

Briefing Paper

Recreational Motor Vehicles

(ATVs, Off-Highway Motorcycles, Off-Road Vehicles, and Snowmobiles)

Key Message:

The Revised Plan recognizes the need to provide opportunities for a very popular and growing recreational pursuit, as well as the need to protect resources, reduce conflicts among users and provide opportunities for non-motorized recreational uses. The use of snowmobiles, ATVs, off-highway motorcycles and off-road vehicles are a legitimate use of National Forest System land, and this use must be carefully managed.

The Forest Service has identified unmanaged recreation, especially the undesirable impacts from unmanaged off-highway vehicles, as a major threat facing the national forests.

The Plan:

- *Provides for development of trail systems that allow a high quality RMV trail experience.*
- *Allows up to an additional 90 miles of ATV trail and 130 miles of snowmobile trail.*
- *Continues to prohibit use on higher maintenance level roads (OML 3, 4, and 5).*
- *Generally allows ATV and OHM use of low standard (OML 1 and 2) and unclassified roads pending site level decisions or where resource damage is occurring.*
- *Of the nearly 2,000 miles of existing OML 1 & 2 and unclassified roads, 1,350 miles are available for ATV and OHM riding.*
- *Generally allows off-road vehicle use (4X4 Trucks) on unclassified and OML-2 roads.*
- *Prohibits all cross country OHV travel including for big game retrieval and trapping.*
- *Continues present direction that allows cross country snowmobile use.*
- *Requires that newly designated snowmobile trails meet management direction for Canada lynx recovery.*
- *Generally prohibits snowmobile use on plowed Forest System roads.*
- *Generally prohibits OHV travel in ditches and on shoulders of National Forest System roads.*
- *Provides areas within the Forest where motorized use is not allowed, to provide quiet areas where people can experience solitude.*

Acronyms defined:

ATV: All-terrain vehicles

OHM: Off-highway motorcycles (dirt bikes)

ORV: Off-road-vehicles (4 x 4 trucks)

OHV: Off-highway vehicles: A term referring to ATVs, OHMs, and ORVs

RMV: Recreational Motor Vehicles: A term referring to ATVs, OHMs, ORVs, and snowmobiles

OML: Objective Maintenance Level for classified roads

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Change From the Proposed Plan:

In the Proposed Plan, cross country OHV travel for big game retrieval was allowed in most Management Areas. The Revised Plan prohibits all cross country OHV travel, in keeping with Forest Service Chief’s policies and to protect natural resources.

Type of Road	Total Miles	Miles available for ATV and OHM	Percent of Road available for ATV and OHM
Unclassified	192	112	58%
OML-1	898	334	37%
OML-2	904	904	100%
Total Unc., OML 1 & 2	1,994	1,350	67%
OML-3	244	0	0
OML-4	311	0	0
OML-5	87	0	0
Total FS system roads	2,444		
Total all FS roads	2,636		

Change from the 1986 Plan:

	1986 Plan direction	Revised Plan direction
ATVs		
Trails	Allowed on two designated trails. (40 total miles)	Allowed – A maximum of 90 additional ATV trail miles may be designated.
Roads, High Standard - OML 3, 4, and 5	Prohibited.	Generally Prohibited
Roads, Low Standard - OML 1 and 2	Allowed.	Most existing roads: Generally allowed pending site specific decisions. New roads: Prohibited.
Unclassified Roads	Allowed	Generally allowed pending site specific decisions.
Cross-country Travel	Allowed	Prohibited
Big Game Retrieval	Allowed	Prohibited
Snowmobiles		
Trails	Allowed on 686 existing trail miles.	Allowed on existing 686 trail miles and a maximum of 130 new snowmobile trails miles may be constructed.
Roads	Allowed on unplowed roads.	Allowed on unplowed roads.
Cross-country Travel	Allowed	Allowed in most management areas except Wilderness, RNAs, CRNA, Unique Biological Areas, and SPNM areas.
Trail Use	Trail use is allowed unless signed closed.	Trail use is prohibited unless designated open for specific motorized use.