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**NATIONAL FOREST MOTORIZED TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**CONSISTENCY**

## NATIONAL FOREST MOTORIZED TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSISTENCY EVALUATION

The purpose of this section is to show consistency between the proposed changes to the National Forest Motorized Travel Management Plan (MTMP) for the Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests and key Trinity County planning documents (Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan) that address non-auto and recreational travel, and maintenance needs for these facilities. This consistency determination focuses on the goals, objectives and policies implemented by the Trinity County Transportation Commission (TCTC), transportation projects recommended for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan, and maintenance objectives and policies.

### ***Shasta-Trinity National Forest Motorized Travel Management Plan***

The Trinity County Board of Supervisors recognizes that the public utilizes County roads to access the United States Forest Service (USFS) road system and lands for multi-use purposes. At the same time, it has concerns that a general prohibition on motorized travel on public lands are very restrictive and will negatively impact the public's use of those road systems as well as the public lands. This will potentially add to the impact on the County road system as the public may use them to conduct inappropriate activities for the County road systems.

***It is important to note that consistency does not necessarily show support of the STNF Motorized Travel Management Plan without modification and consideration requested by the TCTC and Board of Supervisors.***

The existing National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF) is comprised of approximately 5,161 miles of roads and 74 miles of motorized trails authorized for motor vehicle use, in which approximately two thirds traverse Trinity County. The STNF is unique in this respect in the number of miles of routes available to all motor vehicle classes. However, in addition to authorized routes, the Forest Service has inventoried an additional 5,219 unauthorized routes that exist in the Forest. These additional routes add approximately 1,252 miles of roads that receive motor vehicle use. The maintenance of the authorized and unauthorized routes places a greater burden on the Forest Service resulting in an increasing number of miles of maintenance backlog. The proposed changes to the STNF Motorized Travel Management Plan were undertaken with a three-fold purpose: 1) to enhance management of National Forest System lands; 2) sustain natural resource values; and 3) and provide opportunities for motorized recreation experiences for a wide variety of citizens. A concept that Trinity County Board of Supervisors and Transportation Commission supports developed as a collaborative effort.

### Background

The National Forest Service and U.S. Department of Interior report that California is experiencing the highest level of Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use of any state in the nation. This increase in OHV use is often unmanaged resulting in thousands of miles of unplanned roads and trails emerging within national forests accompanied by increased erosion, watershed and habitat degradation, and adverse impacts to cultural resources. According to the National Forest Service (USDA Forest Service, June 2004), these unintended outcomes pose a key national threat to Forests and grasslands. In November 2005, the Forest Service published their final travel management regulations designed to enhance management of National Forest System lands; sustain natural resource values through more effective management of

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motor vehicle use; and provide opportunities for motorized recreation experiences on National Forest system lands. Subpart B (36 CFR 212) of the Travel Management Rule requires specific recognition and designation of these roads, trails and areas that are open to motor vehicle use on National Forests. The intent is that only roads and trails that are part of a National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) may be designated for motorized use.

In 1995, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF) identified specific areas that are open and closed to cross-country motor vehicle travel. These facilities were designated on the Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) map. However, the map showing the location of the closed and open facilities was not modified to reflect changes in management direction between the draft and final LRMP. In addition, the final direction was not adopted with official Forest Orders. As a result, cross-country motor vehicle travel has been occurring on national forest lands outside of designated wilderness areas (where it is legally prohibited).

The Shasta –Trinity National Forest (STNF) currently manages and maintains approximately 5,300 miles of National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) roads and 87 miles of motorized trails. In their continuing effort to manage the transportation system in a sustainable and cost-effective manner, the STNF has proposed changes to the NFTS to address needs identified in the Motorized Travel Management Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). These needs include:

- Regulation of cross country motor vehicle travel to protect cultural and natural resources
- Additions and changes to the NFTS to meet recreation goals in the Forest Plan
- Consistency of the Forest Plan with Subpart B of the Travel Management Regulations.

The analysis of alternatives in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) led to selection of Modified Alternative 2 as the recommended action to meeting the purpose and needs expressed in the FEIS, an action not supported by the Board of Supervisors. The express intent is that only roads, trails, and areas that are part of a NFTS, and are consistent with 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B, can be designated for motorized use. The final Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 2010 recommends the following elements as part of the NFTS.

