for motorized use.

Table 1. Existing Forest Plan direction for motorized cross-country travel (includes Forest Plan amendments and closure orders).

Direction	Acres	%
Non-motorized	484,305	31
Travel allowed on open roads only	246,225	16
Cross-country travel allowed	821,664	53
Total	1,552,194¹	

Open Road Density

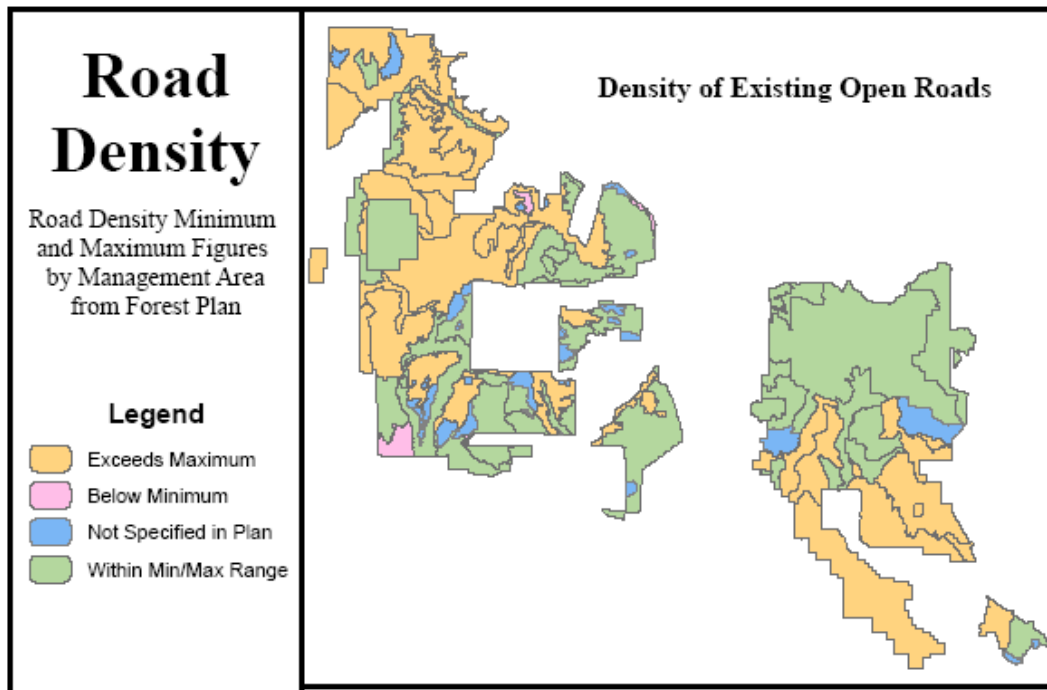


Figure 3. Areas of the Forest, by plan management area, currently exceeding open road density standards.

The Forest Plan specifies open road densities for most management areas. The standards are expressed in miles per square mile, and have an upper and a lower limit. The open road density standards from the Forest Plan are shown in Appendix 2. Currently, about half of the Forest exceeds the maximum open road

¹ Acres do not match total national forest system acres of 1,553,426 listed above due to rounding. The difference is 1,232 acres, or 0.08 percent.

density standards, and some parts of the Forest are under the minimum open road density standard (Figure 3).

Roads

The Forest Plan does not specify a designated system of roads. There are, however, roads the Forest manages as open to the public for motor vehicle use. These roads exist, are under the Forest Service's jurisdiction, are considered a National Forest System road, and are listed as open in the Forest's inventory. Of the approximate 7,154 miles of roads in the Forest's inventory, 4,924 miles meet all these criteria.

Trails

The Forest Plan does not specify a designated system of motorized trails. Of the 937 miles of trail on the Forest, 637 miles are located in areas that are non-motorized, either by forest plan direction or because they are located in federally designated wilderness areas. The remaining 300 miles of trail are located in areas that are also open to motorized travel, and no prohibition against motorized use exists. Of the 300 miles, 5 miles are managed for motorized use.

Other Direction

The Forest Plan contains objectives for road construction, reconstruction, and obliteration. The Forest generally has not been successful at meeting this direction on an annual basis. It also contains an "ORV Map" that depicts where vehicles may travel off roads up to 300 feet on either side to camp in management areas that do not permit cross-country travel. The ORV Map has not been widely disseminated or used by the public.

In summary, the Forest's existing travel policy does not meet the direction contained in the Travel Management Rule because it does not designate a system of roads, trails, and areas open for motor vehicle use by the public.

Desired Direction

The Forest's desired travel policy would comply with the Travel Management Rule by having a designated motorized system of roads, trails, and areas open to the public. Motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails and outside of designated areas will be prohibited by section 212.50. Motorized access to the Santa Fe National Forest would be provided (Forest Plan, p. 18) while protecting heritage and natural resources and minimizing conflicts of uses to the greatest extent possible (Forest Plan, pp. 19-21, 52-92). Open road densities would comply with the Forest Plan, or the Forest Plan would be amended.

Motorized Roads and Trails

The definitions that follow come from the Travel Management Rule at section 212.1. A road is a motor vehicle route over 50 inches wide, unless identified and managed as a trail. A trail (trails are discussed in detail after the section on roads) is defined as a route 50 inches or less in width, or a route over 50 inches in width that is identified and managed as a trail. A forest road or trail means a road or trail wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest System that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources. An unauthorized road or trail is not a forest road or trail, or is a temporary road or trail and that is not included in a forest transportation atlas. The term “route” is used in this document to encompass roads and trails.

Unauthorized routes are not built to Forest standards or maintained by the Forest Service. They develop when a vehicle leaves a forest road or trail and travels cross-country, leaving tracks. Subsequently, other vehicles may travel over the same route repeatedly until an unauthorized route forms. The Santa Fe National Forest does not have a complete inventory of these routes.

During the travel analysis process, the public provided, either electronically or by drawing on maps, approximately 993 miles of new routes they wanted to have designated. Of these, approximately 316 miles were actually new, meaning they were not part of the Forest’s current road inventory.

Existing Direction and Existing Condition

The Santa Fe National Forest has defined the existing condition of its transportation system to include the roads, trails, and areas that the public currently drives on. The existing condition differs from the existing direction described above in that the *direction* prescribes where people should go, and the *condition* describes where the Forest believes people actually are going.

The Forest’s existing *direction* has been described in the policy section above. Its existing *condition* will be described in the sections that follow.

Existing Condition - Roads

Santa Fe National Forest staff estimate that approximately 4,477 miles of roads are currently being used by the public (TAP report, p. 10). This figure includes 25 miles of unauthorized roads.

Estimates from sampling indicate that around 200 miles of closed forest roads are in use, and that about 672 miles of Forest roads do not exist. It is not possible to map the locations of these 872 miles. Closed system roads are not maintained or intended for public or agency use, except in emergencies. A number of roads on the Forest are closed seasonally by closure order.

Maps 3 and 4 show forest roads estimated to be currently in use on the Santa Fe National Forest.

Many roads on the Forest are in a bad location or infrequently maintained, causing damage to soils, water quality, wildlife and its habitat, or heritage resources. More roads exist than are needed to provide access for recreational use and forest management. Parts of the existing road system are not well maintained, which increases hazards to motorized and non-motorized users alike. For those who have private property within the Forest's boundaries, access exists but may be redundant or unauthorized. The existing number and density of roads open for motorized use does not adequately provide for a non-motorized recreational experience in parts of the Forest.

Table 2 summarizes the miles of roads that are affecting natural or heritage resources, have conflicts in uses, or are duplicate routes. Roads could have been listed as affecting up to three resources as shown in the appendix to the Travel Analysis Process Report, from which these miles were taken (Recommendation Table.xls). Table 2 depicts the primary resource affected only.

Table 2. Miles of existing roads affecting resources, having conflicts in uses, or that are duplicate routes.

