

MANAGING USE OF ROADS IN HAPPY VALLEY- CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST PROPOSAL

Coronado National Forest is developing management plans for roads within the Santa Catalina and Rincon Mountain Ranges and have released their initial proposal for public review

Once the proposal completes the NEPA process and an additional public comment period is held, the official decision is signed. A Motor Vehicle Use Map will then be created that will define which roads in the forest will be opened for public travel and where camping with vehicles will be allowed.

The draft proposal known as the Scoping Notice can be viewed at Tri-newsletter.com under Hot Links.

The current comment period ends April 15th. Written comments may be sent by U.S. Mail to Ms. Laura White, Travel Management Program Manager, Coronado National Forest, 300 W. Congress Street, Tucson, Az 85701 or by email to comments-southwestern-Coronado@fs.fed.us with "Travel Management NEPA" in the subject line.

PROPOSED HIGHLIGHTS

Forest Service roads begin approximately 7 miles north on Happy Valley Road. The main road is FSR 35 that transitions into FSR 4410, 4411 near the Clopton Ranch.

- Along the main road, cars may park up to one car width along side the road where they can do so without destroying resources.
- Camping with vehicles along the main road will only be allowed at 19 specified areas that will be accessed with designated entrances. (The areas identified appear to be the familiar areas that have been historically used for camping.)
- Other roads will have vehicle supported camping within 300' from each side of the road - referred to as a 300' camping corridor.
- Roads currently closed or having restricted travel will remain as such.
- The ridge road along Turkey Creek will remain opened to the loop turn around as will the roads to Surprise Pasture, Redrock Tank, etc.
- The road thru Clopton Ranch to Bear Creek will remain for administrative purposes only.

Two existing guidelines will not change:

- Cross-country motorized vehicle use beyond existing roads in the District is prohibited (except for travel within a 300-ft corridor for motorized dispersed camping where allowed).

- Hunters are limited to non-motorized means to retrieve tagged game, preventing damage to delicate ecosystems and avoiding creation of unauthorized routes.

The process currently underway in Happy Valley and the Santa Catalina Ranger District is similar to what will occur for the other mountain ranges throughout this summer.

The Proposals for each range and corresponding maps will be posted on the Forest's public website at www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado and at the District Office in Sierra Vista.

If you wish to participate in study sessions held locally, contact Cochise Trails Association (CTA), a non-profit organization working toward establishing, protecting, and preserving access to trails. This county-based organization will review each proposal and provide comments/ questions to the Forest Service. CTA will continue to meet with NFS Travel Management to clarify the fine detail of the maps so any changes to current use is clearly understood.

Proposals are also being reviewed by the Arizona Public Lands Advisory Coalition so that participating entities have the latest information to advocate for access to public lands. For further information regarding either organization, please call 520-609-2738.

HELP THE ARIZONA TRAIL RECEIVE GRANT FUNDING

Arizona Trail users are asking for community support to help the Arizona Trail receive a winner take-all \$ 50,000 grant to build the Saguaro National Park Connector Trail.

This winner take-all grant would build five difficult miles of the Arizona Trail into the Saguaro National Park east of Tucson. Due to the remote location in a rugged wilderness area, these miles must be constructed by hand. Not only will this project help complete the trail, it allows for access into back-country and protects a sensitive riparian area.

From April 1, 2009, through midnight on May 31, 2009, readers can vote everyday for the Arizona Trail Project - once ONLINE DAILY and also once via TEXT MESSAGE DAILY during this period (yes twice a day, "just like in Chicago").

Vote online at www.greateroutdoorsproject.com