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Forest
Service

Coconino National Forest Motor Vehicle Management Implementation Plan



July 2014

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Summary

In September 2011, the Coconino National Forest Supervisor approved changes to the designated system of roads, trails and areas. This decision also included programmatic changes to motor vehicle use on the forest such as management restrictions on off-road motorized use, which affects a broad spectrum of activities including motorized game retrieval, fuelwood collection, and other federal activities. This 2011 decision explicitly identified the complexity of the decision and need to monitor and continually adapt to additional information. In concert with the decision, the Coconino National Forest also released a communication plan, enforcement plan, and monitoring plan to guide implementation of changes to motor vehicle use management on the Coconino National Forest.

This document is intended to be an updated implementation plan that combines information from the communication, enforcement, and monitoring plans from 2011 and addresses the specific performance measures identified for the Coconino National Forest. Performance measures are relevant because they tie directly to the goals and objectives in the national Forest Service Strategic Plan, which guides employee work priorities and budget.

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Table of Contents	4
Performance Measures	3
Education / Communication Strategy	5
Sign Plan.....	11
Road and Motorized Trail Signage Inventory Information.....	11
Route Signage Assessment and Challenges.....	13
Coconino National Forest Sign Program	18
Resource protection and restoration strategy	22
Resource protection	22
Restoration	30
Enforcement.....	31
General Approach	32
Funding	32
Accomplishments.....	33
Evaluation	33

Performance Measures

Each year every national forest and grassland is required to input data into databases and spreadsheets to report on whether certain accomplishments are being met. The performance measures discussed here are from the Fiscal Year 2014 and apply to motor vehicle use management. The INFRA-NRM database is the database of record for reporting these performance measures.

The development of performance measures for management of motorized use was initiated by a June 30, 2009 U.S. Government Accountability Office report. This report found that enhanced planning could assist agencies including the Forest Service in managing increased use of off-highway vehicles. A specific recommendation of this report was, "To help provide quality OHV recreational opportunities while protecting natural and cultural resources on federal lands, the Secretary of the Interior should direct the Director of BLM to enhance the agency's existing "Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services" by establishing performance measures and time frames for carrying out its stated goals for OHV recreation."

Performance measures related to motor vehicle use management were first provided to national forests in 2013. The Coconino National Forest reported this first year that 67% of performance measures were being met – which established the baseline for reporting accomplishment. In the 2014 Fiscal Year, performance measure reporting is required. It is expected that national forests will improve reporting accomplishments each year until 100% of performance measures are met.

The 2014 performance measures are included below. Each performance measure is measured as a "yes" or "no".

Education/Communication Strategy

- An education/communication strategy which addresses route and area designations has been identified, and actions are implemented consistent with schedule identified in strategy.
- MVUM has been reviewed and reissued consistent with production guide requirements, within the past year. Current Infra, GIS, and ATM data were used. If no MVUM, a map is available displaying current publicly available motor vehicle opportunities.

Protection/Restoration and Signing

- Sign plan is in place which addresses designated routes and areas, and signs are installed consistent with schedule identified in sign plan.
- Protection and restoration strategy has been developed, and actions are implemented consistent with identified schedule.

Enforcement

- Patrols are performed during peak use periods for compliance with MVUM, or current relevant orders if no MVUM.

Evaluation

- Monitoring strategy has been developed, and monitoring is performed according to identified schedule, collected information is evaluated, and recommended changes made to responsible official.

Education / Communication Strategy

The Coconino National Forest began implementation of the Coconino National Forest Travel Management Environmental Impact Statement decision in May 2012. Prior to this change, management of motor vehicles in Coconino National Forest has remained relatively the same for many years, which was that you could drive anywhere unless clearly closed and signed. Implementation of the Travel Management Regulations means fundamental changes for visitors who have enjoyed largely unrestricted motorized travel in the past. It is imperative that information about the travel regulations governing motor vehicle use and the routes and areas open to motor vehicles be widely distributed and made available to interested and affected parties.

Goal

The goal of this Communications Plan is to raise public awareness about the changes to motorized travel on Coconino National Forest, gain public understanding and use of the MVUM(s) or analogous travel aids, and to work with key partners to improve motorized recreation opportunities and compliance with motor vehicle management decisions. Integral to these steps is the inclusion of messages and information that will lead to more appropriate behaviors and natural resource considerations on the part of all motorized recreation users on Coconino National Forest.

State agencies responsible for managing Arizona's OHV program are important partners in our communication effort. We have similar communication goals, objectives and messages making it vital to work closely with our state colleagues as we implement our communication strategies.

Key Themes and Messages

The **Key Messages** in this plan are categorized under several main **Themes** that should be included in all types of messaging for internal and external audiences. These will promote awareness of the theme, and promote and encourage a positive change in behaviors amongst recreational forest visitors. With each of the themes below is a descriptive paragraph followed by several key messages.

Theme 1: Staying on designated routes and areas protects wildlife, water quality, cultural resources, and respects other forest visitors.

- The number of Americans seeking recreational access to public lands increases every year, particularly with OHV usage. The vast majority of OHV users are responsible – they leave no lasting trace on the land.
- But if just one percent leaves unacceptable damage, that's a lot of damage and the cumulative impact is tremendous.
- In many places on the Coconino National Forest where restrictions on motorized travel were minimal or nonexistent, we were seeing damage or the potential for damage. And that demands action.

- With the implementation of TMR on the Coconino National Forest, cross-country travel by motorized vehicles is prohibited. In other words, motorized travel is only permitted on designated roads, trails, and areas.
- Remember: Nature Rules. Stay on designated roads and trails.
- Travel management will help us balance the public's enjoyment of motorized travel with the best possible care of the land. Our goal is a sustainable system of routes and areas designated for motorized use.
- The designated roads, trails and areas open to motor vehicle use are identified on one or more MVUMs.
- Monitoring the use of designated routes and trails will help the Coconino National Forest sustain natural resources in order to accommodate motorized use on public lands. MVUMs are reviewed and updated as necessary and reprinted on an annual basis.

Theme 2: Management of motor vehicle use on the forest is a long-term, ongoing process. The Coconino National Forest is dedicated to continual improvement.

- The Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) provides a clear expectation of where visitors can drive on the Forest. It is similar to the speed limit, which sets an expectation for how fast you can drive and thus improves safety and provides a mechanism to penalize those that can cause real harm. We don't expect the publication of an MVUM will prevent all unauthorized motor vehicle use. Like speed limits, however, we have found that making the rules easier to understand has reduced off-road driving and better enables enforcement of those who cause damage to forest resources as a result of irresponsible motor vehicle use.
- Motor vehicle use management is a long-term process that occurs over decades. Over time, the forest will be increasing the use of signage, gates, and road decommissioning efforts to make unauthorized motor vehicle use more difficult.
- Future planning will consider changes to designated routes or the establishment of new motorized recreation opportunities through the National Environmental Policy Act planning process. The Coconino National Forest has worked closely with Arizona Game and Fish Department and other user groups to approve over 110 miles of new road and trail designations to provide for sustainable motorized access and recreation opportunities since the 2011 Travel Management EIS decision.
- The Coconino National Forest identifies priorities for enforcement, signage, and road closures based on reported user conflict and opportunities for resource protection. The forest has used signage, road closures, and public involvement to successfully reduce user conflict and improve resource protection in priority areas in 2012 and 2013.

Theme 3: Working Together to Make the Change

- The Coconino National Forest is always open to feedback. To date, the Forest has received approximately 1,000 unique comments about motor vehicle management. Over half of these comments have been reviewed and used to make changes to the Motor

Vehicle Use Map. More substantial comments to change route designations will be considered through the National Environmental Policy Act planning process.

- The Forest Service depends heavily on official agency volunteers as well as thoughtful forest visitors to keep the Coconino National Forest clean, safe, and sustainable.
- Most OHV users don't go to the forest just to ride. They go for the same reasons many other folks do – to experience nature, see wildlife, camp, fish, hunt or hike. They don't want to see trashed landscapes or be disturbed by unwanted noise any more than anyone else does.
- Plan ahead, pack a map (MVUM), safety first, and respect the land.

Target Audiences

Messages and Themes for each audience will be the same, but the depth of detail and information and delivery methods will vary. The five primary audiences are **Internal, Partners, Local Community, Special Interest, and Forest Visitors**.