Resource	Miles
Damage to soil	551
Damage to watershed and/or water quality	1,247
Damage to riparian resource	76
Harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats	708
Damage to cultural resources	89
Damage to other forest resource (natural or cultural)	75
Public safety hazard	5
Duplicate route	1,313
Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses	37
Motor vehicle use not compatible with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account sound, emissions, and other factors.	44

Desired Condition - Roads

The Forest would have a designated system of roads open for motor vehicle use by the public by class of vehicle and time of year, pursuant to the Travel Management Rule at section 212.50. Additionally, the desired road system would provide access to National Forest System lands while minimizing damage to natural and heritage resources (Forest Plan, pp. 19 – 21, 52 – 92). It would

provide access to areas where non-motorized activities could occur (Appendix 1). Motorized users would be provided suitable recreational opportunities (Appendix 1). The road system would continue to recognize valid rights of access by allowing people to get to their private property as stated in section 212.55(d). The Forest's permit holders would continue to be provided reasonable access to the Forest via motorized vehicles through section 212.51(a)(8). The road system would be smaller, thereby increasing ecological stability and facilitating the ongoing enjoyment of the Forest. Roads would present minimal hazards to and conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users. The desired road system would not contain unnecessary or unsustainable roads.

Existing Condition - Trails

The Santa Fe National Forest currently manages 937 miles of forest trails, ranging in type from very primitive to paved. Of the 937 miles, 637 are in non-motorized areas, such as areas designated in the Forest Plan for non-motorized opportunities, wilderness areas, and in areas having special closures due to fire, wildlife, or other resource concerns. The Forest has received reports of motorized use occurring in wilderness and designated non-motorized areas.

Approximately 300 miles of forest trails are located in areas shared with motorized uses. There is no prohibition against motorized use on them, and it does occur. The Forest has only two trails, totaling approximately 5 miles, designed and managed for motorized use, one each on the Jemez and Española Ranger Districts.

Unauthorized trails also exist. Unauthorized trails are not built to Forest standards or maintained by the Forest Service. The Santa Fe National Forest does not have a complete inventory of these trails. Groups who ride motorized vehicles on the Forest, however, provided digital data on 291 miles of trails, not already on forest roads or trails, they use.

Maps 3 and 4 depict the existing system of trails on the Santa Fe National Forest.

Currently, the existing motorized trail system is not regulated, so motorized users have access to many loops, half-day or longer trips, scenic vistas, and trails with varying degrees of technical difficulty. In places, cross-country motorized use has resulted in unauthorized motorized trails. Some of these trails are properly placed and would make suitable motorized system trails; others are not well placed and cause damage to resources.

Desired Condition - Trails

The Forest would have a designated system of trails open for motor vehicle use by the public by class of vehicle and time of year, pursuant to the Travel Management Rule at section 212.50. The Santa Fe National Forest's motorized

trail system would provide opportunities for OHV users to access and enjoy the Forest and allow for reasonable and future demands for motorized recreation (Forest Plan, p. 18). There would be loop trails that could take all or part of a day to complete (Appendix 1). The trail system would be designed for a variety of skill levels, from beginner to advanced riders (Appendix 1). The designated motorized trail system would minimize conflicts of uses of the Forest where possible (Appendix 1). The designated motorized trail system would not detract from the non-motorized trail system. The Forest would continue to offer trails for non-motorized activities such as hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and skiing.

Motorized Areas

The Travel Management Rule defines an area as a discrete, specifically delineated space that is smaller, and in most cases much smaller, than a ranger district. An area is a place where motorized vehicles can travel anywhere, either on roads or trails or cross-country.

Existing Condition

The Forest estimates that motorized cross-country use occurs on approximately 16 percent (250,400 acres) of the Santa Fe National Forest as shown in Maps 3 and 4. This estimate was derived from staff on the Forest's five ranger districts.



Figure 4. Creation of unauthorized routes due to mud avoidance.

The observations of Forest staff show that, (generally and depending on the weather condition), cross-country use occurring once or twice a year leaves almost no signs of use, but frequent cross-country travel has resulted in the formation of unauthorized trails and roads, either by repeated use or in some cases unauthorized trail construction.

Unauthorized routes are not built to Forest standards or maintained by the Forest Service. Unauthorized routes also develop when drivers go around a muddy spot (Figure 4). Flat, open areas such as Cuba Mesa on the Cuba Ranger District, the Caja del Rio on the

Española Ranger District, and Glorieta Mesa on the Pecos / Las Vegas Ranger District are susceptible to the creation of unauthorized routes due to cross-country travel. Poorly placed, unauthorized routes can damage natural and heritage resources; however, not all unauthorized routes are in bad locations.

Desired Condition

Motor vehicle use outside of designated areas will be prohibited by section 212.50. The Santa Fe National Forest would have few designated areas, so most of the Forest would no longer be open to cross-country travel. Areas providing motorized recreational opportunities would be provided (Forest Plan, p. 19). These areas would be selected and managed to avoid damage to natural and heritage resources. Federally designated wilderness areas such as the Pecos, Rio Chama, Dome, and San Pedro Parks Wilderness Areas will remain closed to motorized use.

Motor Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping

A “dispersed campsite” is a place where people camp that is not in a developed campground. Dispersed campsites may not have picnic tables or metal fire rings provided by the Forest Service, but may have rock fire rings built by a camper. Usually dispersed camping is free of cost. Dispersed campsites exist across the Forest. “Motorized dispersed camping,” also known as car camping, is when people drive their cars, trucks, RVs, or ATVs off a road to a campsite and camp with their vehicles close by (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Motorized dispersed camping.

Under the Travel Management Rule, motor vehicle use off designated roads, trails, and areas will be prohibited by section 212.50. This means that driving a vehicle cross-country to get to a campsite will be prohibited unless the area or road to it is designated. The Travel Management Rule provides for motorized dispersed camping in this way:

“In designating routes, the responsible official may include in the designation the limited use of motor vehicles within a specified distance of certain designated routes, and if appropriate within specified time periods, solely for the purposes of dispersed camping” (section 212.51(b)).

Existing Condition

The Santa Fe National Forest currently provides motorized dispersed camping opportunities that the public values greatly. Frequently used motorized dispersed campsites, where evidence of camping can be seen, tend to occur along existing roads. Forest staff estimate that between 500 and 600 miles of road on the Forest have frequently used motorized dispersed campsites located within 100 to 200 feet of either side of a roadway. Across the Forest, frequently used motorized dispersed campsites located farther than 200 feet from a road usually have a short spur road leading to them. In addition, Forest staff estimate that infrequent motorized dispersed camping, where evidence of camping is not apparent, occurs on approximately 16 percent (250,400 acres) of the Forest, the same areas where people are driving cross-country.

The Forest believes that most motorized dispersed camping is not currently causing a large amount of resource damage, though there is some in localized areas. The Forest anticipates that, with the growing popularity of ATVs and RVs along with the southwest’s growing population, the potential for resource damage over time will increase.

Desired Condition

On the Santa Fe National Forest, access for motorized dispersed camping would be provided in such a manner as to protect natural and heritage resources (Forest Plan, pp. 18 – 21, 52 – 92). Access to existing, favorite dispersed campsites that have been used for many years would continue to be available, unless resource damage is unacceptable and cannot be repaired or managed to avoid damaging natural and heritage resources (Appendix 1). The creation of new roads to access dispersed campsites would be minimal.

Motor Vehicle Use for Big Game Retrieval

Under the Travel Management Rule, motor vehicle use outside of designated areas and off designated roads will be prohibited by section 212.50. The Travel Management Rule addresses using motor vehicles to retrieve game in this manner:

“In designating routes, the responsible official may include in the designation the limited use of motor vehicles with a specified distance of certain designated routes, and if appropriate within

specified time periods, solely for the purposes of ... retrieval of a downed big game animal by an individual who has legally taken that animal” (section 212.51(b)).

By recognizing that OHV use off designated roads and trails stimulates additional unintended use and subsequent habitat degradation, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has recommended that the Forest Service consider hunting-related OHV activities similar to any other recreational OHV activity.

Existing Condition

Based on recent New Mexico Department of Game and Fish harvest data² for game management units within Santa Fe National Forest lands, approximately 5,790 hunting permits for deer and elk combined were issued in the 2006-2007 hunting season. The same data reveal that about 990 (17 percent) of permit holders reported harvesting a deer or elk. This represents the maximum number of big game that could have been retrieved from a motorized vehicle traveling off-road in that season. It is more likely, however, that the actual number of big game retrieved by OHVs was less, given that some animals are taken down close to a system road, in an area where motor vehicles are already restricted, or that some are retrieved via non-motorized methods.



Desired Condition

Through coordination with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the designated road and trail system would provide reasonable and accepted access to hunting areas on the Forest while minimizing disturbance to habitats.

