

**Forest Service Handbook
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 7709.55 – Travel Planning Handbook
Chapter 10 - Travel Planning for Designations**

Amendment: 7709.55-2016-2

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Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Superseded Directive: 7709.55_10, Amendment 7709.55-2009-1, January 8, 2009

Approved by: Glenn P. Casamassa, Associate Deputy Chief, NFS

Date approved: July 6, 2016

Responsible Staff:

Explanation of changes: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

10: Incorporates new regulations to require designation of roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands to provide for over-snow vehicle (OSV) use. The direction is amended to require the Responsible Official to designate NFS roads, NFS trails, and areas on NFS lands where OSV use is allowed in administrative units or Ranger Districts, or parts of administrative units or Ranger Districts, where snowfall is adequate for OSV use to occur at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 212, Subpart C. Notice of final rule was published in the Federal Register on January 28, 2015 (80 FR 4500).

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Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.

This chapter provides direction on travel planning for the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use under 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B, and over-snow vehicle (OSV) use under 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart C. Designation of OSV use is not required where snowfall is not adequate for that use to occur (FSM 2353.28, para. 3, 7710.3, para. 5).

10.2 - Objectives

1. Tightly focus decisions related to the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use under Subpart B, and OSV use under Subpart C. Reconsideration of the entire Forest transportation system is not required or appropriate (FSM 7715.1).
2. For many administrative units, designation of routes and areas for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C will result in a shift from cross-country motor vehicle use or OSV use to a system of routes and areas designated for motor vehicle use or OSV use. For other administrative units, route and area designation for motor vehicle use or OSV use will simply confirm travel management decisions that have already been made.
3. Avoid unnecessary inventory.
4. Coordinate with Federal, State, county and other local entities and Tribal governments, and obtain public involvement as required in the designation process (36 CFR 212.52(a), 212.81(d); FSM 7715.3). When coordination with other governmental entities and public involvement are required, involve them early and throughout the designation process to engender trust, credibility, and coordination and to provide an integrated system of routes and areas designated for motor vehicle use or OSV use.

10.3 - Policy

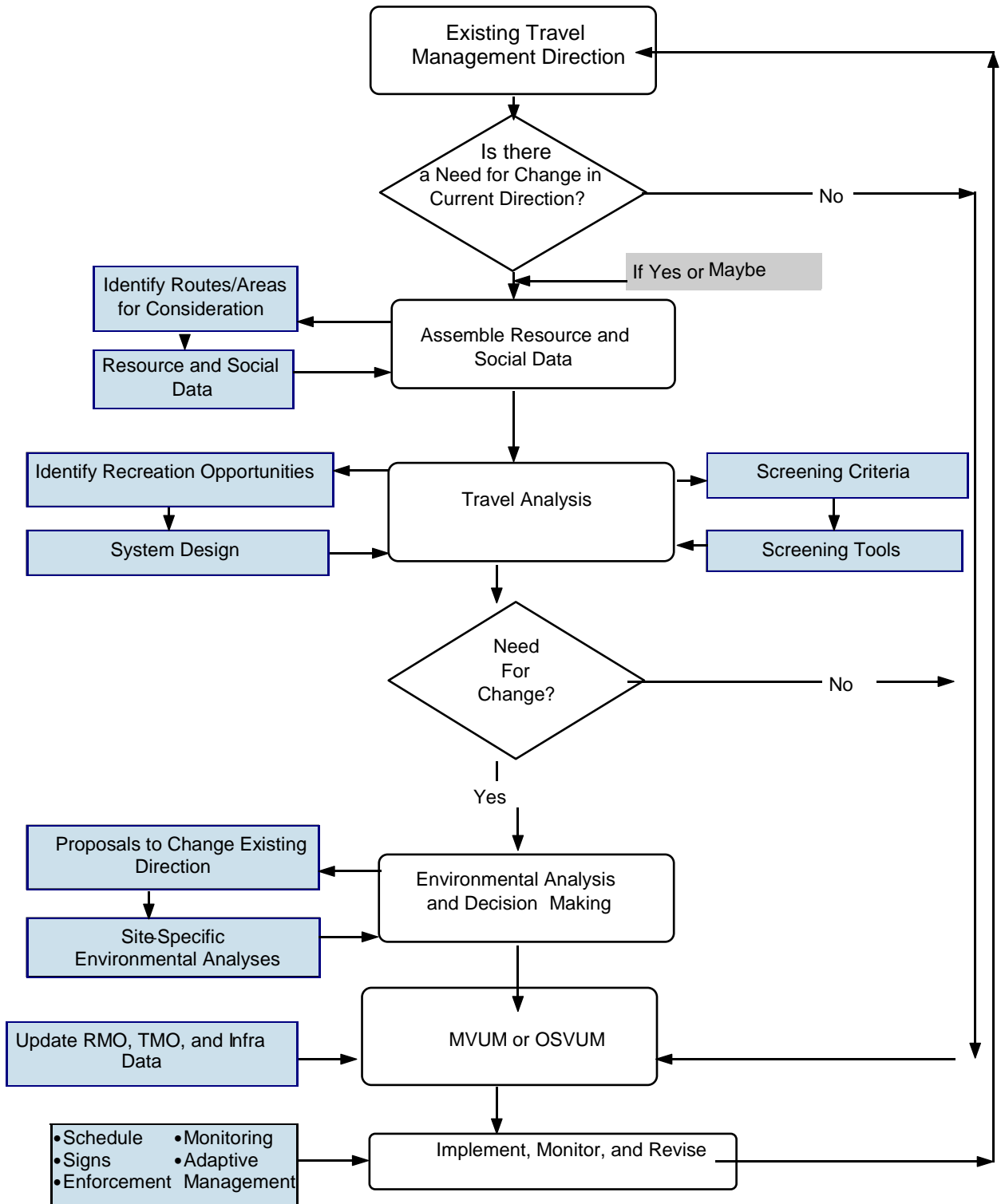
Use the following six-step process to guide designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use under Subpart B and OSV use under Subpart C (see ex. 01).

