

Where do we go from Here?

Jerry Abboud Executive Director

A recent response from the Washington D.C. office of the Forest Service contained two very strongly worded comments regarding the Travel Management Rule. They will proceed to completion on schedule and the first Motor Vehicle Use Maps are not the last word on future motorized travel opportunities. So what does this mean for strategies to keep what is open open and create more opportunity for growing need?

A little background on this issue is in order. Don Riggle of the Trails Preservation Alliance and COHVCO sent a letter to the Chief of the Forest Service stating there is insufficient time to implement the Travel Management Rule by 12/31/2009. In fact, the Washington office of the Forest Service had received requests from more than one Colorado Forest about an extension and that is noted in the letter from Washington. Let's take a look at the response from Washington:

It is apparent that, simply put we are being told that the provisions of travel management as a process and the Rule "...allow for continuing dialogue with the Forest service to identify *additional* (emphasis mine) or different routes and areas for consideration."

OK, so what does this mean? It means that when all is said and done we are left in the same position we have been for two decades; the Forest Service Travel Management process. Problems....thousands of miles of roads and trails have been closed in the past 20 years and very, very few opened. COHVCO is not asleep at the switch, we understood this when the Rule was provided to make environmental bigots happy, so one of the many reasons we are in the process of inventorying the lost rails is to develop some way of, as the Forest Service in DC puts it, consider additional trails (notice the complete exclusion of the word "roads", surely no bias here).

The plan is pretty simple so memorize it.

Inventory and identify every viable trail and road that has relevance to motorized recreation that has been illegally closed to us or provides an opportunity...the more the merrier (yes this includes BLM which is not subject to the Rule).
Continue to provide maintenance, signage and whatever helping hand the Federal Agencies need (remember the BLM does not have this insidious piece of crap of a Rule) as cutting off your nose to spite your face is simple stupidity.
Expect no help from any new administration in Washington or changes in Congress: they don't give a damn and the enviros own them (any other possible reason that government refuses to fix the energy crisis?)
Fight every closure as if the government was coming to take away your children (believe me they do THAT every day).
Vote against every bark lover with no brains or conscience that steps up to the plate in any election (yes, even city council) to send a message even if by today's standards government does not care; see the third point above.

Vote for anyone who believes we won't have alternative fuels available next week and the United States of America needs increased domestic oil production NOW, to prevent our becoming a second rate nation.

Keep sending in your memberships to COHVCO and Blue Ribbon as they are the two organizations who seem to be willing to work together in light of the current reality.

Stop any whining about "why do we need to pay for an access fee or an OHV registration; the enviros despise pay-to-play and even if they are cheap, that's not the reason they oppose it, the theory being shove enough money in someone's face and they LEARN to like you.

Start planning today to take all those routes identified in point number one and begin planning to get them in front of the District Ranger or BLM Field Office Manger ASAP. Here you can do something right now. If you have a favorite trail closed after the publication of the MVUM on a given Forest District, send it into COHVCO at <http://cohvco.org/contact.php> land issues. We will take a look and perhaps it will be your trail; 4wd, dirtbike or ATV that becomes our trial balloon.

Thank you for listening, now go forth and join the Coalition and give it your all in making this happen....or call it a day take up golf.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Washington
Office

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

File Code: 2350

Date: **MAY 29 2008**

Paul A. Turcke
Moore Smith Buxton & Turcke Chartered
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Boise, ID 83702

Dear Mr. Turcke:

Thank you for your March 11, 2008 letter regarding the schedule for implementation of the Travel Management Rule. The Chief has asked me to respond on her behalf.

You are correct that we did not establish a regulatory deadline for implementing the Travel Management Rule. However, we none-the-less believe it is important to complete route and area designations as quickly as possible. This urgency is largely due to continuing resource issues where cross-country travel with motor vehicles is still allowed. According to the latest national information, the Forest Service still manages 64 million acres as being open to cross-country travel with motor vehicles. This represents about 1/3 of all National Forest System acres. It is important that we quickly remedy this situation by moving to a designated system.

We recognize that sincere and thorough discussions with all interested parties are necessary for this effort to be successful. In some cases this means that units need more time to move through the planning process than they had originally anticipated. We have received a number of extension requests over the past two years, including several of the forests you mentioned in your letter. However, no dates beyond 2009 have been approved. The Chief still has an expectation that all administrative units will publish a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) by December 31, 2009.

It is important to keep in mind that designations can be revised as needed, and that this is a dynamic process. Additionally, our draft travel management policy states that MVUMs will be reviewed annually. These provisions allow for continuing dialogue with the Forest Service to identify additional or different routes and areas for consideration.

Thank you for your interest in working with the Forest Service to successfully implement the Travel Management Rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James S. Bedwell".

JAMES S. BEDWELL
Director of Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources

RECEIVED

JUN 03 2008

MSB & T, CTD

cc: Christopher F Spurl, Deidre S StLouis