Motorized Travel Exemptions

Certain uses will be exempt from the designations set by the Travel Management Rule, as stated in section 212.51(a): “The following vehicles and uses are exempted from these designations: (1) aircraft; (2) watercraft; (3) over-snow vehicles; (4) limited administrative use by the Forest Service; (5) use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes; (6)

² New Mexico Game and Fish, Elk Hunter Report 2006 and 2006-07 Deer Harvest Report Summary.

authorized use of any combat or combat support vehicle for national defense purposes; (7) law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit; and (8) motor vehicle use specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulations.” Exemption (8) covers forest activities associated with a permit, such as livestock grazing, firewood cutting, gathering of other forest products such as seedlings and wildlings, outfitter and guide services, maintenance of utility corridors for power lines and pipelines, and special use events. Any motorized cross-country use needed for these activities will be addressed in the written authorization.

Existing Condition

Motorized use of the Forest by aircraft, watercraft, over-snow vehicles, emergency response (including fire), combat and combat support vehicles, and law enforcement pursuit occurs on a very limited basis. Administrative use of roads by the Forest Service or its permittees is more common, but considered infrequent.

Desired Condition

Exempted uses would continue to be allowed on the Forest in such a manner that minimizes damage to natural and heritage resources pursuant to the Travel Management Rule at section 212.51(a). Over time, the Forest would work towards identifying areas specifically for forest product collection, such as dead and down firewood, and move away from forestwide permits.

Proposed Action

The Forest Service recognizes motorized use of the national forests as a legitimate and appropriate way for people to enjoy their national forests - in the right places with proper management, as described in the preamble to the Travel Management Rule on page 68264 of volume 70 of the Federal Register. The Santa Fe National Forest Plan provides for the establishment of opportunities for OHV use and the creation of motorized trails (Forest Plan, p. 18).

The Forest recognizes that motorized use of national forests and grasslands evokes strong opinions and emotions. The proposed action reflects a balance between the public’s input combined with Forest staffs’ professional judgment of where motor vehicle use may occur without causing resource damage. The proposed action strives to provide motorized use where it is appropriate from a resource standpoint and meets Forest Plan standards and guidelines. While motorized access is key to the public’s enjoyment of the Santa Fe National Forest, it does not need to be provided on every acre.

The Forest has not proposed new route construction or specific closure techniques because these require site-specific environmental analysis not feasible to analyze

at a forestwide scale. In a related way, this proposal does not change the condition of existing routes. For example, a road used by high-clearance vehicles will not be upgraded to accommodate passenger cars simply because the road has been designated as open year-round to all vehicles. This proposal does not preclude future road or trail construction or obliteration. Such proposals would require site-specific analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Though this proposed action is limited to Santa Fe National Forest System lands, the Forest has coordinated with and will continue to seek consistency with the adjacent Carson National Forest, Bureau of Land Management field offices, tribes, pueblos, municipal governments, and local landowners. The Forest does not have jurisdiction on all roads and trails that are located on National Forest System lands. The routes under other jurisdictions are shown on the maps so that the public can see how the system interconnects, but is not meant to imply that the Forest will be responsible for determining the designation or appropriate uses of routes on other jurisdictions.

The following table compares Existing Direction, Existing Condition, and the Proposed Action.

Category	Existing Direction – current Forest policy	Existing Condition – where motorized use occurs	Proposed Action
Roads available for motorized use	4,924 miles	4,477 miles	2,309 miles
Trails available for motorized use	300 miles ³	Up to 591 miles ⁴	247 miles ⁵ ATVs and motorcycles = 105 miles Motorcycles only = 142 miles
Acres available for motorized cross-country use	821,664 acres (53%)	250,400 acres (16%)	50 acres (less than 0.01%) of areas 21,099 acres (1.4 %) of dispersed camping corridors
Motorized access to dispersed camping	4,924 miles of road 300 miles of trail	450 to 600 miles of roads and trails	508 miles of road with a corridor 8 miles of trail with a corridor
Motorized access to retrieve downed game	4,924 miles of road 300 miles of trail 821,664 acres (53%)	No data ⁶	No corridors specifically for big game retrieval

³ This figure represents all Forest system trails located in Forest Plan management areas that do not prohibit motorized use or not closed by closure order.

⁴ This figure is the sum of the miles from Direction, plus the 291 miles of trail provided to the Forest by motorized users. It does not include the miles of trail that are coincident with roads.

⁵ In addition, 2,040 miles of the 2,309 miles of roads proposed for designation would permit motorcycle and ATV use.

⁶ In the 2006-2007 season, 990 large game animals were harvested. It is probable that only a percentage were retrieved using motorized vehicles.

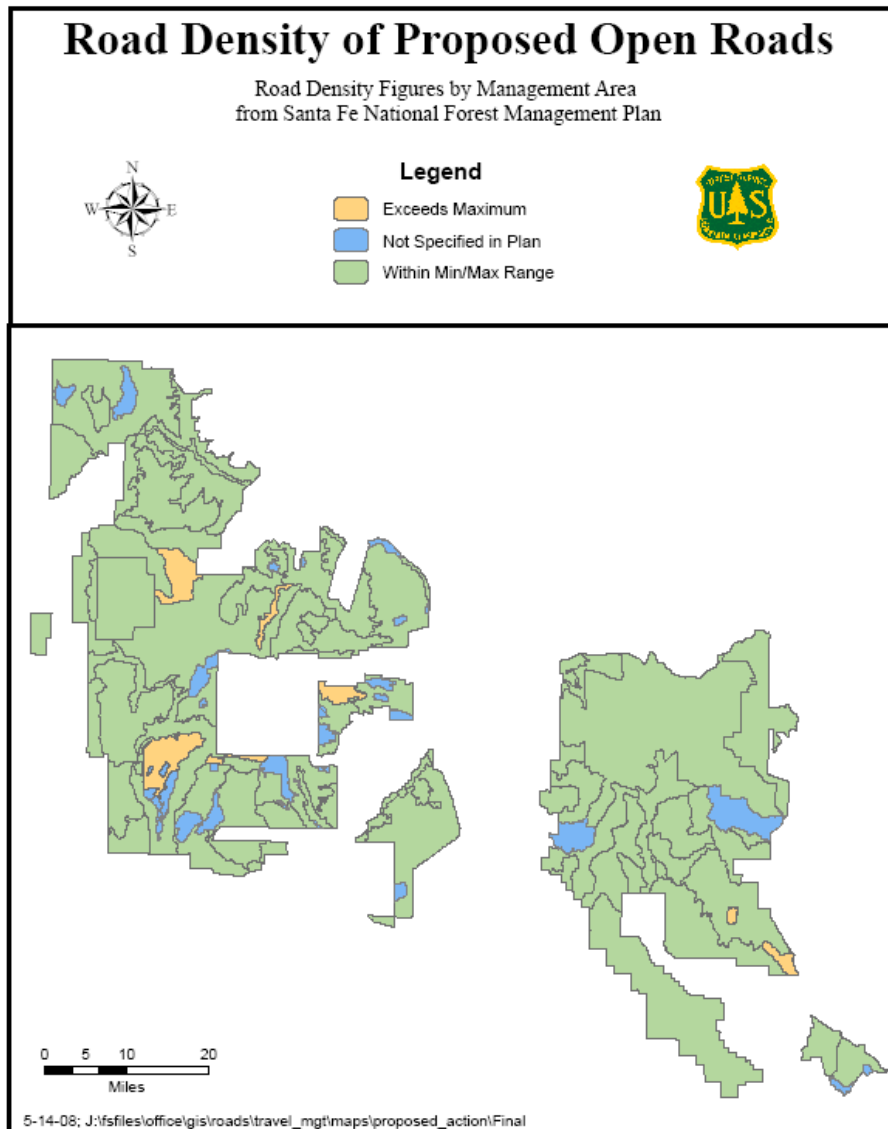
Forest Travel Policy

The Santa Fe National Forest proposes to amend its current forest plan direction so that it complies with the Travel Management Rule and updates language related to management of the transportation system. As part of the decision, the Forest would:

- Designate a system of roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use by the public by class of vehicle and time of year pursuant to section 212.51.
- Prohibit travel off the designated system pursuant to section 251.13.
- Remove the minimum open road density standard from all management areas.
- Amend the maximum open road density standard for specific units within management areas not meeting the open road density currently listed (Figure 6).
- Remove quantitative goals for road construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning.

