



NEWS RELEASE

Nebraska *National Forest*

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Forest Service to Designate Roads and Trails

If you recreate on the Nebraska or Samuel R. McKelvie National Forests, or Oglala National Grassland in Nebraska, your experience may change as a result of an effort now underway to designate roads, trails, and areas available for motorized and non-motorized travel in these areas.

“As the number of people who use these relatively small pieces of Nebraska expands, and the variety of ways people use them increases, we have to make some difficult choices to uphold our mandate to manage for sustainable multiple uses,” said Forest Service spokesman Jerry Schumacher.

The revised Land and Resources Management Plan for these areas, and the Buffalo Gap and Fort Pierre National Grasslands in South Dakota was completed in July, 2002 after six years of public involvement and analysis. The Plan required that within five years of its completion, the Forest Service would designate which roads, trails, and areas would be available for motorized use.

“We heard from people during the comment phase of the Plan revision, and continue to hear, that allowing motorized travel nearly everywhere on the national forests and grasslands year-round is creating conflicts,” said Schumacher. “In addition, there are more miles of roads than we can maintain to their intended standard with our current and projected budgets. And finally, there are some areas where we need to address unacceptable resource damage caused by motorized travel.”

Forest Service Chief, Dale Bosworth, recently identified unmanaged recreation, and primarily Off-Highway Vehicle use, as one of the “Four Threats to the National Forests and Grasslands.”

The Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the effects of a proposal that will limit most motorized uses to designated routes and areas on the national forests and national grassland in Nebraska. An essential part of the EIS process is public involvement.

“We have come up with a proposal that we feel meets the intent of the revised plan and addresses many of the concerns that we have heard. Now, we want to hear from those who are interested in these lands and want to share their ideas about how to manage travel within them,” said Schumacher.

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MORE

The Forest Service has scheduled a series of six “scoping meetings” designed to explain the proposal and collect comments and suggestions on how to make it better. All meetings will include two sessions, the first beginning at 5:00 p.m., and the second beginning at 7:00 p.m., local time.

Meeting Schedule

- **January 7--Chadron, NE**
Chadron State College
Student Center, Scottsbluff Room
Tenth and Shelton Street
- **January 8--Gering, NE**
Gering Civic Center
1050 M, Gering, 10th St. & M St. (Hwy. 92)
- **January 12--Grand Island, NE**
Howard Johnson's
Riverside Inn, 3333 Ramada Dr. (Corner of Locust St. & Hwy 34)
- **January 13--Lincoln, NE**
Best Western Villager
Courtyard & Gardens, 5200 O St. (intersection
Of 52nd St. & O St.)
- **January 14--Norfolk, NE**
Lifelong Learning Center
801 East Benjamin Ave.
- **January 15--Valentine, NE**
Holiday Inn Express
803 East Hwy. 20
- **January 20--Thedford, NE**
Stubbs Restaurant
East of Hwy. 2 & 83 Junction
- **January 21--North Platte, NE**
Sandhills Convention Center/Quality Inn & Suites
2102 S. Jeffers Street

For more information call 308-432-0300.

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