1. Internal audience. This audience should receive information first because of the number of questions they may get from friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and from the public while in the course of their daily work. Because they have these personal, direct contacts, word-of-mouth explanations need to be accurate, brief and easily remembered so they can be conveyed during brief interactions;

- Paid employees
- Volunteers

2. Partnerships. The Coconino National Forest must continue working with partners to implement common goals. Keeping affected and interested parties informed and included in aspects of our transportation system will help gain their support more effectively than simply relying on media coverage, signage, electronic mail, etc. Key partners for the Coconino National Forest TMR implementation include:

- Neighboring national forests, specifically the Kaibab, Prescott, Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto National Forests.
- Other neighboring federal land management agencies, specifically the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Tribal governments;
- State agencies such as the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona State Land Department, Arizona State Forestry Division, and Arizona State Parks; and
- Interpretive Associations.

3. Local Community. The seasonal nature of recreation can have impacts on the economy and economic development of gateway communities. Timely information ahead of potential issues within communities can maintain positive relations and provide for better cooperation in future events and activities around recreational areas. Local contacts include:

- City and county officials;
- Local and state elected officials;
- Local law enforcement and emergency response organizations;
- Civic groups and community organizations;
- Chambers of commerce, travel and tourism associations or boards, convention and visitors bureaus.

4. Special Interest. From motorized user groups to environmental groups, these groups will want detailed, specific information about the designated transportation network for the Coconino National Forest. Special interest groups may include:

- Motorized trail riders’ groups (differentiate between ATV, motorcycle and Jeep/4x4 groups);
- Conservation, preservation groups;
- Off-road vehicle manufacturing and distribution outlets;
- Private campground businesses;
- Nature, wildlife groups (local, or with state or national affiliations).

5. Forest Visitors. General forest visitors should be educated about the newly-designated transportation network for their own safety and awareness. These include:

- Seasonal campers, game hunters, shed hunters;
- Day-use visitors;
- Special permit holders for events, concessions, etc.;
- The general public at visitor center locations, ranger district offices, supervisor’s office, etc.

Table 1. Education and Communication – Strategic Actions

Target Date	Activity/Action	Audience	Responsible
Ongoing	Works towards installation of Forest kiosks and road signage Apply for grants to install NEPA-cleared kiosks and signage Continue to coordinate efforts with adjacent forests for consistency in sign management	Forest visitors	Recreation staffs, OHV coordinators, Engineering
Completed 2/25/2011. Update as necessary.	Work with AZGF and all national forests in Arizona to include relevant information about TMR on national forest lands in game register booklet	Hunters	Travel Management lead, Forest OHV coordinator
Completed 2/17/2011.	Work with timber staff and RO TMR contacts to update language in	Fuelwood Permittees	Travel Management lead, Forest Special

Target Date	Activity/Action	Audience	Responsible
Update as necessary.	fuelwood permits to provide appropriate TMR exemptions for off-road travel		Products coordinator
Ongoing	Attend local and regional fairs, expositions, annual meetings, and other community events to share information about motor vehicle management on the Coconino National Forest.	Partners, Special Interest, Forest Visitors	TMR lead, OHV coordinators
Ongoing	Make available supporting materials from Arizona Game and Fish Department and Arizona State Parks (example: OHV Laws and Places to Ride).	Internal, Local Community, Special Interest, Forest Visitors	OHV coordinators, Recreation Staffs, Public Affairs (website management)
Ongoing	Develop handouts and maintain updated website information that can be distributed along with MVUM maps to provide information on how to get free travel aids on smartphones, tablet devices, and Garmin GPS devices.	All	Travel Management lead, GIS coordinator, Public affairs
Developed 7/1/2011. Ongoing maintenance / use of this form.	Develop a comment card for external audience feedback. It should include key contacts on the forest for upset/angry individuals to contact. Create a web version and a hard copy version.	Partners, Local Community, Special Interest, Forest Visitors	Travel Management lead
Ongoing	Develop key contacts on neighboring forests in order to share key TMR implementation information.	Partners	Travel Management lead, OHV Coordinator
Ongoing	Share key educational products developed on the CNF with neighboring forests.	Partners	Travel Management lead, OHV Coordinator
Ongoing	Establish schedule of patrols for key timeframes such as holiday weekends. Patrols focus on education. Should be two employees per vehicle.	Forest Visitors	Forest OHV coordinator, LEOs, District OHV coordinators
At start of camping season – late spring	Include information on motorized management on the forest at employee orientations, camp ground host meetings, and at annual meetings with other partners	Special Interest, Forest Visitors	Travel Management lead, OHV coordinators

Target Date	Activity/Action	Audience	Responsible
Ongoing	Review specific comments received for designation changes or other issues relating to motor vehicle use on the Forest. Track and document all comments and FS review of comments received in a spreadsheet. Use comments to identify and fix errors on MVUM or to update road data. Consider suggestions for road designation changes when proposing changes through the NEPA process.	Forest visitors, partners, special interest, forest employees, etc.	Travel Management lead, GIS coordinator
Annually	Develop travel aids to help forest visitors easily navigate on designated routes.	All	Travel Management lead, GIS coordinator
Ongoing	Provide information about TMR Implementation at quarterly tribal meetings.	Tribes	Tribal Relations Staff

Sign Plan

Signs are a key part of communicating with Forest visitors. Visitor surveys on the Coconino National Forest have shown that while approximately 80% of visitors said signs are very or extremely important, over 35% of those queried said they were very dissatisfied with road signage on the Coconino National Forest (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report 2009). Additionally, forest visitors to the Coconino National Forest rated interpretive displays as one of the key areas for recreation management where the forest should focus its resources (National Visitor Use Monitoring Report 2009). Ensuring that the public clearly understands the designations shown on Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs) is critical to successful implementation of the Travel Management Rule.

The Coconino National Forest recognizes that one of the main methods for communicating rules, regulations, and forest information is through signs installed along forest road entry ways and at key intersections. A study of OHV users in Utah found that informative signage is the most valued management action in areas they recreate (Smith et al. 2009). The Forest Plan provides management direction to provide road signs for public service, direction, information, and safety. It is also important to strive for consistency with Agency-wide sign plans and signage direction for uniformity in the use of signs, which supports long-term implementation and enforcement efforts. Lack of sign uniformity and consistency will most likely lead to confusion, undermine public support and make implementation of the travel management rule difficult.

This section summarizes the existing level of signage on the Coconino National Forest, recent signage accomplishments and identifies opportunities for signage improvements on the Forest. This document will also provide guidance for implementing national and regional direction related to marking routes and management of closed roads.

Road and Motorized Trail Signage Inventory Information

The Coconino National Forest has worked diligently toward improving signage across the Forest for user enjoyment, safety, and agency compliance. Yet with the recent implementation of the 2005 Travel Management Regulations, signage remains a much needed part of compliance with motor vehicle rules on the Forest. Over the last 8 years, travel management planning efforts have spurred a substantial effort to inventory, identify, and sign travel routes on the Forest. These efforts include:

- *Route markers* – Between 2009 and 2011 an effort was undertaken to mark every forest road intersection with a carsonite route marker. This effort also collected data on existing route marker presence, condition, and presence of vandalism.
- *Place name signs* - Between 2008 and 2012, the Coconino National Forest installed over 800 signs identifying land features such as tanks, draws, canyons, etc. on the ground. This effort was made possible through a state OHV fund grant and designed to improve Forest visitor navigation through the forest.
- *Portal signs* – Over 100 portal signs stating, “Entering wheeled motorized restriction area, only use roads & trails shown on official map” have been installed along major

entryways to the Coconino National Forest. These notify forest visitors that an official map is available for assisting motorized travel on the forest.

- *Removal of wet weather roads signs* – In 2013, the Arizona Game and Fish worked together with the Coconino National Forest to remove many of the wet weather road signs that were installed in 2005-2008 when the forest was implementing a new system of seasonal road closures. Many of the wet weather road signs were in disrepair and unreadable. These signs included a map, which could be confused with the “official map” identified in the portal signs. Removal of the wet weather road signs provides for more consistent Forest road signage.
- *Entry kiosks* - In 2011, the Forest Supervisor approved the installation or replacement of up to 78 kiosks on the Forest at major forest intersections and entryways. Kiosk approval included the installation of road pull-outs as well so Forest visitors can pull off the road and gather information on motor vehicle and camping rules, road conditions, destinations, and fire conditions as they enter the Forest. Kiosk installation is occurring as funds become available.
- *Closure signs* – The use of closure signs and decals has been an important tool for notifying forest visitors of motor vehicle restrictions in special circumstances. Closure signs and decals are an important step toward discouraging motorized use in areas without route designations.