Appendix 3 lists the specific, proposed changes in language to the Santa Fe National Forest Plan.

Figure 6. Open road densities, forestwide, under the proposed action.



Motorized Roads

As described in the existing condition, many roads on the Forest are causing damage to natural and heritage resources, have conflicts in uses, or are redundant. To reduce the negative effects to resources and still provide motorized access, the Santa Fe National Forest proposes to designate 2,309 miles of roads for motorized travel by the public by class of vehicle and season of use. This would reduce the number of miles authorized for motor vehicle use from the existing direction by 2,615 miles, equal to a 53% reduction. Maps 5 and 6 show which roads are proposed for designation, and Maps 7 and 8 show what season of use is proposed. Table 3 shows the miles proposed for designation by district, class of vehicle, and seasonal use. Seasonal restrictions are for wildlife protection and for weather, to keep vehicles off roads during wet conditions.

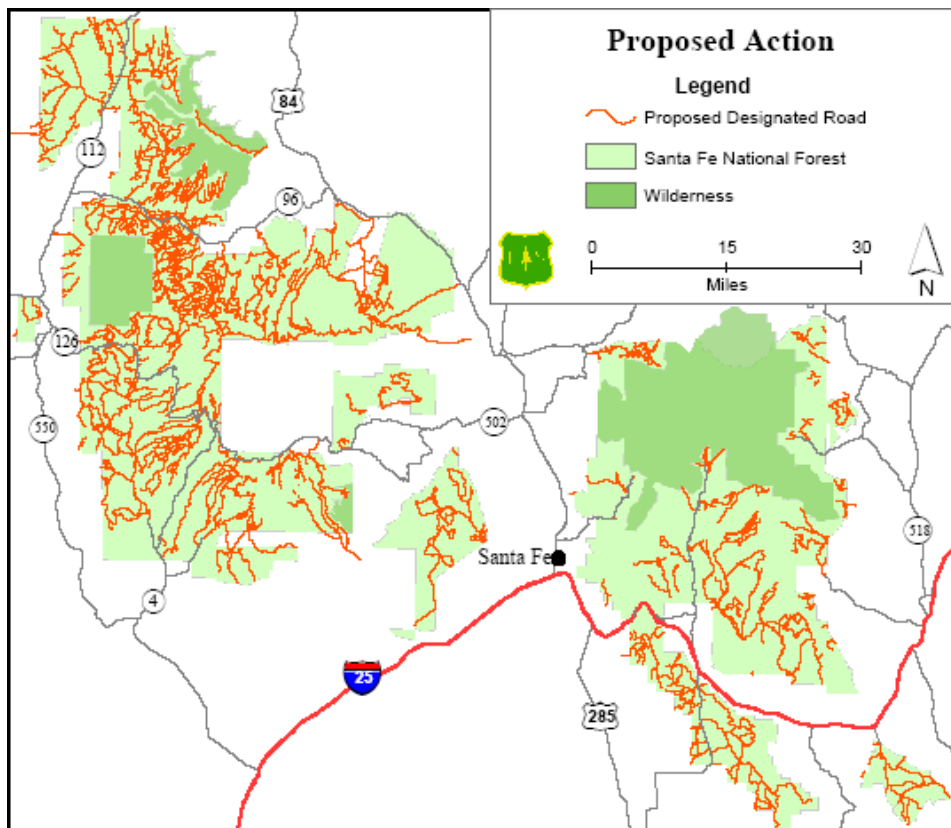
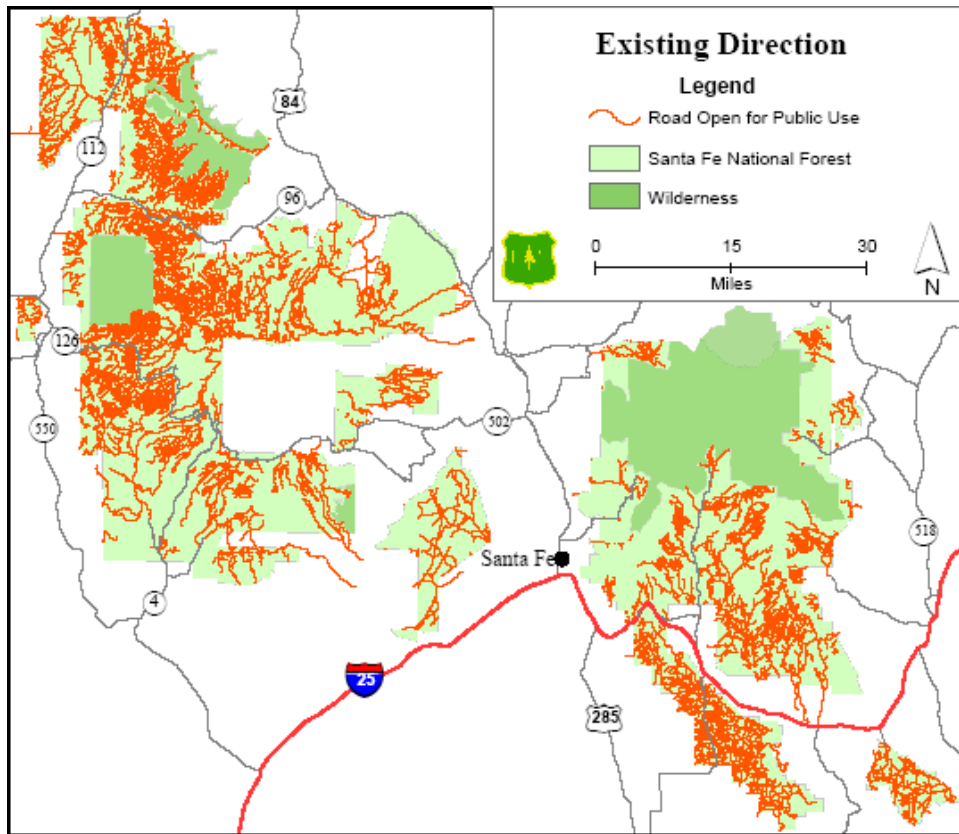
The 2,309 miles proposed for designation includes 17 miles of unauthorized roads, 90 miles of closed forest roads, 9 miles of previously decommissioned roads, 73 miles of non-system roads, and 7 miles of undetermined roads. The glossary contains definitions for these types of roads. The remaining 2,113 miles proposed for designation are existing forest roads.

Approximately 982 miles of roads would be kept for periodic administrative use only by the Forest Service and its permittees, but would be closed to the public. The Forest has identified approximately 3,239 miles as unneeded (TAP report, pp. 36-37). Unneeded roads are no longer needed to meet forest resource management objectives and should be decommissioned or considered for other uses as defined in section 212.5(b)(2). The most relevant aspect of categorizing roads as either for administrative use or as unneeded is closing these roads to public travel. Unauthorized roads not proposed for designation would remain unauthorized and be candidates for future decommissioning after site-specific analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Table 3. Miles of Proposed Designated Roads by District.

District	Open to all vehicles (includes ATVs)		Open to vehicles legal on paved highways (no ATVs)	
	All year	Seasonal	All year	Seasonal
Coyote	15	613		
Cuba	236	199		1
Española	104	221	2	1
Jemez	6	287	19	75
Pecos / Las Vegas	142	217	135	38
Total	503	1,537	156	114
Grand Total is 2,310 miles of roads (1 mile off due to rounding)				

Figure 7. Snapshot comparing roads open for motor vehicle use under existing direction and proposed action.



Motorized Trails

As described in the existing condition, the public drives on more trails - up to 300 miles of forest trails, plus at least 291 miles of unauthorized trails - than are currently managed by the Forest Service for motorized use (5 miles). To provide opportunities for managed motorized recreation, the Santa Fe National Forest proposes to designate 247 miles of trail for motorized use. One hundred and five miles would be for ATVs and motorcycles, and 142 miles would be for motorcycles only. Additionally, approximately 2,040 miles of roads, some of which are coincident with trails, would also be available for use by ATVs and motorcycles. Maps 5 and 6 show which trails are proposed for designation, and Maps 7 and 8 show what season of use is proposed. Table 4 shows the miles proposed for designation by district, class of vehicle, and seasonal use. Seasonal restrictions are for wildlife protection and for weather, to keep vehicles off roads during wet conditions.

