

RECREATION OUTDOORS COALITION
4000 Beacon Drive
Anderson, CA 96007

August 4, 2009

Patricia Grantham
Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest
1312 Fairlane Road
Yreka, CA 96097-9549

Subject: Forest DEIS for Motor Vehicle Travel

Dear Supervisor Grantham:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Klamath National Forest Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Travel Management. Recreation Outdoors Coalition (ROC) is a non-profit organization created to promote responsible access, multiple use, stewardship, tolerance and safety for those recreating on our public lands. We support local, State and federal land management policies while advocating environmentally sustainable recreation use.

ROC has, in general, been very supportive of route designation. We believe a well designed and managed, sustainable off-highway vehicle (OHV) program is necessary to provide quality riding experiences on the Klamath National Forest (KNF). After review of the DEIS, we recommend your staff analyze a new alternative to comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and to provide a better balance between motor vehicle access, affordability and environmental stewardship.

1) General Comments on the DEIS

- a) Impacts have not been fully evaluated for some resources such as Recreation and Transportation Facilities as explained in this letter. We suspect you will amend the alternatives and your effects analysis or consider new alternatives based on the public comments you receive on the DEIS. To this end, ROC recommends you provide a minimum 45 day public comment period on the FEIS prior to issuing the Record of Decision (ROD). This will provide the public with another opportunity to review the changes in the FEIS and to submit their comments for your consideration in the ROD.
- b) Implementation of the 2005 Travel Management Rule (36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B) prohibits motorized cross-country travel (except over snow) and allows motor vehicle use on only designated roads, trails and areas. The alternatives and their direct/indirect effects do not objectively clarify the impact of this reduction on the public.

Page 20 states 1.2 million acres on the Klamath National Forest are currently available for OHV use, although from a practicable stand point, only 508,000 acres are usable. The action alternatives (Table 7, page 45) propose to

designate between 0-65 acres for OHV motorized recreation off designated routes (open riding areas). This is a 99-100 percent reduction in riding opportunity. How many of your OHV users will be affected by this? Will 65 acres safely (environment and human) accommodate the demand for an off road/trail experience? Please describe the impacts from such a significant reduction in areas for motorized recreation. In 2001, the DEIS states 8.5 percent of your recreation activity was OHV use (Table 17, page 68).

Pages 21, 351 and 352 show the existing road system as having 4,715, 4,536.5 and 4,187.9 miles of system roads. Which is correct? Using Table 114 on page 351, the OHV community has been safely using 2,768.7 miles of ML 2 roads, 810.7 miles of ML 3 roads and portions of 102.6 miles of ML 4 roads or a total of 3,682 miles of roads. Alternative 5 proposes to designate mixed use on only 277.8 miles of ML 3 and ML 4 roads. OHV travel would be prohibited on the remaining 635.5 miles of ML 3-4 roads (a 69.6 percent reduction in road miles).

In reviewing your maps, the majority of ML 2 roads are dead end spurs and are not conducive to quality OHV riding experiences. Please review Exhibit 1 for ROC's concept of successful travel management planning. How many more miles of existing NFTS roads can be safely designated to provide a connected system for OHV enthusiasts? Please analyze additional ML 3 and 4 roads to provide better connectivity with your ML 2 road system and motorized trails.

- c) ROC received a July 21, 2008 spreadsheet from the Regional Office, which shows the Klamath National Forest inventoried 800 miles of unauthorized routes. (The forest's Notice of Intent stated 400 miles were inventoried. ROC is unsure which is correct.) The DEIS analyzed 437 of these miles and proposes to designate 0-92 miles. This reflects an 88 to 100 percent reduction in motor vehicle use on the unauthorized routes.

Appendix A, Summary of Route Specific Data, lists all unauthorized routes that were analyzed as proposed additions to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS). A total of 437 miles of unauthorized routes (55 percent of the inventory of 800 miles) were analyzed for this project. Please display all 800 miles of unauthorized routes in Appendix A so the public understands why the rest were eliminated from detailed study and not proposed for designation. The analysis does not conform with NEPA Regulations to describe the site-specific reasons for eliminating routes or the social/environmental impacts from prohibiting motor vehicle travel.

- d) Reference Appendix A, Table A-3. This table displays the unauthorized routes that will be designated as ML 2 roads. However, you have restricted the vehicle class on many routes to "Vehicles 50 inches or less in width" or to "All trail class vehicles". Should these routes be classified as trails or 4WD trails instead of ML 2 roads?