These efforts have provided a solid foundation for meeting agency signage requirements as well as providing for a safe and useful system for forest visitors. The Forest currently meets policy in the April 2012 Off-Highway Vehicle Program Route and Area Designation Implementation Guide, which explains:

“Travel management sign needs should be assessed at a large scale considering forest-wide objectives for implementation and resources available for sign installation, replacement, removal and maintenance. Units should also consider current motor vehicle uses, mixed traffic designations and areas of potential enforcement challenges of motor vehicle designations.

A sign plan will result in signs that are consistent in appearance and placement; help users better understand and follow the MVUM; and will likely result in improved user compliance. An MVUM combined with a carefully planned strategy to provide the minimum number of appropriate signs, will reduce the burden on agency resources for maintenance and improve the recreational experience for forest users through better understanding of travel management rules and designations.” P. 56

This Implementation Guide also provides more detailed information on the prioritization of Forest route signs:

“It is highly recommended that when a unit develops a travel management sign plan, that they focus on the minimum signs needed to begin implementation, for example, the route marker. Additional signs such as portal signs or travel management signs may always be installed at a later date, if the need arises. It is much easier to add new signs than to remove signs that the public has become dependent on. If a unit elects to use signs in addition to the route marker to help implement the MVUM, they should be used consistently and be coordinated with adjacent units as necessary. If a unit has existing

travel management signs that do not meet current sign standards, a schedule to remove or transition to the current standards should be included in the sign plan.” P.56

Many of the steps identified in this Implementation Guide have been completed on the Coconino National Forest. The “minimum signs needed to begin implementation” include route markers for all designated routes (see Region 3 Travel Management Implementation Guide, November 2013). Route Markers were also placed on non-designated Forest Service system roads per guidance in the Implementation Guide, p. 57, “Route markers should be installed on all NFS roads and trails regardless of whether they are shown on the MVUM.” Lastly, the Forest has removed installed travel management signs that do not meet current standards, such as the wet weather road system signs.

Route Signage Assessment and Challenges

Despite these accomplishments there are still a great number of challenges. This sign plan considers long term sign maintenance costs and consistency across unit boundaries. Current goals and challenges discussed here include:

- (1) maintaining existing signage infrastructure on the Forest,
- (2) expanding information at strategic locations, and
- (3) strategic signage for enforcement challenges

Maintaining existing signage infrastructure on the Forest

The effort to improve signage on the Coconino National Forest over the last several years has resulted in a substantial custodial duty to fix and replace broken signs and respond to signage issues that regularly occur. From the 6,324 road intersections inventoried in 2009-2011 we know that almost 23% of signs will likely need to be repaired or replaced at some point in the next decade

Table 2. Sign damage on the Coconino National Forest

Cause of Sign Damage	Observations	Percentage Of All Roads Surveyed
Animal damage	11	0.17%
Weather Damage	523	8.27%
Obscured By Vegetation	32	0.51%
Vandalism	829	13.11%
Wrong Road Number	84	1.33%

More than half of sign replacements and repairs will likely be a result of vandalism by forest visitors (see table 1). Weather damage, animal damage, vegetation growth, and sign errors also contribute to the maintenance needs.



Figure 1. Portal sign vandalism at the intersection of FR 82 and Interstate 40

Another important element affecting signage operation and maintenance costs include the growing use of mobile devices to navigate forest system roads. The Coconino National Forest has made the designated system of roads and trails available on all recent Apple and Android mobile devices so that forest visitors can have a GPS-active map when driving through the Forest (see Figure 3, below).

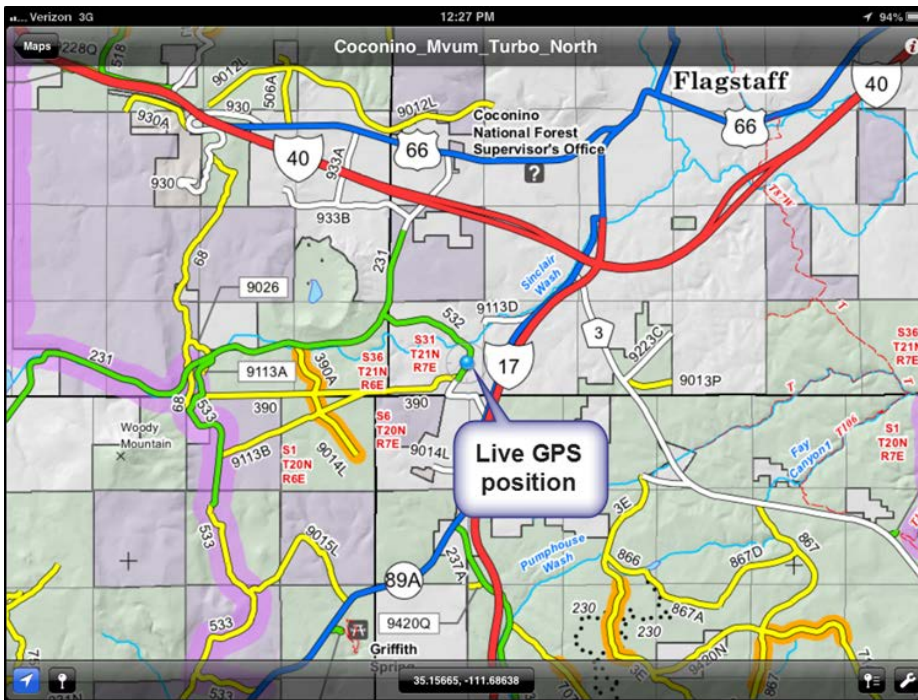


Figure 2. Example of MVUM Travel Aid made available for Apple and Android mobile devices

Making this information available to all forest visitors, partners and other wildlife management agencies, and employees has resulted in receiving constructive feedback from travel aid users. This informative feedback allows us to improve the map or on-the ground signage.

To address comments received from employees or forest visitors related to signage issues the forest maintains a tracking system of road and motorized trail related signage issues. In 2012, the Forest recorded 66 unique signage-related comments, and in 2013 that number dropped to 18 comments. Approximately 60% of these have been fully fixed or replaced at this time.

Addressing signage maintenance and repair is difficult given a steadily decreasing road budget and increasing demands. In recent years the Forest has worked to address this issue by assigning existing Fire Prevention employees sign repair work instead of hiring seasonal, temporary employees. This is a more efficient way to pay for sign repairs, but often requires additional coordination by Fire Prevention and Engineering staff.

Expanding information at strategic locations

Identification of motorized recreation routes

The Coconino National Forest includes several routes specifically designed and designated for motor vehicle recreation. Routes and trail systems including the Cinder Hills OHV Area, Fort Valley Motorized Trail System, Kelly Motorized Trail System, the Casner Trail, and Lower Smasher Canyon are all examples of routes designed for sustainable motorized recreation.

Signs play an important role at keeping these areas sustainable by identifying the acceptable uses on roads and trails, delineating the boundaries of motorized use, and identifying important trail features. Road signage can facilitate the identification of routes using roads designated for “all vehicles” that can be used for family OHV groups. To facilitate consistent signage for motorized routes, the Coconino National Forest developed sign specifications (Figure 3).