This proposal would close some existing trails to motorized use, or not designate some trails, that are currently being used for such. It would designate approximately 71 miles of unauthorized trails. The proposal would convert the following miles of road to trail: 49 miles of closed forest roads, 13 miles of previously decommissioned roads, 7 miles of non-system roads, and 1 mile of undetermined road (see glossary for definitions). The remaining 103 miles proposed for designation are existing forest trails.

The motorized trails proposed were developed in conjunction with motorized user groups so that existing use could be preserved where it does not damage natural or heritage resources. The number of trails proposed for motorized use is still, however, less than the number of trails currently being used for motorized recreation.

Table 4. Miles of Proposed Designated Trails by District.

District	Open to vehicles < 50" (ATVs and motorcycles)		Open to motorcycles only	
	All year	Seasonal	All year	Seasonal
Coyote		26		27
Cuba	2	30		
Espanola		11	23	34
Jemez		20		58
Pecos / Las Vegas	15	1		
Total	17	88	23	119
Grand total is 247 miles of trail				

Motorized Areas

As described in the existing condition, traveling cross-country with a motor vehicle can create new routes. New, unplanned routes or the act of traveling cross-country often cause damage to natural and heritage resources or create duplicate routes. To reduce the negative effects caused by this use, the Santa Fe National Forest proposes to designate approximately 50 acres for motorized cross-country use. Maps 5 and 6 show the location of these areas. Cross-country motorized travel outside of these areas will be prohibited.

On the Jemez Ranger District, the Forest proposes 12 small areas totaling approximately 40 acres for motorcycle use (Map 6). To access these areas, people would use designated motorized singletrack trails. A trials motorcycle group has used these areas for competitive events under a special use permit for the last several years (Figure 8). Their attractiveness for cross-country travel lie in the large boulders and rocky terrain, where riders test their technical abilities at slow speeds.

On the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District, the Forest proposes ten areas, generally 1 acre or less. The District's intent for these areas is to provide motorized dispersed camping in locations that are already well-used for this activity. The Travel Management Rule does not differentiate among types of uses within a designated area, so vehicle use would not be limited to camping.



Figure 8. Motorcycle trials riding on the Jemez Ranger District.

Motor Vehicle Use for Dispersed Camping

As described in the existing condition, the potential for resource damage exists with the growing popularity of motorized dispersed camping. To reduce the risk of future damage to natural and heritage resources, the Santa Fe National Forest proposes to designate motorized access for dispersed camping. Maps 5 and 6 depict the Santa Fe

National Forest's proposal for access to motorized dispersed camping.

The Forest used three methods to designate access to motorized dispersed camping: 1) designating specific routes leading to dispersed campsites;

2) designating areas (see section above); and 3) designating corridors along certain roads pursuant to section 212.51(b). Parking safely next to the side of a designated road and using non-motorized means to get to a campsite will continue to be allowed across the Forest. The Forest's intent is to designate access to those areas where people are already camping, unless substantial resource damage is occurring.

The Forest proposes to designate 150-foot corridors on either side of 437 miles of road and 8 miles of trail, and 300-foot corridors on either side of the road along 71 miles of road, shown in Maps 5 and 6. The roads leading to dispersed campsites beyond these designated distances are proposed individually for designation.

Motor Vehicle Use for Big Game Retrieval

Recognizing that any OHV use off designated roads and trails has the potential to stimulate additional unintended use and subsequent habitat degradation, the Santa Fe National Forest proposes to limit the use of motor vehicles to retrieve downed game to designated routes only. No corridors to retrieve big game with a motorized vehicle are being proposed. Maps 5 and 6 depict the routes proposed for designation, and Maps 7 and 8 show when the routes would be open, representing where hunters would be allowed to drive to retrieve game.

Notes on the Proposed Action and its Relation to the Motor Vehicle Use Map

This proposed action is the first step in the National Environmental Policy Act process. The subsequent environmental analysis and decision will result in the designation of roads, trails and areas open to motorized use. After the designation, a motor vehicle use map showing the designated routes and areas will be published pursuant to section 212.56.

The motor vehicle use map will be distributed at Forest Service offices and on the internet. It will be the tool that implements the decision made about which roads, trails, and areas are designated for motor vehicle use. The motor vehicle use map will show which roads and trails a person can legally drive on, in what kind of vehicle, at what time of year. For instance, if someone is driving on fictional Forest Road 100CJ, and Forest Road 100CJ is *not* on the map, then that person would be using the road illegally and subject to a fine and imprisonment.

The maps included in this analysis are in color, whereas the motor vehicle use map is anticipated to be in black and white so it can be easily reproduced and distributed.

The motor vehicle use map may be updated and changed as needed. For instance, some of the roads, trails, and areas proposed and eventually chosen may not show

up on the first version of the map because the survey and clearance for heritage resources may not be finished at the time of the final decision. As the clearances are completed, the roads, trails, and areas will be added. It will be prohibited to use motorized vehicles on roads or trails or in areas until they are published on the map. The Forest will strive to produce motor vehicle maps annually.

Decision Framework

Based on the environmental analysis, the forest supervisor will decide 1) which roads, trails, and areas will be designated for motorized use by the public by vehicle class and time of year; 2) where to designate motorized access for dispersed camping; and 3) whether and where to designate motorized access to retrieve downed game; and 4) what forest plan amendments to adopt.

What Happens Next?

The Santa Fe National Forest's proposed action is the first step in the National Environmental Policy Act process. The next step is for the Forest to receive feedback on its proposal. To do this, the Forest encourages letters and emails, and will also conduct a series of public meetings. Forest Service staff will be available to attend meetings held by groups, individuals, or organizations if requested to do so. Written comments are the most helpful, because they are permanent and easily referenced, but verbal comments are also welcome.

From these comments, Forest staff will identify issues associated with the proposed action. The issues identified form the basis of the alternatives, which are then analyzed for their respective effects to the environment. This "effects analysis" is published in a draft environmental impact statement, and compares what would happen if there was no change from the existing condition to each of the alternatives. The public will have a chance to comment on the draft environmental impact statement during the 45-day "notice and comment" period. Forest staff will read and analyze all the comments received, making changes to the environmental analysis as necessary and publishing the changes in the final environmental impact statement. The forest supervisor will then make a decision based on the environmental analysis and public comment, and publish it as a record of decision. People who comment during the notice and comment period have standing to appeal the decision. Comments may also be submitted anonymously.

How to Comment on this Proposal

The Forest encourages electronic comments. If sending a comment electronically, please email it to: comments-southwestern-santafe@fs.fed.us (.doc, .txt, .pdf, or .rtf only) with "Travel Management" in the subject line. For your convenience, an electronic form will be provided on the Forest's website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/travelmgt/index.html>.

Please submit your written comments on this proposal to:

Santa Fe Travel Management Planning
1474 Rodeo Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505

The fax number is 505-438-7834.

Comments may be delivered by hand to the Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor's Office (1474 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe) between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

If you would like to make your comments verbally, please call (505) 438-7829 to arrange an appointment.

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses, will become part of the public record and available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217.

The Forest expects to receive a large volume of comments on this proposal. If sending a comment via email, an automatic reply will be sent back to you once staff have opened the email. If you include an email address with a letter, the Forest will send you an email acknowledging receipt of your letter.

Questions about the commenting and analysis process may be directed to Julie Bain, Travel Management Project Leader, at (505) 438-7829 or sftravelmgt@fs.fed.us. Technical questions may be directed to the district ranger nearest you, or to Diane Taliaferro, Forest Recreation Program Manager, at (505) 438-7823 or sftravelmgt@fs.fed.us.

Coyote Ranger District, Francisco Sanchez: (575) 638-5526

Cuba Ranger District, Jim Eaton or Derek Padilla: (575) 289-3264

Jemez Ranger District, Linda Riddle: (575) 829-3535

Pecos / Las Vegas Ranger District, Steve Romero: (505) 757-6121 or (505) 425-3535

Española Ranger District, Sandy Hurlocker: (505) 753-7331

Forest staff look forward to your comments and to seeing you at a meeting.