- Prohibits cross-country travel on 1,599,122 acres of National Forest
- Adds 21.19 miles of high-clearance native surface roads to the NFTS. These roads will be open to all vehicles (highway-legal) and non-highway-legal as defined by the California Vehicle Code) and are listed in Attachment 1 of the ROD. These additions result in an NFTS open to all vehicles of approximately 4,034 miles.
- Adds 10.91 miles of motorized trails. These trails are listed in attachment 1 of the ROD. Of these motorized trails, 5.98 miles are open to all vehicle classes; 3.97 miles are open to vehicles 50 inches and less in width and 0.96 miles are open to motorcycles only. These additions result in an NFTS motorized trails system of approximately 85.14 miles.
- Adds 44,047 acres of open space below the high water mark of Shasta Lake and Trinity Lake. These open areas are described in the FEIS for the purpose of accessing water-based recreation opportunities. These areas are restricted to street-legal vehicles with a 15 mph speed limit.

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- Restricts motorized vehicle use only to roads and trails that are designated in the MTMP. There are numerous roads and trails in the NFTS that were unauthorized and developed by riders and for other uses such as fire fighting. These unauthorized trails/roads were considered for designation, but many were not added to the designated routes. Therefore routes that were used by motorized vehicles but not considered authorized are no longer available for use because they are not designated routes.

The Forest Service informed concerned counties in or adjacent to the STNF about the scope of the final decision, potential impacts to users, and provided them opportunity for comment. For Trinity County, public meetings occurred in September 2008, January 2009, and February 2009. The focus during the public process was to ensure the recommended changes resulted in a balanced NFTS compatible with plans and projects in and around the effected forest lands. Following are the STNF established priorities by the Forest Service for adding routes as part of the NFTS:

- Well established routes that access dispersed recreation areas
- Trails for OHV/ATVs and motorcycles, and roads that connect to make loop rides possible
- Provisions for mixed use of Maintenance Level 3 roads with highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles

And, priorities for excluding routes in the NFTS:

- Routes in habitat for threatened or endangered species
- Routes in Inventoried Roadless Areas
- Routes that may impact water quality or cause soil erosion

The Regional Forester has indicated that Counties in California will be invited to coordinate with the forests in revisions of the USFS Travel Management plan (as well as other plans) that will give full consideration of the concerns addressed by elected officials and the public during the planning process. Once this consideration is given and the appropriate modifications have been made, a more successful and collaborative MTMP can be implemented in STNF.

#### Consistency with Water Quality and Habitat Protection Manual for County Road Maintenance – Chapter 3

The Record of Decision (ROD) authorizes motorized mixed use on Maintenance Level 3 roads within the plan area. Maintenance level 3 is assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car (only 21 miles are available for mixed-use, which includes OHV use). Roads in this maintenance level are typically low speed, single lane with turnouts and spot surfacing. Some roads may be fully surfaced with either native or processed material. The California Highway Patrol must also approve these routes of motorized mixed use. If approved, the routes will be shown on the Motor Vehicle Use Map included in the NFTS. The FEIS and ROD indicate no significant impacts to road maintenance costs and acknowledges that the STNF already has an extensive backlog of deferred maintenance. The selection of routes in Modified Alternative 2 did not recommend routes that required extensive mitigation or repair on the part of the STNF, Trinity County or other stakeholders. Again, while Trinity RTP is consistent with this assessment, the County seeks revisions of the USFS Travel Management plan (as

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well as other plans) that will give full consideration of the concerns addressed by elected officials and the public during the planning process.

#### Consistency with General Plan and 2010 RTP

Trinity County contains parts of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Six Rivers National Forest and Shasta-Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. Consistent with the Trinity County General Plan Circulation Element, the classification of roads within the County includes “*Forest Highways*”. These facilities are federally owned roads that serve Federal Forest service lands and national parks. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) defines a Forest Highway as: open to public travel; and operated and maintained by a local agency. For example, Forest Highway 160 (Corral bottom Road) is operated by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Likewise, SR 36 (State facility) is classified a Forest Highway and is operated by Caltrans. The Trinity County Department of Transportation operates several Forest Highways as identified in Chapter 2 of the RTP. An important consideration is that the maintenance of Forest Highways is performed by the local operating agency at their own expense. However, some assistance for major rehabilitation and emergency repairs is available from the Federal Highway Trust Fund as part of the management of National Forests. The continued cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and other stakeholders in Trinity County contribute to the necessary maintenance of regional trails as well as roads within the County’s forest areas.