SIGN SPECS FOR MOTORIZED TRAIL SYSTEMS COCONINO NF

06/01/2014

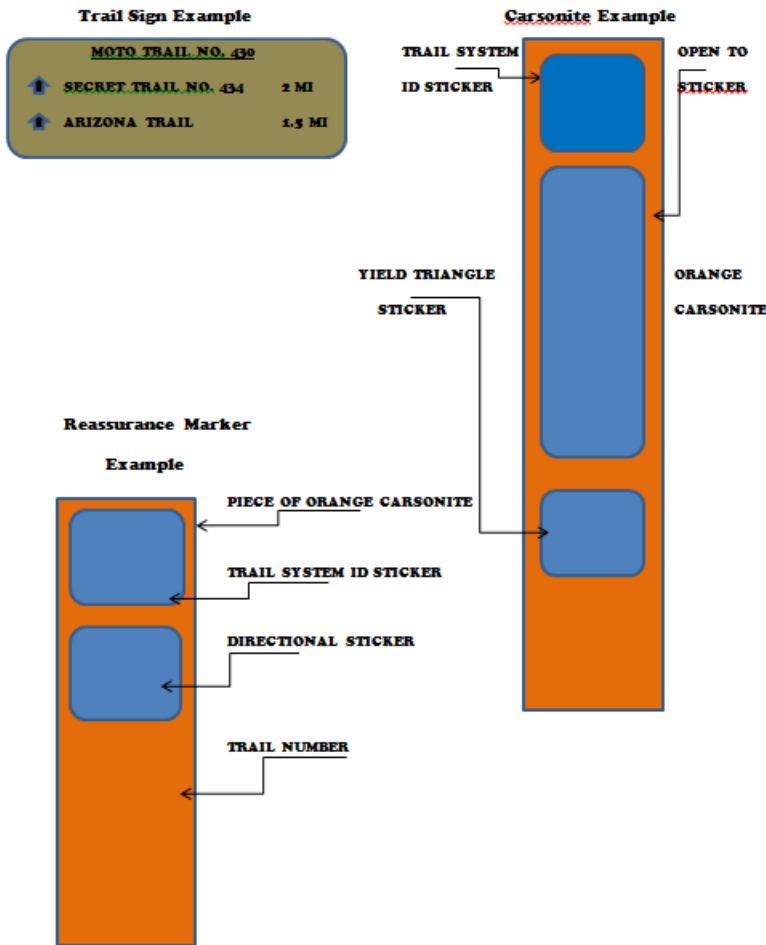


Figure 3. Sign specifications for motorized trails on the Coconino National Forest

Use of centralized information kiosks

One key strategy to address decreasing budgets and increasing signage demand is by concentrating the placement of signs and making spatially relevant information available through electronic means. On many of the Forest Service main roads, the first several hundred feet beyond the road entrance include a number various signs with fire prevention information, forest announcements and potential travel restrictions. While each of these signs conveys important information, they can be inefficient to maintain and result in visual impacts.

The Forest has moved its focus more toward constructing established pull-outs with information kiosks to concentrate forest information at main forest entrances. This allows the Forest to provide more relevant information that can be easily updated. The Forest has identified 78 kiosk locations across the forest that are to be built or updated as funding is made available.

Using the kiosk strategy, the Coconino National Forest has been able to secure grant funds to install several of these kiosks. In 2010 the Forest received a grant to install 8 kiosks with graveled pull-outs, which was completed in 2013. In 2012, the Forest received funding for two additional kiosks in the Stoneman Lake area, which is still in process.

The Coconino National Forest has also worked in conjunction with the Kaibab National Forest to identify a sign plan to coordinate the placement of information on installed kiosks. This will normalize the location of information placed on kiosks across the forests for a more consistent approach to help forest visitors efficiently obtain local forest information. In general, most new installed kiosks will be 3-panelled kiosks.

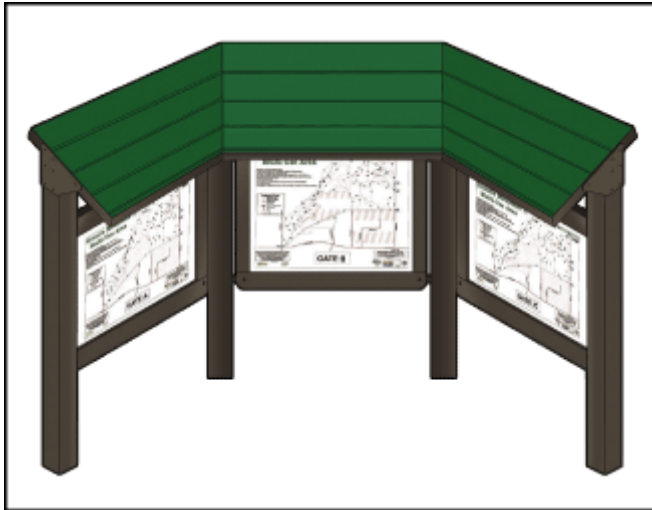


Figure 4. 3-panel kiosks schematic for making forest information available

The sign plan was developed for organization of information on a 3-panel kiosk.

Panel 1: TMR and closure information relevant to the surrounding area. This panel can include the MVUM map or a more detailed and focused map with route designations for the routes in a 5-50 mile radius, depending on the site. This panel can also include stay-on-designated-routes signs, dispersed camping information, closure information, motorized big game retrieval information, pertinent regulations or other local information relevant to the use of motorized vehicles. This panel could also include state or county information relevant to motor vehicle use in the area.

Panel 2: Recent forest information, key messages, and forest recreation posters/information. This panel would include standard posters with key messages such as “Nature Rules! Stay on designated roads and trails,” or “Be Bear Aware! Don’t feed bears or other wild animals.” This panel can also be used to provide more detailed maps of nearby recreation points-of-interest or recent information such as warnings about recent theft, bear encounters, flooding, etc.

Panel 3: Fire information and signs. This panel would include standard fire posters about putting out campfires, etc. This panel would also be used to post current information about the emergency fire closures, red flag days, prescribed fires, or other relevant incidents in the surrounding area.

Use of electronic information

The Forest also plans to use tools such as QR codes, website URLs, and fliers to allow Forest visitors with mobile web access to quickly find and access Coconino National Forest information.

More than half of American adults now own a mobile device with internet access. This supports new opportunities for the Coconino National Forest to share information in an inexpensive

manner. While it will always be important to maintain on-the-ground signage, the growth of mobile devices has provided new ways to share information to forest visitors about forest news and information. The use of websites or QR codes at kiosks or on other forest signs can be helpful at directing forest visitors to websites with information they need for navigation or other interests.

In the summer of 2013, the Coconino National Forest released the first color version of the MVUM for mobile devices via the Avenza PDF Maps App. This allows forest users to track where they are on the forest with a color, shaded-relief map of the designated route system. On-the-ground-signs can be used as information pass-throughs, where forest visitors can immediately retrieve electronic maps and information to enhance understanding and compliance with the motor vehicle rules on the Coconino National Forest.

Strategic signage for enforcement challenges

The Forest road system includes over 7,500 miles of known motorized routes (including many roads managed under permit to private landowners; or by state, county agencies). Keeping these routes clearly signed will remain a challenge, and in many areas it can be confusing which routes are designated for public motor vehicle use and which are closed.

The April 2012 Implementation Guide explains,

“Because 36 CFR 261.13 moves us toward a "closed unless designated open" situation, the MVUM, in conjunction with route markers, should be sufficient to clearly communicate where motor vehicle use is allowed and not allowed. The use of travel management signs may provide additional clarification in special situations. However, use of these signs may also cause confusion for users since not all closed roads and areas will be signed. Use of travel management signs to supplement the MVUM is optional and should be well thought out in a sign plan that considers long term sign maintenance costs and consistency within and across unit boundaries.” P.55

What this means is that additional signage to identify roads as “closed” should only be used in special situations, and cumulatively, these additional signs should be considered in the context of long-term maintenance costs.

Coconino National Forest Sign Program

Travel management sign needs assessed here are to meet forest-wide objectives for implementation given resources available for sign management. The program was specifically designed to address current motor vehicle uses, mixed traffic designations and areas of potential enforcement challenges of motor vehicle designations.

Signage Priorities

Based on the information in the assessment, the Coconino National Forest will focus available resources for signage to the following areas:

- Maintaining and repairing the route markers on forest system roads
- Ensuring safety and identification of motorized recreation routes
- Installation of kiosks and online information pass-throughs

- Identification of closed roads and areas for improved compliance and enforcement

The identification of these signage priorities is expected to meet Forest Plan goals to provide road signs for public service, direction, information, and safety.

Funding Strategies

Funding for road and motorized trail signage has traditionally come from road maintenance funds. More recently, signing has been funded from project-related funds and by working with partners. The Forest will continue to use road maintenance funds, travel management program funds, grants, and partners to maintain, repair, and install signs on routes and motorized areas.