Allow side-by-side vehicles (54 inches wide) on all “ATV trails” which are formally defined as trails 50 inches or less in width. It would be imprudent to prohibit “Rhino-type” vehicles on these trails because they exceed the width definition by a mere four inches.

- e) There is an inadequate range of alternatives. The five action alternatives propose to designate between 0 to 11.5 percent (or 0 to 92 miles) of your total unauthorized routes. ROC requests the KNF analyze a new or revised alternative that would provide a better balance between public access and environmental stewardship. These two goals are not mutually exclusive. Our organization has developed a set of “Proven Principles” that will result in good travel management plans when there is effective collaboration with interested parties (Exhibit 1).

The first principle starts with a “Conceptual Plan” that will satisfy current and projected visitor and agency expectations. This plan cannot be developed without interaction with the public, looking at maps and discussing the value of each desired route. Where credible and specific issues warrant limitations to your existing system, the impacts to recreation and public access should be explained and mitigated where possible. With this kind of collaboration, you will engender public trust and have greater support for your preferred alternative.

- f) How was the season of use from May 1 to October 31 determined? Why was it established? How does it affect hunting seasons? How does it affect wheeled over the snow travel? Is it correct to assume that these closures also apply to USFS travel? If they were chosen for dry conditions, what happens in a wet year? Please provide this information in the FEIS so the public understands the rationale for applying seasonal closures.

2) Motorized Mixed Use on Other Public Roads through the Klamath National Forest

A key objective of travel management planning is: “To 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

Collaboration with other road management agencies is critical for the development of sound NF travel management plans. ROC is working with many counties to designate all unpaved county roads through NFS land for mixed use unless an exception exists for public safety, past accidents, resource impacts, user conflicts or other considerations that cannot be mitigated. Our goal is to have an interconnected transportation system for non-highway legal vehicles using unpaved county and National Forest System (NFS) roads. If County Boards of Supervisors choose to designate mixed use on their unpaved roads, please review the KNF’s final designations to provide a seamless transportation system for the riding public.

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

3) Motorized Mixed Use on Unpaved National Forest System Roads

ROC asserts unpaved NFS roads are not “highways.” Our analysis of the Region’s mixed use policy and the California Vehicle Code supports this.

Your discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.16.2, beginning on page 341, indicates that you understand the Statutes, Regulation, and Direction the same as ROC for motorized mixed use, but have had to modify your applications to conform to Region 5 Regional Forester direction.

Please modify the maintenance level (ML) descriptions shown on page 344 and page 5 and 6 of Appendix C, Public Uses (Roads) White Paper, to match the correct and current FSH definition shown on page 2 of Appendix C.

Table 114, page 351, lists 810.7 miles of ML 3 roads and 102.6 miles of ML 4 roads for a total of 913.3 miles, but you evaluated only 277.8 miles for mixed use. Why were the remaining 635.5 miles not evaluated? You stated that passenger cars are only about 2 percent of your traffic. Therefore, we question the need to maintain 635 miles at the higher maintenance level and the cost effectiveness of doing so. These excluded hardened, unpaved roads provide more environmentally sustainable use, connectivity to the KNF’s high clearance (ML 2) roads and motorized trails, better dispersal of use, and more satisfying travel experiences.

Forest Service Passenger Car Roads:

ROC understands the FS definition of ML 3, 4, and 5 roads as being passenger car roads. However, our interpretation of current Forest Service Manual and Handbook direction is this: Prudent drivers of standard passenger cars, in nearly all cases, stay on ML 5 (paved) roads. We believe all paved (asphalt, chip seal, etc.) roads should be ML 5 roads.

Motorized Mixed Use Policy for the Pacific Southwest Region:

The Region 5 motorized mixed use policy cites the CVC for prohibiting non-highway legal vehicle travel on ML 3-5 roads. However, agencies may propose “combined use” on highway segments if the procedures in Section 38026 CVC are followed and the CHP concurs. Since the Regional Forester says ML 3-5 roads are subject to the CVC, then the correct term to permit non-highway legal vehicles on NFS “highways” is “combined use,” not mixed use. If a Forest Supervisor assumes supremacy over the CVC in the management of NFS passenger car roads, the correct term would be mixed use. If the Regional Forester accepted CHP’s interpretation that the CVC does not apply to unpaved ML 3-5 “roads,” then the correct term to permit non-highway legal vehicles on these roads is also mixed use.

