



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Los Padres National Forest

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Date: June 9, 2006

Subject: OHV Route Designation

To: Interested Parties

Los Padres National Forest Supervisor Gloria Brown announced the initiation of a review of the forest's Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) management program in response to the Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth's initiative to manage OHV use in national forests and grasslands. The Forest Service says this action is an important step to curb unmanaged recreation; one of the Chief's four threats facing the nation's forests today.

The number of OHV users has climbed sevenfold in the past 30 years, from approximately 5 million in 1972 to 36 million in 2000. OHV users account for approximately 1.8 million visitors to the national forests and grasslands. Some of these users leave lasting traces by traveling off roads and trails. Improved management of motor vehicle use on national forest system lands will allow the forest service to enhance opportunities for public enjoyment of the national forest system, including motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences. The Forest Service recently revised its national policy governing the use of wheeled motor vehicles to develop a nationwide system of forest roads, trails, and areas designated for motor vehicle use to minimize or eliminate the undesirable impacts from unmanaged use.

The Los Padres National Forest recognized, early on, the importance of regulating OHV use and instituted a system in 1976 to protect the resources from the impacts that uncontrolled OHV use was causing on the forest. This system has been improved through site specific analyses and a collaborative public involvement process and enforced through Forest Orders with periodic amendments over the past 30 years, which has regulated rampant use while protecting soil, water, vegetation, fish and wildlife, National Forest visitors, and cultural and historic resources.

In response to the direction issued by the Chief, the Los Padres National Forest has completed a forest wide survey to identify where unauthorized OHV activity is occurring. The Forest completed this inventory using aerial photography and Global Positioning System technology and compiled this data on maps. The Forest is now asking for the public's assistance to review and comment on these maps recognizing that gaps in the data may exist. The purpose of this process is to allow the public to help the forest validate this data and to comment on where adjustments could be made to the existing system. In the future, site specific decisions regarding the unauthorized route inventory will include the removal of unauthorized routes and restoration of the land, the conversion of some unauthorized routes to non-motorized use such as hiking or mountain-biking, the rerouting of segments, and/or the addition of some routes to the designated OHV system. These adjustments will occur gradually over time, on an area-by-area basis and as staffing, budget and workload permit.



Maps for review will be posted on the Forest website at:
www.fs.fed.us/r5/lospadres/projects/ohv-route-desig . Instructions to access maps and submit comments can also be found on the website. The public is asked to follow the route inventory review guidelines and use the Los Padres National Forest Route Inventory Review Sheet when submitting comments. Only written comments on the Inventory Review sheets will be accepted. Comments will be accepted through July 31, 2006.

Hardcopy route inventory review sheets can be mailed to:

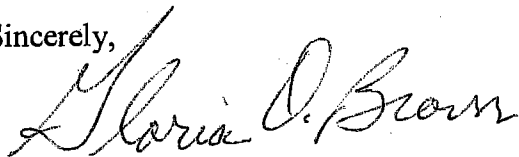
Los Padres National Forest
Attn: Rick Larson, Forest Assistant Recreation Officer
6755 Hollister Ave., Suite 150
Goleta, CA 93117

Email Route Inventory Review Sheets to:

Lospadres.route.designation@fs.fed.us

The forest will host two open houses addressing the OHV route designation process. They will be held on June 28th at the Mt. Pinos Ranger District Office in Frazier Park and June 29th at the Santa Lucia Ranger District Office in Santa Maria. Both open houses are scheduled from 6:00 P.M. to 800 P.M. The public is being invited to review the route inventory maps at these meetings. Forest staff will be in attendance to answer questions regarding OHV route designation and travel management planning on the forest.

Sincerely,



GLORIA D. BROWN
Forest Supervisor