1. Compile existing travel management direction.
2. Assemble resource and social data.
3. Use travel analysis to identify proposals for change.
4. Conduct appropriate environmental analysis and decision-making.
 - a. Provide for public involvement in accordance with 36 CFR 212.52 and FSM 7715.3, paragraph 1.
 - b. Coordinate with appropriate Federal, State, county, and other local governmental entities and Tribal governments in accordance with 36 CFR 212.53 and FSM 7713.3, paragraph 2.

- c. Consider and document application of the criteria in 36 CFR 212.55 and FSM 7715.5 in designating roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C.
5. Identify routes and areas designated for motor vehicle use under Subpart B on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM). Identify routes and areas designated for OSV use under Subpart C on an OSV use map (OSVUM).
6. Implement, monitor (36 CFR 212.57, 212.81(d); FSM 7717.1), and revise (36 CFR 212.54, 212.81(d); FSM 7717.2).

10.3 – Exhibit 01

TRAVEL PLANNING FOR MOTOR VEHICLE USE AND OSV USE DESIGNATIONS



10.5 - Definitions

See FSM 7705 for definitions of terms used in this chapter.

11 - Step 1: Compile Existing Travel Management Direction

Existing travel management direction for each administrative unit or Ranger District reflects its history of travel planning, occupancy and use, road and trail construction, and past decisions, including those contained in the applicable land management plan.

11.1 - Baseline System

1. Consolidate existing direction on travel management for the area under consideration into a single location. This step should not create new direction. Rather, this step involves compiling past decisions that guide motor vehicle use or OSV use, including maps, travel atlases, Road and Trail Management Objectives (FSM 7714), maintenance records, and monitoring reports for National Forest System (NFS) roads and NFS trails on the administrative unit or Ranger District.
2. Carefully review State motor vehicle codes and other applicable local law regarding motor vehicle operation, licensing and registration, safety, and motorized mixed use. Consult with Law Enforcement and Investigations Staff and coordinate with affected State and local law enforcement agencies involved in traffic enforcement for the affected area. Traffic on NFS roads is subject to State traffic laws except when in conflict with designations established under 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B, or with the rules at 36 CFR Part 261. Whether motorized mixed use is allowed on an NFS road is determined by State traffic law or local ordinances, unless it conflicts with the designation for that road established under 36 CFR 212.51.
3. If existing travel management decisions for an administrative unit or a Ranger District restrict motor vehicle use over the entire unit or District, or restrict OSV use where snowfall is adequate for that use to occur, to designated routes and areas, the existing decisions may, with public notice but no further analysis or decision-making, be identified on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM) or OSV use map (OSVUM).