List of Maps

- Map 1 – Existing Direction for Motorized Use, Westside
- Map 2 – Existing Direction for Motorized Use, Eastside
- Map 3 – Existing Condition for Motorized Use, Westside
- Map 4 – Existing Condition for Motorized Use, Eastside
- Map 5 – Travel Management Proposed Action, Westside
- Map 6 – Travel Management Proposed Action, Eastside
- Map 7 – Seasonally Open Dates, Westside
- Map 8 – Seasonally Open Dates, Eastside
- Map 9 – Proposed Open and Closed Comparison, Westside
- Map 10 – Proposed Open and Closed Comparison, Eastside
- Map 11 – Existing and Proposed Road Density, Forestwide

All maps are available on the Santa Fe National Forest's website at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/travelmgt/index.html>

Glossary

All-terrain vehicle: A type of off-highway vehicle that travels on three or more low-pressure tires, has handle-bar steering, is less than or equal to 50 inches in width, and has a seat designed to be straddled by the operator (Forest Service Handbook 2309.18.05).

Area: A discrete, specifically delineated space where motor vehicles may travel off roads and trails (cross-country) that is smaller, and in most cases much smaller, than a Ranger District (36 CFR 212.1).

Closed road: A forest road intended for intermittent use by the Forest Service and not open to motorized use by the public.

Decommission: Demolition, dismantling, removal, obliteration and/or disposal of a deteriorated or otherwise unneeded asset or component, including necessary cleanup work. This action eliminates the deferred maintenance needs for the fixed asset. Portions of an asset or component may remain if they do not cause problems nor require maintenance (Financial Health - Common Definitions for Maintenance and Construction Terms, July 22, 1998).

Decommissioned road: A forest road that has been permanently closed with no intention of further future use.

Designated road, trail, or area: A National Forest System road, National Forest System trail, or an area on National Forest System lands that is designated for motor vehicle use pursuant to section 212.51 on a motor vehicle use map.

Dispersed camping corridor: A specified distance within certain designated routes solely for the purpose of motorized dispersed camping (section 212.51(b)).

Existing Condition: The Forest's best estimate of motorized use currently occurring on forest roads, trails, and areas.

Existing Direction: The motorized use that is allowed under current forest policy.

Forest road or trail: A road or trail wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest System that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources (section 212.1).

Motor vehicle use map: A map reflecting designated roads, trails, and areas on an administrative unit or a Ranger District of the National Forest System (sections 212.1 and 212.56).

Motorized big game retrieval corridor: A specified distance within certain designated routes solely for the purpose of retrieval of a downed big game animal by an individual who has legally taken that animal (section 212.51(b)).

Non-system route: A route not in the Forest Service's jurisdiction, such as a county road.

Off-highway vehicle: Any motor vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain (section 212.1).

Road density: The miles of road per square mile in a land area.

Road: A motor vehicle route over 50 inches wide, unless identified and managed as a trail (section 212.1).

Route: Road or trail.

System road: A forest road other than a road which has been authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a State, county or other local public road authority. (sections 212.1, 251.51, 261.2)

Trail: A route 50 inches or less in width or a route over 50 inches wide that is identified and managed as a trail (section 212.1).

Travel Analysis Process: The process used to identify the minimum road system.

Unauthorized road or trail: A road or trail that is not a forest road or trail or a temporary road or trail and that is not included in a forest transportation atlas (section 212.1).

User-created route: A road or trail created by repetitive public use.

Appendix 1

Summary of comments, alphabetically by topic, received by the Santa Fe National Forest during the collaboration phase of travel management planning

Topic	Comment (Summarized from all received)
Big Game Retrieval	I am concerned that I will not be able to use my ATV to retrieve big game.
Communication / education	Communications with the Forest Service, particularly with the Pecos/Las Vegas District Ranger and with Planning staff have been dissatisfying. The locations and times of meetings, response to written comments, delays in response to telephone messages and written comments, and Forest Service employee tone and conduct have not been professional.
Congestion/traffic	OHV use will lead to increases in congestion and traffic. Traffic, such as people towing their OHVs to get to National Forest, through smaller communities is undesirable.
Designated corridors for dispersed camping	Designated corridors for dispersed camping will promote fires and trash from camping.
Disability Access	Using OHVs to get to public land is necessary for people with disabilities, the elderly, and those who have difficulty walking or walking long distances.
Dispersed Camping	The Travel Management Rule will restrict motorized access, meaning people cannot get to their favorite dispersed camping sites, and camping close to cars will be severely limited.
Economics	The Santa Fe National Forest needs to fully analyze the positive economic effects that authorized motorized use of the Forest brings to local communities.
Economics	The Santa Fe National Forest needs to fully analyze the negative economic impacts resulting from OHV-caused resource damage and the opportunity cost on other Forest uses, which could otherwise economically support local communities.

Topic	Comment (Summarized from all received)
Education	The Santa Fe National Forest needs to do better at educating the public on the Travel Management Rule and the changes that will result from its implementation.
Education	In order to implement the final decision, the Santa Fe National Forest needs to increase the number of signs on the Forest to educate users about designated routes.
Exemptions/ Permitted Uses	Livestock operators (permittees) should be exempt from the Travel Management Rule.
Exemptions/ Permitted Uses	People who live adjacent to or inside National Forest System lands should be exempted from road closures for roads leading to their property, or should be permitted exclusive use of these routes.
Exemptions/ Permitted Uses	The Santa Fe National Forest should provide an exemption to local residents for use of OHVs in areas that are not accessible to the public.
Fairness	The public meetings were not fair because too many OHV users showed up and acted loudly and aggressively.
Fairness	Over 50% of the Santa Fe National Forest is already closed to vehicle use (through Wilderness, Forest Closures, etc.), so it is not fair to close more.
Fairness	Allowing OHV use in the Forest is not fair because it impacts the ability of others to recreate in those same areas.
Fairness	It is not fair that the Santa Fe National Forest is taking comments from people who live in Florida, Virginia, and other distant places and will likely never visit the Forest.
Fairness	The whole process of designating roads and trails is unfair.
Fairness	The Travel Management process is not fair because many people are just learning about it.
Fairness	A few comments by parties both in favor of and opposed to designation and restrictions on motorized travel expressed a lack of faith in the NEPA process to fairly reflect community sentiment.
Fairness	There should be more equity between roads open for use and roads closed.
Fire Prevention	The use of OHVs on the Forest presents a potential for wildfire starts.

Topic	Comment (Summarized from all received)
Fire Prevention	It is essential to keep roads and trails throughout the Forest open and maintained to enable firefighter access in case of a wildfire.
Forest Product Collection	By designating a system of roads and trails, forest product collection would become focused in a smaller area, resulting in larger ecological impacts in these areas.
Forest Production Collection	The Travel Management Rule should not limit the ability of the public to collect firewood and other forest products, or otherwise limit traditional and historical uses of the Forest.
Funding/Budget	The Forest is unable to adequately fund implementation of the Travel Management Rule. When this issue was raised, it was mentioned in tandem with concerns about enforcement and maintenance.
Grazing	OHVs at large are having negative effects on grazing.
Gun and Target Shooting	There needs to be motorized access to areas for shooting. There should be no shooting near private land.
Heritage	OHVs are either damaging or have the potential to damage significant Heritage resources.
Hunting	The Forest Service needs to provide for suitable access for hunting.
Hunting	ATVs ruin the quality hunting experience.
Inventory Roadless Areas (IRA)	People are concerned that IRAs will be negatively affected by implementation of travel management because the last unroaded places would be opened up to ATVs.
Law Enforcement	The Forest Service will not be able to successfully enforce the Travel Management Rule.
Motorized Miles of Roads	Roads are needed for motorized recreation; however, the number of miles in the existing system needs to be decreased.
Motorized Miles of Roads	The pro-motorized community would like to see more miles of roads, and the maintenance level of roads should be varied. For instance, there should be some rough roads unmaintained for recreational activities.
Motorized trails	More trails need to be available for ATVs and motorcycles.