#### Consistency with Non Motorized Element of the GP and RTP

The Non-Motorized element of the RTP addresses locally or regionally significant bike lanes and trails, sidewalks, hiking trails, equestrian trails, and other related improvements. Facilities such as the Pacific Crest Trail (Northern Trinity County) and the National Recreation Trail along the South fork of the Trinity River are identified as having regional and national significance. The County also has numerous recreational trails that are not designed or expected to meet Caltrans standards for Class I facilities, but receive high levels of use. Adopted community plans aid the Trinity County Transportation Commission (TCTC) when considering non-motorized improvement priorities, and help guide the County Board of Supervisors in reviewing land divisions and other county-issued entitlement to determine the extent of right-of-way necessary to provide bicycle routes and preserve important recreational trails. This approach is consistent between the GP and the RTP.

#### *Goals, Objectives and Policies*

An important element of consistency between the GP, RTP and the NFTS is embodied in the transportation goals, objectives and policies established for the GP and the RTP. As stated above, this requires coordination between Trinity County and STNF in a collaborative effort where both County Road and Forest Roads are taken into consideration. Of particular importance to the NFTS are goals and policies that address land use integration, environmental impacts, maintenance, and coordination with resource agencies both state and federal. The following goals, objectives and policies are consistent between the RTP and GP and provide for close coordination with the STNF and NFTS:

#### **GP Circulation Element**

#### **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

*Goal 1 – provides for the long-range development of the county’s roadway system that is consistent with adopted land use patterns, minimizes impacts on the attractiveness of the*

*community, meets environmental and circulation objectives, and maintenance of existing and new roads.*

**Roadway Design**

*Objective 1.1 establishes consistency and linkages between transportation programs and land use plans in the County.*

*Policy 1.1.A updates the Trinity County General Plan and Regional Transportation Plan and/or Community plans to provide consistency with the findings and/or recommendations of transportation studies as appropriate. This would include regulations and changes established for the NFTS within Trinity County.*

*Policy 1.1.C considers the RTP a sub-element of the GP circulation element. Therefore, goals, objectives, policies and projects must be consistent.*

*Objective 1.5 promotes environmental protection/mitigation measures that consider environmental, social, and economic factors when designing, constructing and operating transportation facilities.*

*Policy 1.5.B ensures compliance with applicable State and Federal environmental laws during the planning and construction of roadway projects.*

*Policy 1.5.D promotes coordination with local, State and Federal agencies to ensure that existing and/or proposed environmental regulations achieve protection of the environment without sacrificing public safety or placing unnecessary restrictions on road projects.*

*Policy 1.5.F promotes coordination with local, state and Federal agencies to ensure coordination and consistency in the application of environmental regulations. This coordination occurs at all levels within Trinity County.*

**Roadway Network**

*Objective 1.7 requires identification of the need for road corridor expansion on the basis of existing conditions and/or planned land uses.*

*Policy 1.7.C requires identification of road segments where existing right-of-way is inadequate to accommodate road width needed at community build-out and take steps to obtain necessary right-of-way. These steps include high levels of coordination with effected agencies and stakeholders such as the Forest Service.*

*Policy 1.8.F requires mitigation for transportation projects with potentially significant impacts to existing or planned land uses in the County.*

**Economic Development**

*Objective 1.12 considers financial constraint in the expansion of the transportation system to accommodate and attract new businesses and visitors to the County.*

*Policy 1.12 provides for an assessment of each project's contribution to the aesthetics of the area in which it is implemented and supports those projects that enhance the visitor's experience in the region.*

*Objective 1.14 recommends scenic roadway designation for appropriate State and County highways and roads.*

*Policy 1.14.A requires when Community Plans or the General Plan Land Use Element are developed or updated, appropriate roads or road segments to be designated as County Scenic Roadways be identified.*

*Policy 1.14.B regulates the location and design of off-site signs, community identification signs, and community service signs along designated National Scenic Byways and designated Scenic County Roadways.*

*Policy 1.14.C requires review of plans by other public agencies to insure that the view-sheds of scenic roadways are adequately addressed.*

#### ***Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination***

*Objective 1.17 requires coordination of plans, programs and projects for the County, State and Federal transportation systems between jurisdictional authorities.*