Engineering Analyses:

Under the Region’s current policy, Forest Supervisors are constrained from designating passenger car roads for “combined use” if road segments are greater than three miles (Section 38026 CVC). Forest Supervisors may exceed this length if they assume supremacy over the CVC in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 212.5(a)(1) and the response to public comments to the 2005 Travel Management Rule,

which state:

“Under the current rule, traffic on roads is subject to State traffic laws where applicable, except when in conflict with the Forest Service’s prohibitions at 36 CFR Part 261. If there is a conflict, the agency’s prohibitions preempt State traffic laws. To ensure that the agency’s intent with respect to designation of roads, trails, and areas is fully effectuated, the proposed and final rules also provide for preemption of State traffic laws when they conflict with those designations.”² (Underlining added for emphasis.)

Forest Service directives say:

“The use of motor vehicles on NFS roads is subject to State traffic law where applicable, except when in conflict with motor vehicle designations (36 CFR 212.51) or with the rules at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 261 (36 CFR 212.5(a)(1)). On NFS roads, designations for motor vehicle use take precedence over conflicting State traffic laws. The Forest Service may designate some NFS roads under Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, section 212.51 as open to a vehicle class that would normally be precluded from public roads under State law (for example, NFS roads could be designated for all motor vehicles, where State law allows only highway-legal vehicles).”³

The DEIS acknowledges:

“It became apparent that many OHV users were not aware of the difference between ML 2 and ML 3 roads, and the associated vehicle restrictions (*on ML 3 roads according to R5 Regional Forester direction*). Their frame of reference is focused on the road surface – whether the road is paved or gravel/dirt. OHV users agreed that paved roads were not open to OHVs, but could not always tell whether unpaved roads were ML 2 or ML 3. (This situation is exacerbated by the difficulty in maintaining signage in many areas of the Forest). It is clear that some OHV use has occurred on ML 3 roads, not because it was sanctioned by the Forest Service, but due to public misperception and historical practices on a large remote road system.”⁴

Because OHV use is a long-standing accepted practice on all the KNF’s unpaved roads regardless of maintenance level, please consider more ML 3 roads for motorized mixed use even if greater than three miles. Explain why motorized mixed use was not considered on all ML 3 roads, and the specific reasons for rejecting them.

4) Affordability Analysis and Road Maintenance Levels

The KNF currently manages and maintains approximately 4,536.5 miles of NFTS roads.⁵ In addition, there are 800 miles of unauthorized routes.

The Forest Service Manual states:

“Consider maintenance and administrative obligations and capability in the context of future budgets and staffing. Administrative units and ranger districts should avoid adding routes to the forest transportation system unless there is adequate provision of

² Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 216, Rules and Regulations, November 9, 2005.

³ Forest Service Manual 7731.2, #1 and #3 (effective 10/07/2008).

⁴ DEIS, page 347.

⁵ DEIS, page 5.

their maintenance. Grants, agreements, and volunteers may be used to extend Forest Service resources.”⁶

The DEIS states:

“ 36 CFR 212.55 requires consideration of the need for maintenance and administration of the designated NFTS.”

ROC is concerned about the Agency’s liability due to the lack of maintenance on NFS roads. As described in our response to the NOI, alternatives that address the KNF’s ability to maintain NFTS roads should be analyzed. Deferred maintenance needs for roads on the Klamath National Forest are currently estimated to be \$20 million. Table 113 displays the forest’s annual estimated road maintenance costs. The cost to maintain a ML 3 road is almost three times the amount to maintain a ML 2, high clearance road (\$700 vs. \$250 respectively). The annual maintenance cost for a ML 4 road is over 28 times more expensive than a ML 2 road at \$7,000/mile. All alternatives require over \$3 million annually to maintain the KNF’s road system. The DEIS does not describe the KNF’s average annual road maintenance budget. The cost to implement the adopted travel management plan (with mitigation measures) is unknown. Please breakout implementation and mitigation costs separately in the FEIS, and include the forest’s average annual road maintenance budget from 2004-2009).

<i>Table 114 –page 351</i>		<i>Table 113</i> Annual Maintenance \$/mile	Annual Budget Needed for System Maintenance	<i>Table 115</i> Miles Maintained in 2008	2008 Maintenance Expenditure
Operational Mtce Level	Miles				
1	813.0	\$30	\$24,390	40.97	\$1229
2	2,768.7	\$250	\$692,175	686.03	\$171,508
3	810.7	\$700	\$567,490	677.28	\$404,096
4	102.6	\$7,000	\$718,200	60.2	\$421,400
5	41.5	\$25,000	\$1,037,500	33.2	\$830,000
Total	4,536.5		\$3,039,755	1497.68	\$1,827,133

There is no information in the DEIS on the percent and miles of NFTS roads that currently meet their assigned road management objectives (RMO) and maintenance standards. With such a huge backlog of deferred road maintenance, RMO standards are certainly not being met at this time.