11.2 - Land Management Plans

1. Land management plans are strategic documents. They establish desired conditions and objectives, identify the suitability of land for various uses, and describe guidelines for resource protection (FSM 1920). Approval of a plan, plan amendment, or plan revision should not include a final decision designating roads, trails, or areas for motor vehicle use or OSV use or otherwise restricting those uses. Rather, the land management plan provides information and guidance for travel management decisions.
2. Travel management decisions are made at the project level. They must be consistent with land management plans (FSM 7712.2).

3. Some land management plans prepared under the 1982 planning rule include travel management decisions as plan standards. The Responsible Official generally should avoid including travel management decisions in land management plans prepared or revised under current planning regulations (36 CFR Part 219, Subpart A). If travel management decisions are approved simultaneously with a plan, plan amendment, or plan revision, the travel management decisions must be accompanied by appropriate environmental analysis. Travel management decisions incorporated in land management plan standards under the 1982 planning rule are part of the existing travel management direction for an administrative unit or a Ranger District.

11.3 - Existing Travel Management Decisions

1. The regulations at 36 CFR Part 212, Subparts B and C, do not require reconsideration of previous travel management decisions.
2. Many administrative units or Ranger Districts have NFS roads and NFS trails that are in effect already designated for the uses for which they are currently managed. All administrative units or Ranger Districts, for example, have NFS roads managed as open to highway-legal vehicles (generally NFS roads classified at Operational Maintenance Level 2, 3, 4, or 5). These roads are in effect already designated for use by highway-legal vehicles.

11.4 - Jurisdiction Over a Forest Transportation Facility

1. Identify jurisdiction over Forest transportation facilities. The designation requirements in Subparts B and C apply only to NFS roads and NFS trails. Some Forest roads and Forest trails are State, county, or municipal routes authorized by legally documented rights-of-way. While the Forest Service may have some authority to regulate use of these roads and trails to protect NFS lands, these routes are not subject to designation under 36 CFR 212.51 or 36 CFR 212.81.
2. When jurisdiction over a Forest transportation facility is uncertain, coordinate with Federal, State, county, and local public road authorities and consult with the local Office of the General Counsel. Legal research and title searches may sometimes be necessary to establish jurisdiction over a forest transportation facility.

12 - Step 2: Assemble Resource and Social Data

1. Travel analysis and travel management decisions require information about use patterns, natural resource conditions, user demand, and social and economic interactions. Gather only the information necessary to make informed travel management decisions. Travel management decisions do not require an inventory of unauthorized routes.
2. The public is a valuable source of information. Public participation at this stage may include sharing information about unauthorized routes, joint collection of resource data, and collaborative learning about natural resource impacts. An open public process can

increase understanding about travel management issues and set the stage for successful decision-making.

12.1 - Identifying Roads, Trails, and Areas for Consideration

1. The baseline for travel analysis and designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C includes a complete and accurate inventory of NFS roads and NFS trails and areas on NFS lands that are managed for wheeled motor vehicle use or OSV use. This inventory must include maps, as well as information on the authorized uses and characteristics of each route. Much of this information should be contained in the applicable forest transportation atlas.
2. Administrative units should establish a process for identifying any unauthorized routes that should be considered in travel analysis. Appropriate consideration should be given to unauthorized routes, based on their potential contribution to the forest transportation system.

