



BUTTE COUNTY FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 24, 2014 - 4:00 P.M.

ITEM NO.

- 1.00 Call to order – **Golden Valley Bank, 190 Cohasset Rd. Chico, CA 95926 (park in center of lot)**
- 2.00 Pledge of allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America (if American flag is present)
- 2.01 Roll Call
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- 3.00 **Consent Agenda**
- 3.01 Review and approve minutes of 10-27-14
- 4.00 **Agenda**
- 4.01 Self Introduction of Forest Advisory Committee Members, Alternates, Guests and Public – 5 Min
- 4.02 Randy Gould, Feather River District Ranger, Plumas NF. Plumas NF management overview and vision for the future – 15 min
- 4.03 Butte County OHV Ground Operations Grant, Plumas NF proposed Cooperative Forest Agreement – list of roads needed. (Mike Crump). Preliminary Routes and Draft Cooperative Agreement are included with agenda. ACTION REQUESTED: Review public input from November 18 meeting to develop recommendations for consideration by the Coordinating Committee for submission of roads to propose for repairs/maintenance using OHV grant money. 15 min
- 4.04 Update from Forest Service/CHP/Counties November 12 meeting in Susanville regarding combined use roads—Mike Crump – 10 min
- 4.05 Pacific Crest Trail Association Proposal – discuss parameters and potential impacts – 10 min
- 4.06 Fisher presentation – Michelle Schroeder, SPI Biologist – 30 min
- 4.07 Update from Supervisor Teeter on Over the Snow Vehicle Use USFS Open Houses on Nov. 5 (Lassen, in Susanville) and Nov. 6 (Plumas, in Quincy) – 10 min
- 4.08 Follow up on Butte Creek Forks BLM land use issue (Faulkner) - 10 min
- 4.09 Grazing as forest fuel reduction tool (Pete Moak) – 10 min
- 4.10 New Business – considerations for next meeting agenda - NOTE: General Plan presentation to be re-scheduled? Also, Bylaws have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors, as amended.
- 4.11 Public Comment (THE COMMITTEE IS PROHIBITED BY STATE LAW FROM TAKING ACTION ON ANY ITEM PRESENTED IF IT IS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA.)
- 4.12 Discussion item: Next meeting will be Monday, 12/15/2014, at 6:00 PM (**Paradise- Gold Nugget Museum?**)

Subject: Lassen National Forest 2010 Travel Management Plan

11/12/2014 Meeting Objective: To achieve compatible road management strategies that will provide an interconnected transportation system for non-highway legal vehicles (OHVs) using unpaved county and national forest system (NFS) roads.

Background: A key objective of the Forest Service's travel management planning was: "coordinate travel planning and analysis on NFS lands with federal, state, county and other local governmental entities and tribal governments and to allow the public to participate in the designation of NFS roads, NFS trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use."¹

Five County Boards of Supervisors, their Coordination Councils, and/or Public Works Directors have met with Lassen National Forest (LNF) staff several times to discuss changes to the Forest Service's travel management decision, issued in January 2010. County and public comments include:

- There has been longstanding, historical use of OHVs on unpaved LNF and county roads prior to the 2010 decision.
- The counties' request the LNF take a comprehensive look at analyzing approximately 663 miles of unpaved maintenance level 3 and 4 roads in the Lassen National Forest (LNF) to allow all vehicles to travel on them, including OHVs.
- LNF's 2010 travel management decision is inconsistent with how the counties manage their unpaved road system through the LNF. People do not understand this disconnect.
- The LNF's decision prohibits OHV travel on unpaved maintenance level 3 and 4 (ML 3-4) roads, as the FS defines them as "highways" (or passenger car roads). The FS says these "highways" fall under California Vehicle Code (CVC) 38025 and OHV travel must conform with CVC 38026 regulations for combined use. The FS uses the term "mixed use" in designating NFS roads for OHV travel.
- Many county roads through the forest fall under CVC 38001 and OHV travel is legal. ". . . the term "highway" does not include fire trails, logging roads, service roads regardless of surface composition, or other roughly graded trails and roads upon which vehicular travel by the public is permitted."
- The CHP does not concur with the FS's interpretation that ML 3 roads are "highways" to prohibit OHV travel (CHP December 19, 2007 letter). The letter states "mixed use" roads do not require CHP approval before designation.
- LNF motor vehicle use maps (MVUMs) are hard to read. The public does not understand where they may legally ride with their OHVs on either FS or county roads. Many FS road numbers are missing making on-the-ground orientation difficult.
- From a summer long 2005 traffic study on 72 miles of LNF "highways", the average daily traffic was 12 vehicles and 10% of that traffic was passenger cars - 90% of the traffic is high clearance vehicles. Travel speeds ranged from 15 to 27mph.

¹ Forest Service Manual 7702, Objectives (effective 01/08/2009).

- There have been no documented mixed use accidents (OHV and highway legal vehicle) on the LNF on any road. Public safety is a concern, but it should not be used as justification to restrict OHV travel on unpaved ML 3-4 roads.
- The FS is not enforcing the MVUM restrictions on OHV travel. They are allowing a 5 year “grace period” from the January 2010 decision to educate the public on the restrictions.
- The Regional Forester’s travel management policies for all California national forests are based on flawed interpretation of the CVC and unsubstantiated concern for public safety on unpaved ML 3-4 roads.
- FS region-wide policies for travel management do not consider vast differences in population and motor vehicle use in California’s national forests. Recreational use in rural northeastern California with a population of 54,000 in Lassen, Modoc, and Plumas Counties is far different than in the southern Los Angeles/San Bernardino area with 16 million people. Forest Supervisors need the flexibility to do what is right for their forest and the recreating public.
- The FS can reassign their operational road maintenance levels from ML 3-4 to ML 2, which would allow mixed use under current regional policy. They are reluctant to do this for fear of losing federal highway funds.
- If the FS has data to justify keeping FS “highways” at their current maintenance level, the Forest Supervisor has the option to designate operational ML 3-4 “highways” as open to a vehicle class that would be in conflict with state traffic law (36 Code of Federal Regulations 212.5(a)1). On NFS roads, Forest Supervisor designations for motor vehicle travel may preempt state traffic laws.