Chapter 3, Section 3.16 ,Transportation Management, and Forest Engineer Stagg’s White Paper in Appendix C demonstrate that the KNF understands the changing use dynamics and its’ impact in providing a safe transportation system.

⁶ Forest Service Manual 7715.03, Policy, #6.

Further reduction of operational road maintenance levels should be seriously considered to bring the KNF's road maintenance program in alignment with the Forest's expected out year budgets.

We did not find the amount of road maintenance funds the forest had to work with in 2008, but based upon what we have learned from other forest's DEISs you do not get enough. This is why lowering maintenance levels commensurate with actual travel demand is needed.

Describing road management objectives and re-classifying maintenance levels are administrative and not subject to NEPA. Since passenger car travel will not be prohibited and operators can choose to drive their passenger cars on ML 2 roads, NEPA is not required.

Consider the factors listed in FSH 7709.59, 62.31 when selecting maintenance levels. It makes little sense to keep roads at a higher maintenance level if passenger cars are a minor component of the traffic (just 2 percent on the KNF). ROC believes "prudent drivers in standard passenger cars" with P-rated tires almost always stay on paved roads. The primary vehicle class using the road should drive the assignment of operational road maintenance levels and not vice versa. ROC does not consider the KNF's unpaved ML 3 and 4 roads to be passenger car roads or "highways." Unless paved, they are "roughly graded" and becoming more so over time. The lack of road maintenance is a serious liability issue for the Agency when operational maintenance levels are reported higher than what you can accomplish with current budgets.

As a further option in reducing your maintenance costs, temporarily raise the operational ML of a road to provide more economical commodity haul (or for some other management purpose), then lower the operational ML when the activity has ended. Consider converting some ML 2 roads with low use to ML 1 or motorized trails to further reduce your maintenance costs. Again, assign your operational maintenance levels commensurate with your use.

"The operational maintenance level is the maintenance level currently assigned to a road considering today's needs, road condition, budget constraints, and environmental concerns; in other words, it defines the level to which the road is currently being maintained."⁷

ROC suggests the KNF follow the criteria in FSM 7715.5 for roads when assigning road maintenance levels, which state:

"In addition to the general criteria in FSM 7715.5, consider the following for NFS roads:
a. Speed, volume, composition, and distribution of traffic on roads; and
b. Compatibility of vehicle class with road geometry and road surfacing."⁸

Absent valid traffic survey data, ROC highly recommends the following steps to bring your road system in alignment with your projected annual road maintenance budgets:

⁷ Forest Service Handbook 7709.59, 62.31.

⁸ Forest Service Manual 7715.5, #3.

- Set the operational maintenance level on all unpaved roads as ML 2.
- Begin monitoring actual use according to accepted protocols for traffic surveillance to determine volume, distribution and type of traffic actually flowing on KNF roads.
- Adjust the operational maintenance level up when standard passenger cars, buses, motor homes or vehicles pulling trailers exceed 50 percent of the total traffic on individual roads and the ADT is at least 100. Sport utility vehicles and pickups are considered high clearance.
- Use “No Traffic Signs” on all ML 2 roads, per FSH 7709.60 (2/09) to further reduce costs.

Another option is to close ML 2 roads that provide no recreational opportunity and serve no administrative purpose. ROC supports the closure of low use roads to reduce maintenance costs, reduce road densities in highly roaded watersheds and habitats, and mitigate resource concerns. These roads can be re-assigned from an objective ML 1 (closed) status to an operational ML 2 status if future project access is needed.

When motorized mixed use is designated on a road in California, State OHV Trust Funds may be used to maintain the road. They will help reduce the KNF’s backlog of road maintenance if the FS chooses to apply for these grants. This is another reason for lowering your maintenance levels and allowing mixed use.

Please address the opportunity to use volunteers to maintain roads if they are designated for mixed use (e.g. remove vegetation encroachment). Describe your current OHV volunteer program and its potential to assist with the Forest’s future road and trail maintenance through such programs as Adopt-a-Trail or Adopt-a-Road.