13 - Step 3: Use Travel Analysis to Identify Proposals for Change

1. The first two steps of the travel planning process overlap with the first three steps of the travel analysis process (FSH 7709.55, ch. 20). Responsible Officials should conduct the planning process to prevent duplication of effort. These two six-step processes are not intended to be rigid. Responsible Officials should design these processes to meet local needs.
2. Travel analysis (FSH 7709.55, ch. 20) provides a comprehensive view of the road and trail network across a broad landscape. Some travel management issues (such as response to visitor demand, open road density, and other wildlife issues) should be considered at a broad scale, while other issues (such as potential conflicts among uses on a particular trail and mitigation measures for a particular stream crossing) are best evaluated at a smaller scale. Travel analysis is often the point where broad-scale issues can be identified. Site-specific issues are addressed at the project level (FSH 7709.55, sec. 14).
3. Travel analysis should form the basis for proposed actions related to the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C. Some of these proposed actions will be evaluated through environmental analysis. Examples include proposals to add unauthorized routes to the Forest transportation system, proposals to establish or change prohibitions or restrictions on motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C, and proposals to change motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C on NFS roads and NFS trails. Travel analysis does not itself produce these decisions.

14 - Step 4: Conduct Necessary Environmental Analysis and Decision-Making

1. Proposed changes to the Forest transportation system may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws. Forest Service NEPA procedures are found in 36 CFR Part 220 and FSH 1909.15.
2. If motor vehicle use is not restricted to designated routes and areas over the entire administrative unit or Ranger District, or if OSV use is not restricted to designated routes and areas where snowfall is adequate for that use to occur, propose designating routes and areas for that purpose, and conduct appropriate environmental analysis and documentation (FSM 7715).
3. Review existing travel or roads analysis and conduct any necessary travel analysis before conducting environmental analysis of a proposal to change current travel management direction. Avoid duplication by incorporating relevant information from travel analysis into site-specific environmental analysis, documentation, and decision-making.
4. For trails and areas, consideration of damage, harassment, and conflicts as provided in 36 CFR 212.55(b) and efforts to minimize those impacts, if impacts exist, should be documented in the environmental analysis and decision document. Typically, efforts to minimize damage, harassment, or conflicts as provided in 36 CFR 212.55(b) may be documented through identification and analysis of appropriate mitigation measures or other management actions. The environmental analysis should explicitly address the minimization criteria (36 CFR 212.55 (b)) and should explain how mitigation measures or other management actions minimize any damage, harassment, and conflicts that were identified through the effects analysis of the proposed action and alternatives.
5. Minimization of damage, harassment, and conflicts under 36 CFR 212.55(b) occurs in the context of the Forest Service's statutory obligation under National Forest Management Act and the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act, which includes balancing competing uses of NFS lands and providing for outdoor recreation. Minimization of damage, harassment, and conflicts as provided in 36 CFR 212.55(b) does not mean that they have to be eliminated, nor does minimization in this context mean reducing designated routes to a particular number or mileage.
6. The decision should explain how the identified damage, harassment, and conflicts will be minimized in the designation of trails and areas, utilizing the information provided in the environmental analysis, which could include a description of mitigation measures, seasonal or vehicle class restrictions, and any other management actions that will be implemented as part of the decision to minimize damage, harassment, and conflicts as provided in 36 CFR 212.55(b).