Topic	Comment (Summarized from all received)
Motorized trails	ATVs and motorcycles should stay on roads and not use trails at all. ATVs and motorcycles should not be allowed near private property or where people do other types of recreation. The Forest Service should consider eliminating ATV and motorcycle use on the Forest entirely.
Noise	Opening the Forest to motorized vehicles will create a lot of noise, which is unacceptable from a recreational perspective.
Noise / User-conflict	Motorized recreation should not be allowed near residences or areas where people like to recreate in ways that do not involve motors. It will be difficult to have a quiet camping experience in traditional dispersed campsites that are adjacent to designated roads and trails.
Non-motorized Recreation	Non-motorized recreation will be impacted negatively by increased motorized activity on roads, trails, or areas.
Off-Road driving	Off-road driving is not a practice that should be widespread. If allowed, off-road driving should be limited to certain designated areas.
OHV “Controls”	The state or other regulatory agency needs to mandate requirements in order to operate an OHV, such as requiring helmets, training, license and registration. Stricter “hurdles” are needed in order for people to be able to ride OHVs. OHV education courses should be required before one is allowed to use OHVs on public lands.
OHV Areas	OHV travel should be confined to designated areas, particularly away from communities and private housing areas adjacent to the Forest. OHV areas should be privatized and located outside of the Forest.

Topic	Comment (Summarized from all received)
OHV Areas	A large volume of comments and petitions stated a concern that several areas of the Forest—Forest Road 79/Cañada de los Alamos, the Cochiti Mesa area, Forest Road 375/La Cueva, and Glorieta/Rowe Mesa in particular—would be designated OHV areas, or would become de facto OHV areas as a consequence of the route and area designation process. The vast majority of comments was opposed to these designations and instead urged significant limitations or complete elimination of OHV travel in these areas. One comment commended the designation of Glorieta/Rowe Mesa as a “sacrifice area” for OHV travel.
OHV Trails	Many of the written comments were very unfavorable to ATV use on the Forest. Most comments asked that ATV use be either severely limited or banned altogether.
OHV Trails	Motorized singletrack trail is very valuable and precious to motorcycle riders. Once ATVs start using it, it becomes degraded into an ATV Trail (loss of vegetation, increased erosion, widening of trail, etc). There should be more singletrack that is not shared with trucks and ATVs that are available for riding
OHV Trails	ATVs destroy trails.
OHV Trails	Some ATVers want more trails that are not on a road system. The Forest Service is paying more attention to single track than ATV trails.
Parking	Parking areas should be created, so people would have to park in certain areas and go from there.
Private Land Access	Access to inholdings, or for other needs like <i>acequia</i> maintenance, needs to be part of the designation process.
Public Access	Public access to the Forest would be restricted by the designation process. This privileges non-motorized over motorized recreation and discriminates against motorized users.

Topic	Comment (Summarized from all received)
Resource Damage	Greater restrictions on motorized travel are needed to prevent resource damage (impacts to soils, water quality, heritage, wildlife, vegetation, air quality, noxious weeds etc.) from motorized vehicles.
Resource Damage	Responsible use of motorized vehicles does not contribute to resource damage.
Right-of –Way	Public access across private lands when there is no public easement is not acceptable. Public use/access on special use right-of-ways is acceptable.
Riparian	Keep all open roads and trails out of riparian areas. Protect riparian areas from resource damage, maintain riparian health and function.
Road Density	Current road and trail (motorized) densities on the Forest are too high and they need to be reduced. This could be done by eliminating parallel roads that go to the same location.
Road maintenance	The Forest Service does not maintain the roads and trails it currently has, and we do not expect that it will be able to under the TMR.
Safety	Ruts and rocks in the roadway have made some roads and trails (motorized) unsafe for use.
Safety / user conflicts	Some roads and trails (motorized) are unsafe because hikers, horses, and/or motorized vehicles (motorcycles, ATV, OHV, etc.) use the same trail or road. Excessive speeding and reckless driving on some roads and trails is dangerous.
Single Track/ Motorcycles	The Forest Service needs to restrict motorcycle use to designated trails.
Single Track/ Motorcycles	The Forest Service needs to provide a trail network, such as loops, for single-track vehicles. It should also retain the user-established motorcycle trail system on the Forest. An added benefit to these trails is that mountain bikers also like them, and they like that someone clears the trails for them.

Topic	Comment (Summarized from all received)
Single Track/ Motorcycles	There are already too many loop trails for motorcycles.
Snowmobiles	Roads designated open for motor vehicles should also be open to snowmobiles.
Soils	OHV, ATV, and/or motorcycle roads/trails cause soil erosion and loss of topsoil.
Soils	OHV, ATV, and/or motorcycles use should not occur on easily erodable (fragile) soils.
Trash	The increase in OHV, ATV, and/or motorcycle use along roads and trails has resulted in an increase in trash on the Forest, or soon will.
Trespass	Unauthorized entry into private property already occurs and will be worse under the TMR.
User conflicts	The areas where people use chainsaws need to be separated from quiet recreation areas.
User Conflicts	There are user conflicts between OHVs and other types of recreation, and between types of OHVs. The safety of users in the same area is not guaranteed. These conflicts affect the recreational experience of users.
Water Quality	OHVs directly impact water quality (drinking water) through erosion.
Wilderness Areas	There is illegal intrusion into wilderness areas by motorized vehicles.

Appendix 2

Forest Plan Standards for Open Road Density by Management Area

Management Area	Emphasis	Open Road Density (Miles/SqMile)
A	TIMBER/WILDLIFE - Emphasis is on timber management and enhancement of wildlife habitat diversity consistent with other resource needs.	1.0 - 2.5
B	WILDLIFE/TIMBER - Emphasis is on wildlife habitat improvement and key habitat protection. Grazing and timber management activities occur where compatible with the primary emphasis.	0.3 - 1.5
C	RECREATION-VISUAL-WILDLIFE/TIMBER - Emphasis is on enhancement of visual quality and developed recreation while protecting essential wildlife habitat. Grazing and timber management occur where compatible with the primary emphasis.	1.0 - 2.5
D	RECREATION-VISUAL/TIMBER - Emphasis is on visual quality and developed recreation. Grazing and timber management occur where compatible with the primary emphasis.	1.0 - 2.5
E	DISPERSED RECREATION-VISUAL/TIMBER - Emphasis is on dispersed recreation, visual enhancement, timber and firewood production.	1.0 - 2.5
F	WILD & SCENIC RIVERS - Pecos, Chama, East Fork Jemez	Not specified
G	WILDLIFE-RANGE-FIREWOOD - Emphasis is on key wildlife habitat, forage production and firewood production with dispersed recreation.	0.3 - 1.5

Management Area	Emphasis	Open Road Density (Miles/SqMile)
H	WILDERNESS - Emphasis is on preservation and enhancement of wilderness values.	Non-motorized
I	CULTURAL RESOURCES - Emphasis is on active management including protection, stabilization, interpretation, evaluation, and opportunities for research.	Not specified
J	GALLINAS CREEK WATERSHED - Emphasis is on water quality maintenance or enhancement and sustained water yield.	Not specified
K	SENSITIVE SOILS AND SPECIES - Primary emphasis is on protection of sensitive species, ecosystems and fragile soils.	0 - 1.0
L	SEMI-PRIMITIVE NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION - Emphasis is on providing semi-primitive non-motorized recreation with other uses where compatible. Timber harvest and road building are not consistent with this emphasis.	Non-motorized
M	RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS - Managed to provide opportunities for non-disruptive research.	Not specified
N	THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES HABITAT - Managed to protect and enhance essential wildlife habitat.	Not specified
O	SANTA FE WATERSHED - Management emphasis is on quality water production. This area will continue to be managed according to the original closure order.	Not specified
P	CULTURAL RESOURCES-TIMBER/WILDLIFE - Emphasis is on cultural resource location, inventory and nomination with timber management and wildlife habitat enhancement.	1.0 - 2.5

Management Area	Emphasis	Open Road Density (Miles/SqMile)
Q	CULTURAL RESOURCES-DISPERSED RECREATION-VISUAL TIMBER - Emphasis is on cultural resource location, inventory and nomination with dispersed recreation opportunities, visual enhancement and timber management.	1.0 - 2.5
R	CULTURAL RESOURCES-WILDLIFE/TIMBER - Emphasis is on cultural resource location, inventory and nomination with wildlife habitat improvement timber management activities.	0.3 - 1.5
S	CULTURAL RESOURCES-WILDLIFE-RANGE-FIREWOOD - Emphasis is on cultural resource location, inventory and nomination with key wildlife habitat protection, forage production and firewood production.	0.3 - 1.5
X	JEMEZ NATIONAL RECREATION AREA	Not specified

Existing and proposed open road densities were measured in *miles of road per square mile of land* by individual management area unit, except for Management Area K. In this management area, the Plan specifies the use of a Forest-wide average. Thus, the total *length* of all open roads in Management Area K units were added and divided by the sum of the total *area* in Management Area K units across the Forest.