Grants have become a major source for funding the installment of large 3-panel kiosks as well as signage at other heavily used areas. For example, state OHV funds from grant approved in 2011 and 2012 supported the installation of 10 3-panel kiosks, replacement of the directional signage on Stoneman Lake Road, route identification and boundary markers at OHV designated routes and areas, and several road and area closed carsonites to protect sensitive areas. Grants should continue to be considered a potential funding source for kiosks and in other place-based grants for improving motorized recreation opportunities.

Partners and volunteers are also valuable for meeting signage goals. In 2012, the Friends of Northern Arizona Forests applied for \$11,000 in funds to purchase signage for marking the boundary of the Cinder Hills OHV Area, installation of closure signs to protect sensitive resources, and installation of “no garbage” informational signs in heavily used dispersed camping areas. The Verde Valley 4-Wheelers also partnered with the Forest to install route identification signs for the Lower Smasher Canyon jeep trail. Partnerships and volunteers are an important and integral part of improving the signage infrastructure for forest visitors.

Lastly, the Forest can use road maintenance and project-related funds more efficiently to meet signage goals. Funding seasonal employees who may be underfunded in their program area to install and repair signs can be a cost efficient way to address the custodial needs of the Forest signage infrastructure. Development of electronic information and maps can also be used to manage the demand for signage and interpretive information on the Forest.

Consistent Approach to Additional Travel Management Signage

There have been a number of comments received from forest users and employees regarding the need for road closure signs. According to **the Implementation Guide and the Region 3 Travel Management Implementation Strategy**,

- Signing all routes as either open or closed is not consistent with current sign policy or guidelines and is unnecessary to fulfill the requirements of the TMR. Units are not to use such signing.
- Travel management signs and decals **may** be used to draw attention to certain motor vehicle restrictions:
 - In trespass or other problem areas with poor compliance from the public when other methods are ineffective

- For educational purposes when the restriction or prohibition is new to the public
- When a route has been open historically to motor vehicles
- To avoid confusion with other prohibitions on non-motorized, mechanized or over snow use
- To provide reassurance to the public as needed

This affirms that closure signs and decals aren't appropriate on every closed roads, but can be appropriate in a limited number of situations. The Coconino National Forest will focus on the placement and maintenance of closure signs and decals¹ for exceptions stated above, especially in relation to motorized use on closed roads where closure signs can be important for law enforcement. It is at the discretion of the District Ranger as to which non-designated routes are marked with closure signs or decals for this purpose. The Arizona Game and Fish stated that game officers will focus on road closures that are signed. Thus, the placement of closure decals or signs can be an effective tool to facilitate enforcement on non-designated roads that continue to get regular motorized use.

Another exception that is relevant on the Coconino National Forest is where road closed signs may be used for educational purposes when the restriction or prohibition is new to the public. Many Coconino National Forest visitors come to the forest infrequently. We find that a high percentage of Forest visitors to the Coconino National Forest are from the Phoenix Metropolitan Area (NVUM 2009), and may be unfamiliar with recent changes to the motor vehicle use rules. Signage on closed roads in heavily used summer camping locations and hunting areas can also be effective toward increasing compliance with route designations where approved by the District Ranger.

Lastly, additional decals may be used in situations where road designations or 300-foot motorized camping corridors may appear to abruptly end on the MVUM map due to resource issues. There are several situations where due to sensitive wildlife habitat or cultural resource sites, road designations may end on the map, without any clear indicator on the ground. For example, a portion of the 135 road is designated. The designation extends for approximately 2.5 miles of the 3 mile road, ending at the boundary of a Mexican spotted owl Protected Activity Center (PAC). The PAC is not shown on the map, so it seems to the MVUM user that the road designation stops arbitrarily. Providing information at these locations with information on why the designation ends and where can be helpful to improve compliance.

¹ Decals generally include “road closed” and “area closed” stickers that fit on the route marker carsonite.

Information on acceptable travel management signs and decals is listed in the Off-Highway Vehicle Program Route and Area Designation Implementation Guide starting on P. 57.



Figure 5. "No Motor Vehicles" carsonite installed at a 'hill climb' at Wing Mountain on June 4, 2014

Resource protection and restoration strategy

The Travel Management Regulations published in 2005 specifically identified the need to allow for access, motorized recreation opportunities, and resource protection. Motor vehicle use and the existence of forest roads can have one of the largest impacts to important forest resources including wildlife, water quality, scenic views, cultural resources, as well as non-motorized recreation. Motorized use in undesignated areas on the Forest can result in access to areas that are sensitive to human disturbance or can cause direct disturbance to wildlife, removal of vegetation, increased erosion, and direct impacts to cultural resources. Even in the absence of motor vehicle use, non-designated roads can continue to cause impacts to downstream water quality and wildlife.

To address these issues, the Coconino National Forest has identified a number of strategies to decrease motorized use on non-designated routes and other areas, as well as restoration of unneeded or user-created routes.

Resource protection is primarily dependent on compliance with the designated system of roads, trails, and areas for motorized use. Resource protection may also occur as a result of restoration, where there are existing conditions that are contributing to wildlife, soils, water quality, cultural and historic resource, scenic, or other impacts.

Resource protection

One of the main purposes of the 2005 Travel Management Regulations is to sustain natural resource values through more effective management of motor vehicle use. Thus, almost all efforts tied to implementation of motor vehicle management under the Travel Management Rule are expected to facilitate resource protection at some level. However, implementation of these new motor vehicle rules is a long-term process requiring a multifaceted approach including education, engineering, enforcement, and evaluation.

The Forest's strategy for resource protection includes the following key elements:

Identify “problem areas” and focus resources in these areas

Problem areas are defined as locations in or adjacent to the national forest where repeated violations of the motor vehicle use rules result in re-occurring damage to forest resources or re-occurring user conflict. These areas are generally identified through public comments or Forest Service employee observations and reporting. The focus on problem areas is expected to stem the growth of new roads and trails and thus contain potential increasing resource damage.

As discussed in the Coconino National Forest Travel Management EIS, unrestricted motorized use near communities within or adjacent to the national forest continues to be a source of user conflict (Coconino National Forest Travel Management EIS, p. 51) and often resource damage. This is not surprising as studies have shown that OHV behaviors such as riding off designated routes is more likely to occur in high-density areas where there is already clear evidence of unauthorized motorized use (Pierskalla et al. 2011).

We've received complaints from various sources on observed unauthorized routes in areas near private lands including the Camp Verde/Airstrip area, Russell Wash, Blue Ridge Subdivisions, and the Airport area near Ponderosa Trails. Similar areas where public complaints were of greatest magnitude include:

Cinder Hills / Doney Park Interface – Regular complaints regarding unauthorized off-road driving by adjacent landowners as well as encroachment from the Cinder Hills OHV Area. This area is very open and difficult to physically restrict motor vehicle use. The Flagstaff Ranger District has installed road closed signage, signed the Cinder Hills OHV boundary, and enforced motor vehicle restrictions through several patrols in this area. Unauthorized motor vehicle use and damage to private property still occasionally occurs in this area, but the efforts of FS employees and community members have made a big difference. An e-mail from a resident after the 2013 Memorial Day Weekend states, “On a scale of 1-10 I would say it was a 8.5 a vast improvement from last year and I want to say thank you!”



Figure 6. Signage installed on an unauthorized road near the Cinder Hills OHV Area

McGuireville / Rimrock / Russel Wash Interface – There have been several complaints of unauthorized off-road driving, vegetation clearing, trail building. This area is likely accessed from nearby private lands and includes use of closed roads, two-track trail establishment, and continued use of existing single track trails. The Red Rock District has focused efforts in areas

where the most unauthorized motor vehicle use and motorized trail construction has occurred. These efforts include increased signage, increased enforcement efforts, and installation of gates and other structures to physically limit motor vehicle use in this area.



Figure 7. Efforts completed in 2013 to reduce unauthorized motor vehicle use and protect forest resources in the Russell Wash area.

Cornville / Green Gate Interface – This area has a number of unauthorized roads that have been used for several years by local residents. Many of the roads are user-created and occur in or across ephemeral washes in the area. There is also evidence of constructed jumps and berms in some localized areas near the boundary with private lands. The area includes desert scrub and desert grassland and is very open, making it difficult to physically block motor vehicle use. Increased signage and enforcement is being used in this area.