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Corridor

Desired Conditions

1. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) corridor is permanently protected to provide outstanding primitive hiking and horseback experiences:
 - Roads and motorized trails, including snowmobiles, do not intersect the trail except at designated crossings which should be minimized, preferably fewer than one crossing per 5 miles of trail;
 - Lands or interests are acquired where needed to protect the trail experience;
 - Visitor use is managed to protect the experiences and other overlapping land management desired conditions.
2. The trail corridor provides panoramic views of undisturbed landscapes in a tranquil scenic environment, and features historic high country landmarks where they occur. The corridor is of sufficient width to encompass national trail resources, qualities, values, associated settings and the primary use or uses. This includes vistas (key observation points), campsites, water sources and other important resource values.
3. National Forest System lands within the PCT corridor meet or exceed a high scenic integrity objective, and those within the middle ground and background landscape distance zones meet at least a medium scenic integrity objective.
4. The emphasis will be on providing remote backcountry recreation settings in a predominately natural or natural-appearing landscape. Development levels and levels of use vary by location and do not detract from those experiences.

Strategies

1. Use partnerships to achieve the maintenance and management goals for the PCT.

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2. Place priority on the purchase of lands or interest in lands necessary to protect the PCT experience as delineated in the PCT Land Acquisition Inventory.
3. Reconstruct or relocate existing portions of the PCT as needed to enhance the recreation experience and protect resources. Trail relocations will be evaluated using the optimal location review process in partnership with adjoining federal agencies and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Association.
4. Establish key observations points along the trail corridor that will serve as monitoring points for proposed projects during the life of the plan to evaluate the condition of scenery resources.
5. Allow timber harvest, prescribed burning and wildland fire to manage vegetation consistent with desired conditions and setting for the PCT.
6. Wildfire suppression strategies will strive to minimize impacts on PCT values.

Standards

1. New recreation events such as foot races or horseback endurance events and fundraising events must be limited to designated crossings only.
2. New roads, permanent or temporary, are not permitted within the trail corridor unless required by law to provide access to private lands and documented as the only prudent and feasible alternative.
3. The use of bicycles and other mechanized transport and motorized use is prohibited on the PCT tread and within the trail corridor, except on trails designated crossings where such use is allowed.

4. Outside the proclamation boundary, PCT corridor lands with easements or outstanding rights will be managed consistent with deed transfer language and the PCT corridor direction.
5. The PCT is a concern level 1 travelway, and middle ground and background areas on National Forest System lands seen from the PCT must be managed to meet or exceed a scenic integrity objective of at least moderate for scenery in accordance with scenic integrity objectives identified through the scenery management system.
6. All management activities must meet a scenic integrity objective of high or very high.
 7. For leasable minerals such as oil, gas and geothermal energy, PCT permits and activities within the trail corridor are available for leasing but must contain a “no surface occupancy” stipulation within the foreground and immediate foreground visual zones, based on the Forest Service Scenery Management System.
 8. For mineral materials such as sand, gravel, pumice, cinders and other common variety minerals, extraction is prohibited within the PCT corridor. When existing permits terminate or expire, new permits will be changed to reflect this standard.
 9. All mining claims pre-dating the congressional designation of the PCT are subject to valid existing rights. Any mineral exploration or extraction that causes surface disturbance within the trail corridor is prohibited, including recreational rock and mineral collecting.
10. Construction of new communication sites is prohibited within the PCT corridor.

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11. Construction of new wind towers is prohibited within the PCT corridor.
 12. New utility lines or rights-of-way are prohibited within the PCT corridor unless they represent the only feasible and prudent alternative to meet an overriding public need. Project design and mitigation will be sufficient to protect trail values. This includes required mitigation measures such as screening, feathering and other visual management techniques to mitigate visual and other impacts of new or upgraded utility rights-of-way. Mitigation measures apply to facilities as well as vegetation.
 13. New buildings and structures associated with special uses that would be visible from the PCT are prohibited within the trail corridor.

Guidelines

1. To maintain the outstanding primitive hiking and horseback experiences, new crossings of the PCT by trails for bicycles or other mechanized transport should be avoided except as mutually agreed on by the forest and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Association.
2. Road and utility corridors should cross at right angles to the PCT wherever possible to minimize scenery impacts.
3. To provide outstanding opportunities for primitive hiking and equestrians, apply Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) primitive class wherever possible, with a second preference for semi-primitive non-motorized within the PCT corridor. In locations where the existing condition is semi-primitive motorized or roaded natural, that ROS may be retained.
4. To minimize impacts to desired conditions for natural resources and visitor experiences, such as solitude, implement visitor use management strategies such as planning and managing visitor use and the recreation setting through education, site management, regulation and enforcement.
5. Management of overnight camping and recreation use should recognize different levels of use and desired recreation opportunities consistent with overall PCT desired conditions.
6. To enhance the recreation experience and protect resources, consider reconstructing or relocating existing portions of the PCT as needed. Trail relocations should be evaluated using the optimal location review process in partnership with adjoining federal agencies and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Association.