Open road density standards in the Forest Plan were set in the context of gross management area acres (including private land inclusions). In keeping with this standard, the Forest included private land in its open road density calculations, though private land is not evenly distributed across the management areas.

Open roads used in the calculations did not include closed roads or roads used administratively because the definition of these roads is that they are not intended for regular, frequent use and are effectively closed.

Appendix 3

Comparison of current forest plan direction and proposed plan amendments for the Santa Fe National Forest Motorized Travel Management Proposed Action

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
			<p>Replace ORV (off-road vehicle) with OHV (off-highway vehicle) throughout. Change to make consistent with the Travel Management Rule.</p>
Chapter 2 – Public Issues and Management Concerns	13-14	<p><i>The Plan proposes to construct 9.5 miles per year and reconstruct 71.5 miles per year, improving the drainage and surface of major access roads.</i></p> <p><i>An estimated 660 miles of unneeded roads will be seeded and closed permanently.</i></p>	<p>Changes to the existing road system will focus on the closure of unneeded roads and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of designated National Forest System roads. New road construction will occur only as the need arises, and generally be for temporary use at site-specific projects. Setting specific annual mileage requirements is not practical and has not been accomplished consistently since publication of the Forest Plan.</p>

⁷ **Bold text shows proposed new language.** *Italics shows proposed deletions.* Regular text explains rationale for additions and deletions.

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
Chapter 4 – Forestwide Standards and Guidelines	52	<p><i>Remaining areas are open to ORV use unless resource considerations necessitate additional restrictions or closures based upon monitoring activities and appropriate environmental analysis. These actions may vary from a seasonal restriction for specific vehicles to yearlong closures for all vehicles. User enjoyment and safety will be considered as well as needs for resource protection. Criteria for restricted use or closure of an area may include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Loss of vegetative cover</i> <i>2. Degradation of important wildlife habitat or wildlife harassment.</i> <i>3. Identifiable impacts on soils, riparian ecosystems, or water quality.</i> <i>4. Disturbance of known Native American religious or cultural resource sites.</i> <i>5. Need for separation of different recreation uses which may adversely affect one another.</i> <i>6. Disruption of grazing management programs or harassment of permitted livestock.</i> 	<p>Motor vehicle use of the Forest by the public is limited to designated roads, trails, and areas by class of vehicle and season of use as shown on the Forest’s motor vehicle use map. Motor vehicle use off designated roads and trails and outside of designated areas is prohibited, except where exempted under 36 CFR 212.51.</p> <p>New text is consistent with the Travel Management Rule.</p>

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
		<p><i>Categories of ORV area management are defined as follows:</i></p> <p><i>CLOSED - to all motorized travel. Use of motorized vehicles is not permitted on trails or for cross-country travel. Some administrative roads may occur In some areas, but they are not open for public use.</i></p> <p><i>RESTRICTED - area closed to all cross-country motorized travel. Road and trail use is permitted through an area, but no cross-country use is allowed. Vehicles are allowed to pull off of open roads up to 100 yards (or to other administratively designated areas) for parking or camping.</i></p> <p><i>RESTRICTED SEASONALLY - Same guidelines as RESTRICTED but only for specified areas or times of the year. Outside of these times, areas are open.</i></p> <p><i>OPEN - to cross-country travel. Some slopes over 40% may be designated as open. Organized ORV events may occur by permit only. Seasonal closures may be imposed for resource protection.</i></p>	
Chapter 4 – Forestwide	76	Accomplish 100 acres (approximately 66 miles) of road obliteration each year for the first two decades.	Road obliteration will be emphasized in the Plan and accomplished as feasible. Setting a specific

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
Standards and Guidelines			mileage for annual road obliteration is not practical and has not been accomplished regularly since the publication of the Forest Plan.
Management Area A	99	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superseded by new forestwide direction.
	100	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 2.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area B	103	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superseded by new forestwide direction.
	104	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 0.3 to 1.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 1.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area C	107	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except within the boundaries of developed recreation sites, and for the areas displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superseded by new forestwide direction.

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
	111	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 2.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area D	113	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except within the boundaries of developed recreation sites, and for the areas displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superseded by new forestwide direction.
	116	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 2.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area E	118	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superseded by new forestwide direction.
		<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 2.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area F	121	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV</i>	Superseded by new forestwide direction.

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
		<i>map.</i>	
	123	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 0.3 to 1.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 1.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area I	136	<i>Motorized travel is allowed only on open roads.</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.
Management Area J	141	<i>Motorized travel is allowed only on open roads.</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.
Management Area K	144	<i>Motorized travel is allowed only on open roads.</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.
	145	<i>As a forestwide average for this management area, road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 0 to 1.0 miles per square mile.</i>	As a Forestwide average for this management area, the objective for open road density will be 1.0 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area N	153	<i>Motorized travel is allowed only on open roads.</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.
Management Area P	158	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
		<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 2.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area Q	163	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.
	164	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 2.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area R	166	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV map.</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.
	168	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 0.3 to 1.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 1.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area S	171	<i>These lands are generally open to ORV travel except for the restrictions and closures displayed on the ORV</i>	Superceded by new forestwide direction.

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
		<i>map.</i>	
	173	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 0.3 to 1.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The objective for open road density will be 1.5 miles per square mile or less. Having a required minimum road density is not needed. Access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
Management Area B – Sprague Ranch	104	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 0.3 to 1.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The open road density for this specific unit (T15N R13/14E) will be 2.5 miles per square mile or less. This unit contains private land that the Forest Service must provide legal access to. It is also a hub where several Forest roads that provide recreational access intersect.
Management Area C – Rio Chama	111	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The open road density for this specific unit (T23N R5E) will be 3.2 miles per square mile or less. The single road traversing this management area provides extensive camping and recreational opportunities.
Management Area C – Chama River Canyon Wilderness	111	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The open road density for this specific unit (T23N R5E) will be 3.8 miles per square mile or less. Roads traversing this management unit, which is less than 100 acres, provide access to the Chama River Canyon Wilderness.

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
Management Area E – Mesa Poleo	118	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 1.0 to 2.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The open road density for this specific unit (T22N R2E) will be 3.5 miles per square mile or less. The roads in this unit are needed to provide legal access to private land.
Management Area I – El Pueblo	136-137	<i>Motorized use allowed on open roads only.</i> Roads will not be constructed except where necessary for permitted special uses, to access adjacent management areas where other reasonable access is not available or to support cultural resource management.	First sentence replaced by Forestwide direction. Keep rest of text, and add: In El Pueblo (T12N R16E), adopt one road and one motorized area as depicted on the Motor Vehicle Use Map. This is a popular camping area, and directs use to appropriate places.
Management Area I – Chupaderos	136-137	<i>Motorized use allowed on open roads only.</i> Roads will not be constructed except where necessary for permitted special uses, to access adjacent management areas where other reasonable access is not available or to support cultural resource management.	First sentence replaced by Forestwide direction. Keep rest of text, and add: In Chupaderos (T20N R6E), adopt motorized roads and trails as depicted on the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Provides important opportunities for managed motorized use.
Management Area I – Paliza	136-137	<i>Motorized use allowed on open roads only.</i> Roads will not be constructed except where necessary for permitted special uses, to access adjacent	First sentence replaced by Forestwide direction. Keep rest of text, and add: In Paliza Canyon (T17N R3E), permit motorized

Chapter, Management Area, or site-specific location	Page(s)	Current Plan Direction	Proposed Plan Amendment ⁷
Canyon		management areas where other reasonable access is not available or to support cultural resource management.	cross country travel 300 feet on either side of designated roads for motorized dispersed camping as depicted on the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Provides important opportunities for managed motorized use.
Management Area R – Jemez National Recreation Area	168	<i>Road use will be managed with the objective of limiting open road density to 0.3 to 1.5 miles per square mile.</i>	The open road density for this specific unit (T18N R2E) will be 2.0 miles per square mile or less. These roads provide access to the Jemez National Recreation Area.