Camp Verde Airstrip – The abandoned Camp Verde airstrip and surrounding area is regularly used by local residents for recreation or to access the nearby Zane Gray shopping area without having to drive on State Highway 260. This use has likely been occurring for decades, but with the growth of this community and the increased availability of OHVs, use and resource damage has also increased. This has resulted in a large network of unauthorized roads that have removed a large amount of native vegetation and created increased erosion. The area includes desert scrub and desert grassland and is very open, making it difficult to physically block motor vehicle use. Increased signage, physical barriers, and enforcement is being used in this area.

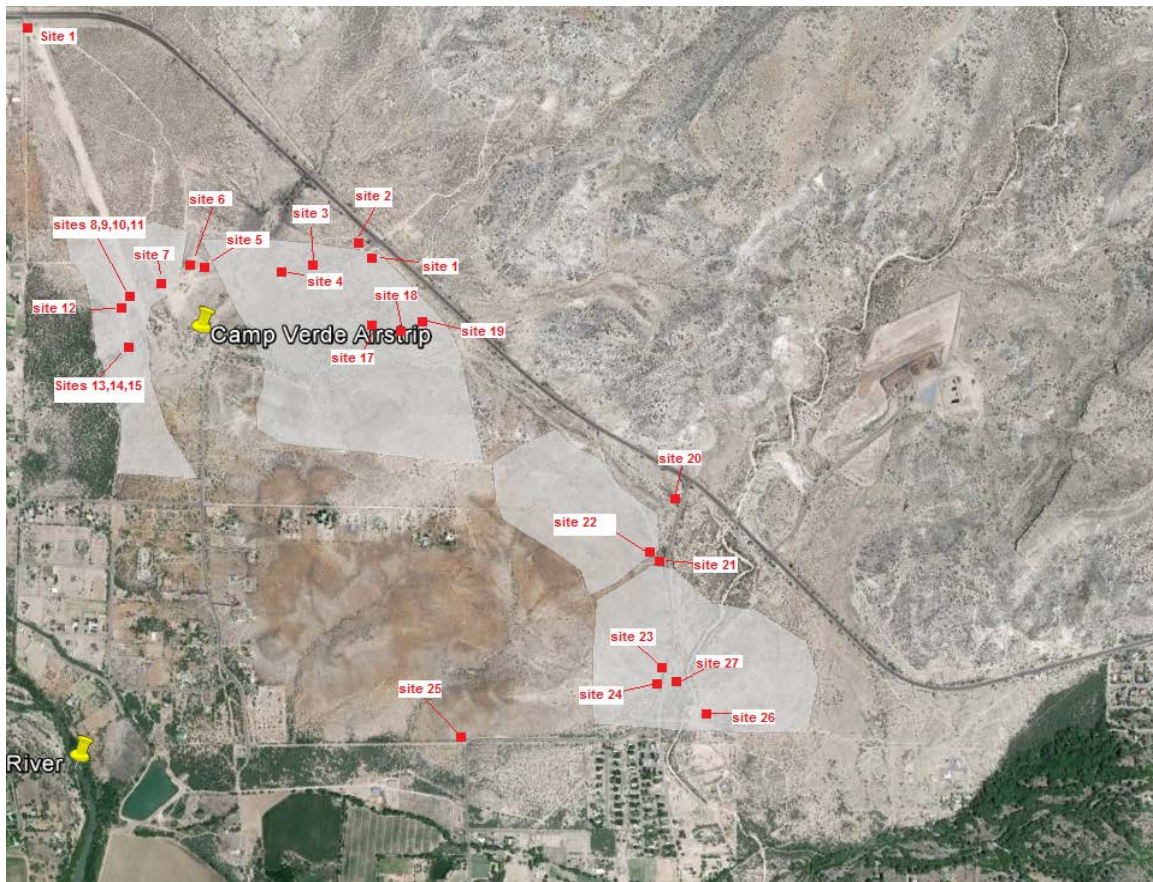


Figure 8. Resource protection efforts in the Camp Verde Airstrip Area in 2013

There are also problem areas that aren't adjacent to communities. Three in particular include:

Wing Mountain Pit – An old borrow pit located at the base of Wing Mountain located adjacent to 519 was regularly used in the past by single track motorcycle riders, and by ATVs using the steep pit wall as a 'hill climb'. There is also a smaller pit nearby accessible from 222B. Both areas continue to receive occasional motorized use despite not being designated. Those who use these areas cite the fact that it includes compressed cinders good for beginner single track

motorcycle riding, which is not available elsewhere on the Forest. A portion of the single track trail emanating from the shooting pit off of Forest Road 519 goes through a northern goshawk nest stand, which is a Region 3 sensitive species. The Coconino National Forest implemented several enforcement and education patrols at this location in 2012. In June 2014, several signs were installed to discourage motorized use off of designated routes.

A-1 Mountain Area – The A-1 Mountain area is easily accessible from Interstate 40 and the area is regularly used by RV campers. This area is often used by those who have no permanent place of residence who are looking for a place to live on the Forest. While some stay on the designated road system, others try to find out-of-the-way spots to avoid the regular law enforcement presence in the area.

Hart Prairie Area – The Hart Prairie area includes important high-elevation meadows, and valuable wildlife habitat in transitional forest types between Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer.

This area has experienced a proliferation of roads since it is a highly desirable summertime recreation area and is easily accessible from Highway 180 and nearby private property.

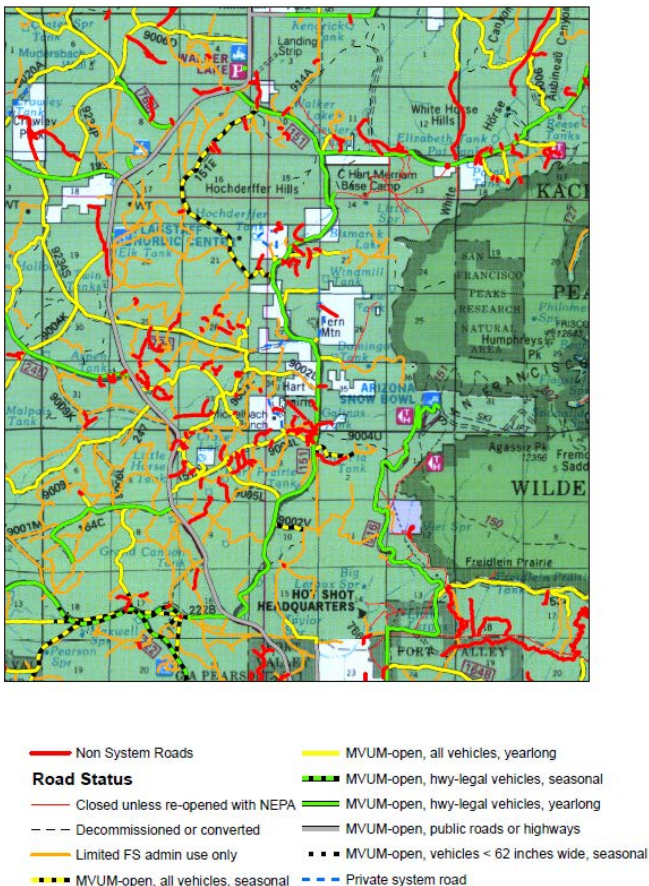


Figure 9. A proliferation of non-system roads in the Hart Prairie area

Turkey Hills – This area is primarily accessible by forest road 791 from Route 66 in Flagstaff, and includes a matrix of forest lands as well as private lands. The Forest has received repeated complaints about the creation of new roads in this area from off-road driving as well as the use of

the area for “parties” that include large bonfires and result in large amounts of trash. In March 2014, during a two week period 73 vehicles were observed violating a motor vehicle closure off of 791 despite clear signage. As a result of these issues, law enforcement has increased in addition to signage. Due to the very open vegetation at the site allowing easy off-road vehicle travel, future efforts may include fencing off these areas by blocking motor vehicle access off of the 791 road.

