

Appendix E
OHV Management Guidance

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IMPLEMENTING AREA OHV DESIGNATIONS AND GUIDANCE FOR SITE SPECIFIC PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Background

The off-highway portion of the Draft EIS for the FFO is a programmatic planning document and is intended to provide the environmental analysis and disclosure needed to amend OHV area designations in the proposed resource management plan.

The Draft EIS addresses the impacts of motorized wheeled OHV travel on areas currently available to cross-country travel. The proposed decision would amend the resource management plan OHV designations on approximately 1.4 million acres of public land within the FFO. This designation limits/restricts motorized wheeled cross-country travel yearlong under BLM regulations (CFR 8342). The proposed action does not change the current limited/restricted yearlong or closed designations, or designated OHV intensive use areas within the existing Special Management Areas. Site specific planning would address OHV use in each OHV Management Unit.

The programmatic Draft EIS is not intended to change existing site-specific direction to close areas or trails to the traffic types causing considerable adverse effects (43 CFR 8341.2). Identifying affected areas or trails may occur through normal administration and monitoring or may be the result of public input.

PLANNING PROCESS

EIS/Plan Amendment: Planning for BLM lands involves two levels of decision. The first level, often referred to as programmatic planning, is the development or amendment of the resource management plan, which provides management direction for the various resource programs, uses, and protection measures. The resource management plan and associated amendments are intended to set out management prescriptions with goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and terms and conditions for future decision-making through site-specific planning. This includes the designation of areas as closed, open, or restricted/limited to motorized wheeled cross-country travel.

Site-Specific Planning: The second level of planning involves the analysis and implementation of management practices designed to achieve goals and objectives of the resource management plan. This is referred to, as project, activity, or site-specific planning that requires detailed information, including the location, condition, and current use of individual roads, trails, routes, and areas. This allows the identification of when and where individual roads, trails, routes and areas will be open or closed to various types of use. This step is accomplished through the site-specific planning process at the local level, and is dependent on the availability of funds and resources. A prioritized list of areas for site-specific planning would be completed within six months after the signing of the Record of Decision for the Final EIS.

This would be consistent with the land use planning manual and handbook (Manual 1600 and Handbook H-1600-1) and any future OHV planning policy.

PRIORITIZATION FOR SITE SPECIFIC PLANNING

Introduction

To ensure that site-specific planning is initiated in areas of the most need, areas would be identified by three categories to provide appropriate emphasis for their completion. Prioritization for

site-specific planning would be done by OHV management unit or by SMA and would be rated as high, moderate, or low based on several factors.

Prioritization of Areas

The FFO would complete a prioritized list of areas for site-specific planning within six months of the signing of the ROD in close coordination with the public.

Factors: When determining the priorities for site-specific planning, the FFO will consider the effects of the Final EIS; Executive Orders 11644 and 11989; the National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands; coordination with the public; other partners, agencies, and tribal governments; and the factors listed below:

- Opportunity to provide a variety of OHV recreational experiences, while minimizing resource damage and conflicts.
- Risk of, or current damage to, soil watersheds, vegetation, or other natural, cultural or historic resources on public land.
- Potential to spread noxious weeds.
- Avoidance of riparian/wetland areas.
- Need to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant degradation of wildlife habitats.
- Concern for safety of all users.
- Resolution of conflicts between various user groups.
- Current or potential impacts to federally listed threatened or endangered, and sensitive species.
- Amount of public land within the disposal zone.

Categories: OHV management units and applicable SMAs will be included in one of the following categories:

HIGH PRIORITY AREAS – Areas that currently have a high level of OHV use, which has resulted in resource damage and/or user conflicts. There is the need to address all or most of the factors listed above. Site-specific planning would be initiated within two years of the resolution of any protests to the Final EIS or administrative appeals to the ROD.

MODERATE PRIORITY AREA – These areas may address some of the factors listed above, as well as identifying areas that provide OHV opportunities, and at the same time minimize user conflicts and resource damage. Site-specific planning would be started within five years (same guidelines as above).

LOW PRIORITY AREAS – Areas where the majority of the public land is in the disposal zone and/or there is low OHV use due to remoteness and distance from the major population centers. Any resource problems can be solved with emergency closures until they are resolved. There are no specific requirements for initiation of site-specific planning.

Road/Trail/Route/Area Inventory

Through site-specific planning, roads, routes, trails, and areas would be inventoried, mapped and designated as open, limited by season or type of vehicle, or closed.

Site-specific planning would identify appropriate locations and types of allowable use based on resource management plan desired conditions and management conditions. In addition, site-specific planning may identify areas for trail construction and/or improvement, or specific areas where intensive OHV use may be appropriate. Integration of other resource objectives and other types of recreational use would be incorporated at this time.

User Needs

Site-specific planning would identify issues needing resolution at the site-specific level. The following procedure would be followed:

1. Define the scope of the analysis. The boundaries of the area to be analyzed would be the prioritized OHV Management Unit and/or the Special Management Area.
2. Identify and describe vehicle travel needs for individual roads, routes, trails and areas. Consider the reasons for needing access to the area, what travel mode is needed or desired, and why people choose to participate in a specific activity in a particular place. Is access needed for:
 - Meeting recreation opportunities and demand?
 - Commodity production?
 - Water production?
 - Special use permits?
 - Rights-of-way, legal access, easements, cost-share or prescriptive rights?
 - Private in holdings?
 - Hazardous waste remediation or watershed restoration?
 - Fire protection or law enforcement?
 - Barrier-free recreation opportunities or special access accommodations as needed by individuals?
 - Other access needs?
3. Identify and describe needs and/or reasons to limit travel in the OHV Management Unit. Consider the potential effects of different uses on:
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Grazing allotments
 - Soils
 - Water quality
 - Riparian areas
 - Threatened and endangered species habitat
 - Cultural resources
 - Native vegetation
 - Conflicting uses
 - Public safety
 - Special management areas
 - Lessees and permittees
 - Other access restriction needs

Development of Alternatives

Alternatives should reflect a range of distribution strategies for agency and public land users. The distribution strategies must balance requirements for restrictions with the needs for vehicle travel.

They must also address the objectives for the area. Planning prescriptions should be developed for roads, routes, trails, and areas within the analysis area.

Decision

Completion of site-specific planning for an area will establish a permanent management plan for that particular area through the designation of roads, routes, trails, and areas open, limited, or closed for a particular use.

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