5) Implementation Schedule for Pre-Mitigation Measures

Appendix A displays specific data for each route analyzed for this project on a route data sheet. There are 124 individual data (route) sheets. Some of the routes require mitigation work. Please include a schedule in the FEIS when all pre-mitigation measures will be implemented for each alternative. Describe the cost to perform the mitigation and how this work will be accomplished. Unless this schedule is provided, the public does not know when/if the proposed route additions or changes to the NFTS will truly be available for motor vehicle use.

6) Parking and Dispersed Camping Off Roads

As discussed in our response to the NOI, ROC urges continued motor vehicle access to all historically used dispersed recreation sites. We noted the efforts you have made to do this, but out of 322 inventoried campsites, the action alternatives designate access to 0 to 258 sites (or 0 to 80 percent). The public does not want to stage one vehicle length from the edge of a road. They desire the security, privacy, solitude, and scenic amenities that dispersed recreation sites provide. There is minimal law enforcement presence in dispersed areas on the national forests. You are on your own. No one feels secure parking their vehicle out of sight of their dispersed camp.

If there were prior resource concerns at some of these sites, ROC assumes action would have been taken before now to address them. At some dispersed sites, please consider designating an area for vehicle parking to protect riparian areas, meadows or other sensitive resources. Monitor these sites to determine if other mitigation is required.

The DEIS is silent on parking off roads. ROC recommends motor vehicle access for other dispersed camping (separate from the historically used campsites) be permitted within 100 feet of a designated road, trail or OHV area when it is feasible to do so and does not cause damage to national forest resources or facilities. (Refer to FSM 7715.74 and FSM 7716.13.) Monitor impacts to see if access needs to be modified in some areas.

ROC recommends parking be permitted within 30 feet from any designated road, trail or open OHV area when it does not cause damage to national forest resources or facilities. This is consistent with the new FS travel management directives found in FSM 7716.1. Regulations in 36 CFR 261.15 allow FS officers to issue violation notices for damage to national forest resources. Monitor use and determine if this length needs to be modified in some areas.

7) Non-highway Legal Vehicle Travel within Developed Campgrounds

In the Forest's MVUM, please adopt a 5 mph speed limit for non-highway legal vehicles (if not all vehicle classes) within developed recreation areas if they are permitted to travel on these roads. Concern over excessive noise, public safety, and visitor conflicts can be avoided by requiring operators to "idle in" and "idle out" of developed campgrounds where this is allowed. There is no reason to go any faster.

8) Big Game Hunting Retrieval

The DEIS is silent on big game retrieval. During the hunting season, ROC recommends the KNF seasonally allow cross-country travel with all-terrain vehicles (ATVs or rhinos) for the specific purpose of big game retrieval (barring any wet weather, fire-related or other off-road closures already in place). See FSM 7715.74 and FSM 7716.13 for designations for big game retrieval. This is a reasonable accommodation to hunters if desired by the public for certain hunting zones or all zones. Vehicle operators causing damage to national forest resources can be cited. If not allowed, describe the effects of eliminating ATV use for big game retrieval in the FEIS.

9) Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

General Comments: ROC believes the overall impacts from adding unauthorized routes are so minor, that when aggregated with other impacts occurring across the forest landscape (existing roads/trails, vegetation management, wildfires, mining, grazing, etc.), they are imperceptible and discountable. These routes are already in place and are being used. Ground disturbance and other resource impacts have already occurred and will likely remain the same if designated. The adverse effects from route designation are minor compared to the impacts from cross-country travel, which will now be prohibited. Overall, the effects from designation are an improvement over the

existing situation since many miles of unauthorized routes will be closed to motor vehicle travel. Chapter 3, “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences” section should describe the context of the proposed route additions in light of all these other activities.

10) Recommendation

After reviewing your concise document we believe more miles of unpaved ML 3 – 4 roads can be assigned an operational maintenance level of 2 and thus further reduce your road maintenance obligations. Other roads should be considered for “storage” or closure to ML 1. Additional unauthorized routes should be analyzed to access dispersed recreation sites and provide high quality OHV experiences. Most of your activities on the Forest involve motorized access.

Recreation says Alt. 5 is the most beneficial for motorized recreation.

Hydrology says Alt. 5 has no effects to water quality from changing vehicle class on existing roads.

Soil says Alt. 5 will be beneficial due to no cross-country travel. Mixed use on the roads will not affect soil resources.

Fisheries says Alt 5 will not have any direct or indirect effects on fisheries resources or fish.