Potato Lake – The Potato Lake area is a very popular dispersed recreation area as it is heavily visited in the summer and one of the first destination areas on the Mogollon rim accessible from the Phoenix metropolitan area. The non-designated routes in the area continue to receive regular use and there is regular cutting of fences by OHV users to access the area directly adjacent to potato lake itself. The potato lake area is within and surrounded by a Mexican spotted owl Protected Activity Center, and is considered sensitive wildlife habitat as a result. Part of the issue in this area is that there is no available parking or nearby vehicle access given the road designations in the 2011 Coconino National Forest travel management decision. A combination of rviewing route designations to provide for some capacity while also physically blocking and signing other access routes to keep motor vehicle use out of the most sensitive areas is needed here. Efforts were made in June 2014 to sign and block many of the undesignated routes regularly being driven on in this area.

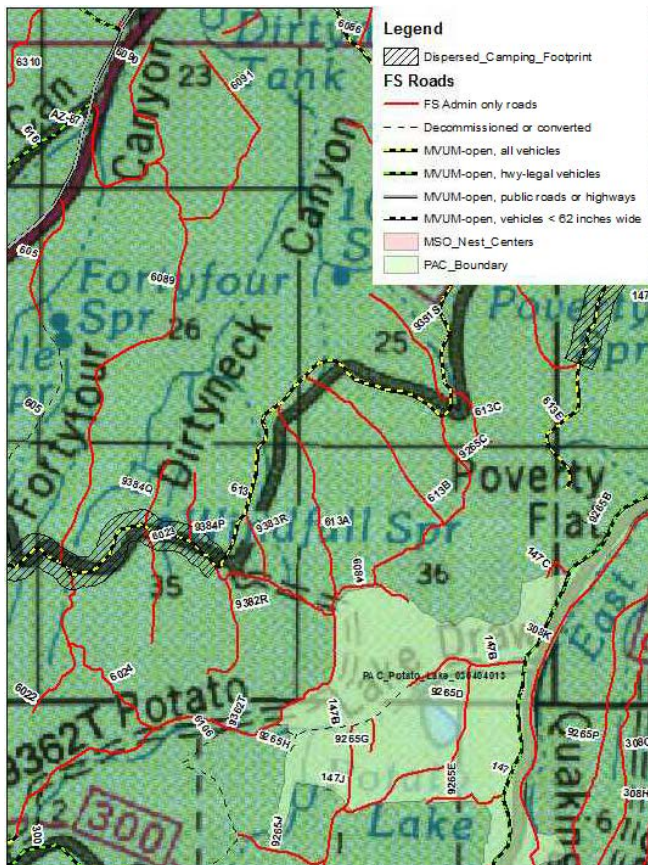


Figure 10. Potato Lake area showing road designations and sensitive wildlife habitat

Actions

- Continue to identify problem areas and document issues in these areas
- Identify one or two problem areas to focus on each year and take steps to reduce unauthorized use and restore natural conditions by using multiple tools including education, signage, enforcement, and ‘soft’ closures (blocking route with branches, rocks, etc. without the use of heavy equipment).

Use scientifically supported methods to improve education and enforcement efforts

The Forest has very limited resources to influence the 2.5 million visitors a year in a way that results in resource protection and maintains limited costs. However, there are a number of studies that suggest minor changes in management can result in improvements in compliance.

Many of these management practices are already incorporated into current management efforts. For example, the placement of signs identifying roads as closed to motor vehicle has been shown to be effective at reducing the amount of unauthorized motor vehicle use on these signed routes by up to 75 – 90% (Hunt and Hosegood 2008). Forest Service policy requires that all designated and non-designated routes are marked with a route marker, but not all non-designated routes should be marked with “road closed” signs. This policy has changed somewhat between 2010 and 2012 with the reissuance of the Off-Highway Vehicle Program Route and Area Designation Implementation Guide. In the revised version of the guide, more flexibility is allowed for the use and installation of “road closed” signs to inform Forest visitors of what is open and what is closed to motor vehicle use. Based on this information, the Coconino National Forest has been increasing the use of signage to inform users of the motor vehicle rules for increased compliance with route and area designations.

Other studies have identified that signage should be more than simply informative, but should target the ideologies and values of motorized users to be more effective. For example, a 2012 report by Bill Scapato at Temple University encourages Federal agencies grappling with this compliance issue to use the “Don’t Tread On Me” message. He argues that by aligning messages on signs and other postings with the ideological foundations of motorized users, agencies can expect to have more compliance and less damage to these signs. This approach has been tested on portions of the Forest by using signage with the “Don’t Tread On Me” message as well as a picture of the American Flag. While there are currently no analyses on the effectiveness of this strategy, it is expected to provide more information as time and monitoring determine the effect of these efforts.

Similar strategies have been brought up by Forest partners. For example, in a coordination meeting in late February 2014, the Arizona Game and Fish urged the Coconino National Forest to include signage with more information as to *why* a road is closed. They estimate that if more users were provided information that a road was closed for wildlife protection, they were more likely to respect that than if no information at all was provided. This suggestion is generally supported by numerous studies that find providing information can alter user perceptions and affect attitudes (Hill and Daniel 2008, Scapato 2012, Kuehn et al. 2011). This strategy is used in some locations (e.g. Forest road 500 includes signage identifying closures for Bald Eagle protection), but is not widely applied. Efforts to apply this more broadly can be used in the future.

Actions

- Continue to use signing techniques that are shown to result in less vandalism and/or more compliance
- Work with partners to try out new techniques that may improve compliance with motor vehicle rules

Engage local communities and user groups

With limited resources and a recent trend of fewer and fewer resources to work toward management goals, it is necessary to work together with user groups and local communities to work toward common goals. This approach has been supported by a number of studies. For example, Fillmore and Bury (1978) found that designating specific motorcycle riding areas can reduce conflict with other public land users.

The broad array of research on motor vehicle use on national forests suggests that motorized recreation planning that only includes restrictions is generally undesirable and can lack effectiveness (Flood 2008, Mihell and Hunt 2011). However, planning efforts that can re-direct motorized use to more sustainable areas if those planning efforts incorporate characteristics desired by users (Siderelis et al. 2010).

The Coconino National Forest has tried this approach several times and found it to be effective given there are adequate resources to implement planning decisions. For example, in December 2012 the Coconino National Forest approved the Kelly Motorized Trail project to designate a motorized trail system with almost 100 miles of trail. The Kelly Motorized Trail system was located in an area with regular unauthorized motor vehicle use, including an entire single-track user-created motorized trail system (airport trails). The planning process considered both existing system routes, non-system routes, and potential new routes to create a workable motorized trail route that would avoid the most sensitive areas and include characteristics important to users. This decision also included the decommissioning of 13 miles of existing roads, some of which occur in sensitive wildlife habitat. Tied to this effort, the Forest worked with the Coconino Trail Riders user group to apply for and receive a grant to implement the trail system and road restoration efforts. As a result this project is expected to result in decreased motor vehicle use in sensitive areas, restoration of important habitat components in sensitive areas, and increased compliance with Coconino National Forest motor vehicle use designations.

While this approach is not viable or desirable in all areas of the Forest, it is likely one of the most effective alternatives in areas with heavy unauthorized motorized use near populations. For example, efforts to apply this strategy in other areas of the Forest are currently in process near the Cornville area with the current Cornville Motorized Trails planning process.

Actions:

- Continue to implement approved motorized planning decisions in conjunction with partners.
- Work with communities to address resource concerns and user conflicts.
- Consider additional motorized planning efforts where user conflict and/or resource damage adjacent to population centers are increasing.

Restoration

With the growth of OHV use throughout the nation and a more than doubling of population in local and northern Arizona in the past several decades, there has been a substantial growth of non-system roads being created throughout the Coconino National Forest in the past several years. Prior to the May 1, 2012 implementation of the Travel Management EIS decision on the Coconino National Forest, off-road motor vehicle use was allowed, and in some areas this practice resulted in the establishment of many new roads and motorized trails.

In some areas the establishment and use of non-system roads has occurred at levels where watershed impacts, impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat, impacts to cultural and historic resource sites, as well as impacts to non-motorized recreation have become a problem. Since the implementation of the travel management rules in 2012, Coconino National Forest staff has observed that the amount of off-road motorized use has largely decreased across the Forest. However, there are still hundreds of miles of non-system roads that continue to exist and in some situations, continue to cause impacts to Forest resources.

