

# Trail Advocates

of the Clackamas River Ranger District of the Mount Hood National Forest

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## MHNF to Limit OHV Use

**Topic:** MHNF to Limit OHV Use

**Author:** Robert Koscik

**Topic Started:** 8/30/2009; 1:47:54 PM

**Last Posted:** 9/1/2009; 8:03:48 AM

### MHNF to Limit OHV Use

**Robert Koscik** : 8/30/2009; 12:47:54 PM

Reads: 103, Responses: 4 ( [view responses to this item](#))

## Mt. Hood National Forest on path to limit off-road vehicles

by Matthew Preusch, The Oregonian

Friday August 28, 2009, 5:41 PM

The Mt. Hood National Forest is moving toward limiting off-road vehicles such as ATVs and dirt bikes to just a few select areas in the 1 million-acre forest east of Portland, dramatically curtailing their presence on the mountain.

Forest officials Thursday released a draft plan that would ban any cross-country travel by such machines, confining them to designated roads and trails to limit their environmental impact.

Like all national forests, Mt. Hood is creating a "travel management plan" to comply with a 2005 rule change by the U.S. Forest Service.

In the past, all areas in most forests, including Mt. Hood, were open to off-highway vehicles -- a category that includes motorcycles and Jeeps -- unless they were marked off-limits. Under the new rules, all areas are presumed off-limits unless specifically designated for off-highway vehicles.

The Mt. Hood forest has about 3,383 miles of roads in different states of repair, and the forest's two preferred plans released Thursday would limit off-road vehicles to 99 or 325 miles of roads and trails in select areas.

Over the past two years, the public and interest groups have weighed in on a more general plan the forest issued two years ago.

"We got lots of comment and interaction from the public," said Rick Acosta, a forest spokesman. Those comments led to the specific

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proposals put forward today.

ATV advocates are generally unhappy with the approach the Mt. Hood forest is taking, saying it will concentrate too many off-road users in too-small areas that aren't linked by connecting roads.

"I read through this thing and I thought, 'Good grief'," said Joni Mogstad of Eugene, treasurer for the Blue Ribbon Coalition, a national public lands access advocacy group.

Conservation groups take a more mixed view about what forest planners have come up with, generally supporting the option with the fewest miles of roads open to off-road vehicles.

"We do believe people have a right to use the forest, but we don't think it's right for people to be going into the backcountry and abusing it," said Amy Harwood of the Portland group Bark.

The public will get a chance to comment on those proposals at two public meetings: Sept. 15 at the University Place Hotel & Conference Center in Portland and Sept. 16 at the Hood River Inn in Hood River. Both open houses will be from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

The earliest a final plan would be released would be late this year, and it probably will be 2010 before a final decision is reached and implemented.

For information on the proposal and how to submit comments, go to [www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/projects](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/projects)

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**Re: MHNH to Limit OHV Use****Tom Kloster** : 8/31/2009; 6:27:48 AMReads: 95, Responses: 0 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Thanks for posting this, Robert. The more accurate headline, of course, is that the USFS is proposing to limit OHV to a number of small "playgrounds", and to that extent, concentrating them for maximum impact on whatever "playgrounds" are deemed disposable.

Based on a first glance at the DEIS, anywhere from 30-50 miles of "play trails" would be retrofitted or constructed in these areas, though it's unclear how the USFS would fund these new trails, given the state of the current trail system. I wouldn't be surprised if the OHV industry comes up with the funds, however, since they've got machines to sell, and (see below) I have a hard time believing they're not involved behind the scenes.

As you all know, several of the proposals under study are in Clackamas country. Dropped from the DEIS is simply limiting OHVs to road, and a ban on off-road travel in motorized vehicles. I've always assumed that this is a deal worked out behind the scenes between the USFS and the OHV lobby, given the history of MHNH and it's other private concessions, and the the DEIS is window dressing for an agreement to allow the industry to build dirt bike and ATV circuits on public land.

But comment, nonetheless! At least with the environmental process, any back room deals must be justified according to the law, and that's not a bad start.

Tom

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**Re: MHNF to Limit OHV Use****tempus fugit** : 8/31/2009; 2:07:08 PMReads: 92, Responses: 2 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

As the name implies, Travel Management, isn't just about ORV's. A lot of roads will be closed, which means a lot of the cool little roads and jeep trails that we use to get to our secret favorite spots will be closed to us. It means less access for all, including hikers, since we might not be able to get close enough to our destination with our car, suv, or jeep and have to hike farther in. Trail maintenance will also be more difficult because we can't get close enough to problem spots and have to hike too far with the saw and tools. Travel Manangement = less access.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: MHNF to Limit OHV Use****Robert Koscik** : 9/1/2009; 5:33:22 AMReads: 89, Responses: 1 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

True, but how many times can you wrap the earth with roads from the Clackamas District?















[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: MHNF to Limit OHV Use****tempus fugit** : 9/1/2009; 7:03:48 AMReads: 95, Responses: 0 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Is that a bad thing? ;-) j/k Seriously though, I must apologize. It seems I am not up to date. I should have read the update letter before commenting. It states: "First, this planning process will not be determining where licensed motor vehicles are allowed to drive off roads to access dispersed (undeveloped) camping. The initial scoping for this proposal demonstrated that combining the designation of OHV routes and the designation of motorized access to dispersed camping corridors was confusing to the public and complicated the planning process. The existing condition for access to dispersed camping will remain in place. Motorized access to dispersed camping may be analyzed more in the future."

There are a lot of cool roads with great access to dispersed camping and loads of stuff to see up there especially if you have a jeep, subaru, or a street legal motorcycle. The plan that I saw earlier that is referred to as being "confusing to the public" pretty much shut all that down and only left the main roads open. I think (hope) there was a big enough uproar over it and that's why they changed the scope but sounds like the door has been left open to return to it.

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