Terrestrial Wildlife says Alt. 5’s negative impacts would be countered by the elimination of cross-country travel on 102,000 acres of LS habitat. And “Insignificant differences exist between action alternatives for various species groups.”

Cultural Resources says Alt. 5 cumulative effects are not anticipated.

Botany says Alt. 5 cumulative effect of these activities should be beneficial.

Non-native Invasion Species says Alt. 5’s cumulative effect is the same as Alt. 1 and Alt. 6.

Visual Resources says Alt 5’s impact on the landscape would have higher scenic integrity than currently exists with less evidence of human activity over time.

Transportation Management says Alt. 5 cumulative effects are minimal.

Inventoried Roadless Area says Alt. 5 has no cumulative effects.

Geological Resource says Alt. 5 would have minimum cumulative effects.

Therefore, ROC recommends the KNF analyze a new action alternative (#7) that will provide additional motorized recreation opportunities using both NFTS and unauthorized routes.

Conclusion: Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit ROC's comments. ROC recommends you provide a minimum 45 day public comment period on the FEIS prior to issuing the Record of Decision (ROD). I would like to receive a hard copy of the FEIS and all the maps when it is issued.

Sincerely

/s/ Sylvia Milligan

SYLVIA MILLIGAN
Chair, Recreation Outdoors Coalition

Enclosures:
Exhibit 1: Proven Principles: Roads and Trails as Recreational Route Systems

cc:
Angela Coleman, Deputy Regional Forester
Gregg Mumm, BlueRibbon Coalition
Don Amador, BlueRibbon Coalition
Dave Pickett, American Motorcyclist Association
Robert Reed, John Stewart, and Amy Granat, California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs, Inc.
Fred Wiley, Off Road Business Association
Bill Dart
Tom Crimmins, National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council
Daphne Greene and Phil Jenkins, CA. Off-highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
Del Norte County Board of Supervisors
Modoc County Board of Supervisors
Shasta County Board of Supervisors
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Exhibit 1

Recreation Outdoors Coalition

Roads and Trails as Recreational Route Systems – 6/09

Successful recreational travel management requires an integrated system of routes. Individual routes when considered alone cannot meet the diverse requirements, needs and demands of public land stakeholders or the mission of managing agencies.

There are basic concepts, practices, procedures and proven techniques that are common to successful recreation travel programs worldwide. As society changes and land use issues continue, more ideas will evolve.

The concepts, practices and ideas presented here form the framework for success. Individual projects may require creativity to insure successful outcomes. We can meet the challenge.

Successful Travel Route Systems Must Provide:

- An acceptable level of resource impact
- Sustainable routes
- Satisfaction of participants (fun)
- Active and responsible management by the agency

The Planning Process Requires:

- A conceptual plan - what can be provided, where are the opportunities, who will use the routes, etc.
- Resource inventory - identify potential constraints of the area
- Route inventory - authorized and unauthorized routes, location and condition
- Planned system of routes - adequate mileage, dispersal, range of challenge, destinations, loops, etc.
- Development and documentation of Road and Trail Management Objectives (RMOs/TMOs) - how will routes be managed, maintained and monitored?

Elements Necessary for Success:

- Resource protection
- Visitor safety
- Satisfaction of participants - enough mileage and “time in the saddle”
- Clear, concise and documented management objectives
- Loop routes
- Desirable destinations
- Variety of experience, challenge and difficulty
- Variety of route widths, single track, ATV, 4x4
- Access from trailheads, staging areas, campgrounds, communities
- Access to goods and services
- Youth and beginner loops and areas
- Play areas for non-trail based interests and activities (training, education, play riding)
- Accurate and current maps and handouts
- A sign system coordinated with maps
- Active management, agency presence and involvement
- Cost effective operation and management
- Utilization of stewardship and volunteer agreements, cost share agreements and concessionaire permits
- Use of existing roads and trails where conceptual plan goals can be met
- Change classification of roads to trails and reconfigure to meet management objectives (challenge, variety, etc.)

Shared Use Roads:

- Roads have two different roles - transportation and recreation
- As a transportation facility, roads provide quick legal access
- As recreation facility, roads are part of the overall system, contribute to the recreation experience, disperse use, and provide vital connections between trail segments
- Roads can be easily downgraded to lower maintenance levels to enhance use as a recreation facility
- Roads can be legally converted into trails, thereby changing use levels and patterns and lowering maintenance requirements
- Roads can serve special purposes such as featured long distance loop and destination opportunities (the Lassen Backcountry Byway, Share The Dream Trail and California Back Country Discovery Trails are examples)