In addition to non-system roads, the Coconino National Forest also includes a legacy of system logging roads in some areas of the Forest that may no longer be needed. Restoration of these system and non-system routes may occur naturally in some situations, but in other situations, may require active restoration efforts with heavy machinery. As a result it often requires a route-by-route approach to plan and implement restoration of both system and non-system routes.

Since the implementation of the Travel Management decision in 2012, the Forest has approved the active restoration or decommissioning of several routes through various National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning efforts:

Table 3. NEPA approved road decommissioning since implementation of the Coconino National Forest Travel Management EIS decision

NEPA Project	Miles	Year
Kelly Motorized Trails Project	Approved decommissioning of 13 miles of road	2012
Wing Mountain Fuels Reduction and Forest Restoration	Approved decommissioning of 49 miles of road and obliteration of 5 miles of road.	2013
Clints Well Forest Restoration	Approved decommissioning of 2.8 miles of road	2013
Hunter Access to Aspen Depredation Area	Approved 6.8 miles of roads to be decommissioned	2013

Many of these projects will implement the decommissioning of roads in conjunction with other approved activities such as trail construction, or forest thinning operations, when heavy equipment is on-site.

In addition, the Forest has been implementing “soft closures” or gate installations on non-designated roads with a road maintenance level 1, which continue to receive regular unauthorized motor vehicle use or where motor vehicle use may impact sensitive resources. Gates can be

effective, but are extremely expensive, are time-consuming to plan and implement, and are often targeted for vandalism. Soft closures on the other hand usually include dragging slash and other materials to block the road entrance, and as a result are much less expensive and require much fewer resources. These actions are in compliance with FSH 7709.58, which explains that roads with road maintenance level 1 are closed to vehicle traffic and have attributes including the road being “physically blocked or entrance is disguised.”

Restoration goals for road management are expected to yield benefits to many Forest resources including wildlife, historic and cultural resources, scenic resources, and soil and water resources. Restoration goals for the Coconino National Forest include the following (Table 4).

Table 4. Restoration Actions and time frames

Restoration Actions	Time period
Identify unneeded roads during site-specific NEPA analysis and consider decommissioning unneeded roads through the NEPA process as appropriate.	Ongoing
Physically block and/or obliterate roads approved for decommissioning through the NEPA process.	5 years after date of NEPA decision
Install gates or soft closures on maintenance level 1 roads where there is evidence of regular unauthorized motor vehicle use or potential impacts to sensitive forest resources.	Ongoing
Document road closures with descriptions and GPS coordinates of actions taken for documentation and monitoring purposes.	Ongoing

Enforcement

Enforcement is one of several tools available to the Coconino National Forest to facilitate motor vehicle management. While enforcement may be effective at implementing motor vehicle rules, arbitrary or overly aggressive enforcement can also have the opposite effect of influencing more motor vehicle users to break the rules. Thus, it is essential that enforcement is used strategically in conjunction with other tools (education, engineering, evaluation) to coordinate management efforts.

For effective management of motor vehicle use on the Forest the Coconino National Forest will work with our internal and external partners to ensure compliance with TMR by:

- Asking Forest Service employees to assist in the enforcement of existing motor vehicle laws.
- Using concentrated patrols to inform and enforce the TMR

General Approach

Enforcement should focus on problem areas and in situations where there is clear resource damage.

Employees and our partners are an integral to the enforcement of existing laws leading to the implementation and enforcement of the TMR.

External Partners include: The Arizona Game and Fish Department, Coconino and Yavapai County Sheriffs' Departments, local police departments, Arizona Department of Public Safety, National Park Service and others.

Internal participants: The Forest will utilize its Law Enforcement Officers, Forest Protection Officers, Fire Prevention, as well as all other employees.

Officers in the field will use discretion when contacting violators with a focus on gaining compliance through education. Nothing in this plan provides for a grace period for not issuing citations but rather allows officers to use their judgment based on the totality of the circumstances of whether or not to issue a violation notice.

Forest Law Enforcement Officers in coordination with Forest OHV coordinators and District Rangers will coordinate concentrated Enforcement and Education events.

Enforcement and Education events consist of internal and external participants focusing enforcement and education efforts at predetermined high use areas and during high use time periods (such as holiday weekends in the summer) across the Forest.

The spirit of the enforcement and education events is to contact motor vehicle users and provide education material regarding safe and responsible OHV use, the legal requirements for OHV on Forest Service Lands, and when necessary use of the enforcement tools.

District Staff and Rangers will coordinate weekend patrols of Forest Protection Officers, Fire Prevention and employees.

The primary focus of patrols will be education followed by enforcement.

Use signage strategically to provide information of road and area closures to facilitate enforcement of motor vehicle use that can cause impacts to sensitive Forest resources.

Patrols should be focused during times of high use, keeping the safety of our employees and users as a priority. Where possible patrols should occur during periods when Forest visitors are arriving on the Forest so that they learn the rules prior to setting up camp and using motor vehicles on the Forest.

Funding

Continue to provide funding for an 'OHV Ranger' on each district (Red Rock, Mogollon Rim, Flagstaff) from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

District Rangers and Staff will encourage employees to participate in patrols during holiday weekends and other strategic education and enforcement efforts.

Work with volunteers where appropriate to increase education efforts in lieu of enforcement to increase outreach effectiveness.

Accomplishments

Beginning with planning efforts to implement the Travel Management Regulations in 2006, the Coconino National Forest began implementing strategic patrols to educate users and focused enforcement on off-road motorized use that caused resource damage. With the approval of the Travel Management EIS decision in 2011 and subsequent implementation in May 2012, focused education/enforcement efforts greatly increased. In 2012, the Forest implemented approximately 65 additional focused patrols beyond baseline fire prevention, law enforcement, and recreation patrols that also continued to occur. This resulted in approximately 5,600 additional contacts to enhance education about the new motor vehicle rules, answer questions, and enforce the new rules.

In 2013, focused patrols were refined to Labor Day weekend (the highest visitation period on the Forest) and to focus on hunters during fall and winter hunts. These efforts resulted in approximately 2,000 contacts. Compared to 2012, patrols in 2013 were more focused on problem areas and included more slightly more enforcement. For example, Flagstaff Fire Prevention employees contacted almost 26,000 persons in 2013. These efforts included walking into dispersed campsites and discussing Forest rules and addressing any transgressions. This differed from the 2012 strategy of which leaned more toward education by providing information and MVUM maps at the entrance to main Forest access roads. In addition, in 2013 the Red Rock Ranger District was staffed with an OHV Ranger to specifically patrol and address motor vehicle use problem areas. On the Red Rock Ranger District, the OHV Ranger made 512 contacts in problem areas and issued 56 warnings and violation notices.

Evaluation

The Travel Management Rule preamble states that monitoring may include methods to measure changes in environmental conditions, recreation demand, and other factors to provide information to make changes in designations. In addition, the Rule specifically states, “monitor the effects of motor vehicle use on designated roads and trails and in designated areas... consistent with the applicable land management plan as appropriate and feasible (36 CFR 212.57).” In the September 28, 2011 Travel Management Environmental Impact Statement decision acknowledges this need for monitoring, and explains that the decision is to be implemented within an adaptive management framework. A key part of this framework includes evaluation and monitoring. The Coconino National Forest has shown a strong commitment to monitoring, despite very few resources available to do so. This is illustrated by the issuance of the 2013 Coconino National Forest Travel Management Monitoring Report (http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5432269.pdf), the only such report issued in the southwestern region. In addition to information in the 2013 monitoring report, in 2014 the Coconino National Forest has increased efforts to monitor conditions in designated 300-foot motorized camping corridors.

The 2013 monitoring report includes information gathered based on monitoring questions in the 2011 Monitoring Plan issued with the Travel Management EIS decision. This monitoring plan is located online on the Coconino National Forest website.

The Forest has also regularly accepted comments and feedback from the public regarding suggested changes to travel management designations. As of May 2014, the Forest has received 772 unique comments/suggestions. Approximately 97% of these have been evaluated and many have been used to make corrections to the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Of the 772 comments, almost 400 would require NEPA analysis. These comments have been evaluated and have resulted in recommendations to the Forest leadership to make designation changes through the NEPA process. It is expected the recommendations will ultimately inform a new proposed action that will be evaluated through the NEPA process. The proposed action is expected to be released in September 2014.