*Policy 1.17.A provides State and Federal agencies the opportunity to comment on transportation plans and projects proposed by the County. A copy of the RTP and the GP Circulation Element is provided to state and federal agencies for review and comment.*

*Policy 1.17 B seeks opportunities for Trinity County to review and comment on transportation plans and projects proposed by State and Federal agencies.*

#### ***NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION***

*Goal 4 increases bicycle and pedestrian travel by recommending development of a safe and convenient system of bicycle routes, trails, storage facilities and pedestrian walkways in key areas of the County. This system includes on and off-road facilities.*

#### ***Regional Transportation Plan***

##### ***Overall Regional Transportation***

*Goal 0: provides for a safe, reliable, accessible, cost-effective and efficient transportation system that is consistent with socioeconomic and environmental needs. Additionally, requires evaluation of improvement projects and impacts to the transportation system.*

##### ***Streets and Highways***

*Goal 1: provides for an efficient and safe system of roads and bridges that are sensitive to economic and environmental needs.*

*Objective 1.4 maintains a uniform road classification system to assure consistency in road standards*

*Objective 1.5 provides all-weather access to developed communities in the county.*

*Policy 1.5.A identifies communities with a history of access problems and facilitates efforts to eliminate the obstacle.*

*Policy 1.5.B considers the development of additional access routes into residential areas if feasible.*

*Objective 1.7 establishes consistency and/or linkages between transportation needs and land use plans*

*Objective 1.8 coordinates plans, programs and projects for the county, state and federal transportation systems.*

*Policies 1.8.A through 1.8.C seek opportunities for mutual review of plans, programs and projects by county, state and federal agencies as well as developing partnerships with Caltrans and regional agencies when considering large transportation projects with multi-jurisdictional benefits and/or impacts.*

### **Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Non-Auto Modes**

*Goal 3 promotes non-auto mode travel by developing a safe and convenient system of bicycler routes, pedestrian facilities and trails to connect Trinity County's activity centers and communities*

*Policy 3.1.B strives for a well connected bicycle system with complete bicycle "loop" routes.*

*Objective 3.3.A considers equestrian interests as part of the RTP and other transportation development planning processes.*

### **Tourism**

*Goal 6: supports tourism throughout the County by developing and maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system*

*Policy 6.1.A updates tourist and marketing material for use by the Chamber of Commerce*

*Policy 6.1.B maintains connections to tourist attractions*

*Policy 6.1.C provides safe, convenient, and well marked parking areas for tourists, including parking for recreational vehicles and vehicles pulling trailers.*

### **Environment**

*Goals 7: Considers environmental impacts of transportation projects and mitigates impacts accordingly*

*Objective 7.1 coordinates with local, state and federal agencies and committees who are responsible for setting environmental policies and procedures to provide the county's experience and perspective*

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*Policy 7.1.B minimizes environmental impacts through early and continued resource agency consultation and public involvement. The County was an active partner in the development of the NFTS.*

*Objective 7.3 provides for road maintenance practices that minimize and/or mitigates degradation of environmental quality.*

*Policy 7.3.C provides for surfacing unpaved (dirt) roadways that are adjacent to waterways that are habitat to aquatic species as funding allows.*

#### *2010 RTP Projects*

*The 2010 RTP proposes both on-road and off-road bike facilities as part of the non-auto element. A review of the system maps for the NFTS and the ROD did not reveal any discrepancies between RTP projects and the additions of roads and trails proposed to the NFTS. In addition, the unconstrained project list for the RTP, Appendix 4G, contains facilities for Class 2 bike lanes and Class 1 recreational trails. These projects do not adversely impact the changes to the NFTS as proposed in the ROD. The list of projects in the RTP are consistent with the intent of the ROD and any future RTP proposals would be coordinated with the Forest Service in areas that are part of the NFTS. The maintenance of County roads will continue to be consistent with the Water Quality and Habitat Protection Manual for County road maintenance – Chapter 3.*

#### **Six Rivers National Forest Motorized Travel Management Plan**

The Six Rivers National Forest Motorized Travel Management Plan is consistent with the Trinity County planning and maintenance documents described above. The TCTC and Trinity County Board of Supervisors are in general agreement with and support the Six Rivers National Forest Motorized Travel Management Plan.