

# Workshops to study 'travel management' in Lincoln National Forest

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Public workshops covering Travel Management on the Lincoln National Forest will kick off at the Guadalupe Ranger District on May 3, followed by a session May 7 in Ruidoso

The Travel Management Rule was issued by U.S. Forest Service officials in November 2005. The new rule requires that each National Forest designate a system of roads, trails and areas that will be open to motorized travel.

The Lincoln National Forest has a travel management policy in place since 1987 that identifies roads and trails open to motorized use.

Public input from the workshops will be used to identify potential changes to the travel system that better protect natural and cultural resources, address user conflicts and secure sustainable opportunities for public enjoyment of national forests, Forest Service officials say.

The end product of the designation process will be a Motor Vehicle Use Map that will be published showing a system of roads, trails and/or areas designated for motorized use. Any motorized use outside of the designated system will be prohibited.

Jerry Fennell, who has lived in the old Jicarilla settlement and operated mining claims in the national forest, contends the true intent of USFS officials is to close or severely restrict the right of the American public's access to the lands.

"In fact, (they are) making an attempt to create a de facto wilderness of our National Forest, this being an illegal act as a Wilderness Area can only be implemented by the President of The United States and/or an Act of Congress," Fennell said.

"This is in direct violation of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), which states in part, 'any road open prior to October 1, 1976 must remain open.'

"How many rights have we already lost? Better yet, how many more must we lose before we wake up?"

The closing of these roads or even restricting access would have a devastating effect upon this part of the country for many reasons, Fennell said.

"These roads have been used for many years for outdoor recreation, sightseeing, picnics - there are millions of reasons these roads are needed."

He explained that RS2477 was part of the Mining Act of 1866, and aimed to secure rights-of-way over public lands to encourage the development of roads to settle the West and link supply points.

Many became major highways. Although RS2477 was replaced in 1976 by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the act preserved RS2477 rights of way already in place, he stated.

Officials with the Lincoln National Forest say they are committed to involving the public in a collaborative process as it implements the Travel Management Rule on all units within the next two years. Participants in the workshop will learn about the Travel Management Rule, participate in small group discussions regarding the types of motorized opportunities and experiences they would like to see on the Forest, and learn how they can continue to be involved in the process, they said.

The workshop schedule location and times are:

- 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., May 3, at the Carlsbad Library

- 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., May 7, at the Ruidoso Civic Center
- 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., May 9, at the Nivison Library in Cloud-croft
- 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., May 10, at the Alamogordo Civic Center

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