15 - Step 5: Identify Designated Routes and Areas on an MVUM or OSVUM

15.1 - MVUMs and OSVUMs

1. Publication of an MVUM (36 CFR 212.56) or an OSVUM (36 CFR 212.81(c)) completes the designation process. The prohibition on motor vehicle use off the designated system (36 CFR 261.13) goes into effect and is enforceable when routes and areas designated for motor vehicle use under Subpart B are identified on an MVUM. The prohibition on OSV use off the designated system (36 CFR 261.14) goes into effect and is enforceable when routes and areas designated for OSV use under Subpart C are identified on an OSVUM.
2. An MVUM must cover an entire administrative unit or Ranger District (36 CFR 212.1) and OSVUM must cover all parts of the unit or District where snowfall is adequate for OSV use to occur. If environmental analysis in step 4 is conducted at a smaller scale (such as at the scale of a watershed), do not publish an MVUM until designation supported by appropriate documentation is complete for the entire unit or District, and do not publish an OSVUM until designation supported by documentation is complete for all parts of the unit or District where snowfall is adequate for OSV use to occur.
3. Link trails data in the Forest Service's Infrastructure database to geographic information system spatial data as described in the Motor Vehicle Use Map Production Guide, available at <http://fsweb.mvum.fs.fed.us> or Over-Snow Vehicle Use Map Production Guide, available at <http://fsweb.mvum.fs.fed.us/osvum> and use those data to produce an MVUM or an OSVUM.
4. An MVUM or OSVUM for an administrative unit or a Ranger District may be displayed on more than one sheet of paper. If the MVUM or OSVUM covers a broad geographic area or the route density is high, a single page may not be sufficient to display the detail necessary to identify designated routes and areas. An MVUM or OSVUM may include as many pages at whatever scale is necessary to identify sufficiently the roads, trails, and areas designated for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C in the administrative unit or Ranger District.
5. An MVUM or OSVUM must meet requirements established by the Washington Office, Director of Engineering (FSM 7710.42). These requirements are identified in the Motor Vehicle Use Map Production Guide or Over-Snow Vehicle Use Map Production Guide.
6. The following methods may be used individually or in combination to notify the public of the availability of an MVUM or OSVUM:
 - a. Publishing a notice in the local newspaper;
 - b. Posting a notice at the Ranger District office;

- c. Posting a notice at the headquarters of the administrative unit;
- d. Posting a notice at the local post office or local places of business; and/or
- e. Posting a notice on the appropriate Forest Service website.

15.2 - Road and Trail Management Objectives

1. Road Management Objectives (RMOs) (FSM 7714 and 7731) and Trail Management Objectives (TMOs) (FSM 2353.12) document direction for day-to-day management of an NFS road or an NFS trail based on travel management decisions. Therefore, establishing RMOs and TMOs is not a separate travel management process and does not involve additional decision-making. Adjustments to RMOs and TMOs may be required subsequent to travel management decisions.
2. An RMO documents the intended purpose of an NFS road. An RMO enumerates design, operation, and maintenance criteria and documents traffic management strategies for each vehicle class allowed on an NFS road (FSM 7731). An RMO also documents Forest orders and permits associated with the road.
3. A TMO documents the five Trail Fundamentals, Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classifications, and travel management strategies as they apply to an NFS trail.

16 - Step 6: Implement, Monitor and Revise

Implementation of travel management decisions requires effective public education, enforcement, and monitoring. Results and information from all of these initiatives help determine whether designations for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C should be revised.

16.1 - Signs

Guidance on signing is found in EM 7100-15, "Sign and Poster Guidelines for the Forest Service." Signs should complement and be consistent with the applicable MVUM or OSVUM (FSM 7716.42).

16.2 - Enforcement

Enforcement of 36 CFR 261.13 and 36 CFR 261.14 should be targeted and effective, with a sufficient field presence by qualified Forest Protection Officers, Law Enforcement Officers, and other Agency law enforcement personnel, consistent with availability of resources. Public education, route design, and traffic management strategies can complement law enforcement and reduce the number of violations.

16.3 - Monitoring

1. Monitoring involves the following types of activities:

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- a. Implementation Monitoring. Evaluating consistency with the applicable land management plan and compliance with travel management decisions, including any required mitigation measures.
 - b. Validation Monitoring. Verifying assumptions and models used in travel analysis and environmental analysis. Use applicable criteria established in 36 CFR 212.55 as a basis for identifying effects to monitor under Subpart B or C (FSM 7717.1, para. 2).
 - c. Effectiveness Monitoring. Evaluating the effectiveness of management and enforcement actions in achieving the desired outcomes of travel management decisions, including designation of routes and areas for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C.
 - d. Program Monitoring. Tracking and evaluating whether the long-term objectives of travel management for the administrative unit or Ranger District have been achieved.
2. Monitoring can help Responsible Officials identify the need to change or make new travel management decisions. Changes to the system of routes and areas designated for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C may include constructing new routes, removing designations, or changing designated vehicle classes or seasons of use. Revisions to designations are governed by 36 CFR 212.54 and 212.81(d). In most cases, these changes (including connected actions and cumulative effects) can be addressed on a site-specific basis and will not trigger reconsideration of decisions governing the entire system of roads, trails, and areas designated for motor vehicle use under Subpart B or OSV use under Subpart C in an administrative unit or a Ranger District.