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## Calling All Sportsmen!

Hunters, Fishermen, and Rockhunters

As hunting season has started and is in full swing, many hunters are expressing surprise at the changes they're finding in our national forests. When traveling to their favorite hunting areas sportsmen are wondering why certain roads are closed, why dispersed camping spots long used and enjoyed by generations of families are no longer accessible, and why parking and big game retrieval is limited to only one car length off a designated road or trail.

Welcome to the effects of the Travel Management Plan.

Travel Management plans started public scoping in most northern and central California forests back in 2005/6, and after years of environmental analysis, decisions that have been made regarding travel on forest dirt roads and trails are finally being enacted. It's a tough realization for many, as sportsmen were not contacted by Forest Service personnel in regards to these analyses, or their input was ignored and disregarded. By calling Travel Management an off-highway vehicle travel plan, many sportsmen did not consider these plans would affect them, or change the fundamental way they enjoy their sport. After all, sportsmen aren't off-roaders...or so they thought. To the surprise of many anyone who travels on a dirt road or trail in a forest or desert is an off-roader.

Whether the Forest Service purposely misled the sporting community, or simply ignored the ramifications that Travel Management would have on hunting and fishing is debatable. What isn't in question is the very real on-the-ground affects now being experienced. Motor Vehicle Use Maps showing the designated roads and trails remaining after Travel Management are flimsy and inaccurate, but in many cases are the only guides sportsmen have to know which roads are open and which are closed.

CORVA has been involved since the very beginning with Travel Management, trying to spread the word far and wide throughout the state about the future ramifications. We realized that Travel Management could have wide-ranging affects on sportsmen, and started working with the California Outdoor

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Heritage Alliance to spread the word. The CORVA Comments Project held workshops educating enthusiasts, but few sportsmen attended, mostly out of disbelief that this OHV Travel Management Plan had anything to do with them. But the truth is we were outgunned and outmaneuvered by extreme environmental groups, their political ideology dominated the Forest Service and became a critical part of national planning for Travel Management. Their stated goals have always included targeting all dirt roads and trails for closure.

Now that we know Travel Management affects anyone who uses a dirt road or trail in a forest for access, here are a few ground rules for sportsmen:

1. Before you head out to the forest on your hunting trip, call the Forest Supervisor's or District Ranger's office and ask about travel restrictions. Don't be surprised if the person answering the phone has no idea what you're asking, be persistent and ask for a recreation coordinator or Travel Management team leader.
2. Go to the forest website and download the Motor Vehicle Use Map. Many times downloaded maps will have more detail than the maps available at the office.
3. If confronted by a Law Enforcement Officer in the forest, stay calm and be polite. In all the forests except for the Eldorado, this first year officers should be educating the public about changes in designations, and about the loss of hundreds of dispersed camping spots. Please document any instances of bias or misuse of power by Law Enforcement Officers, CORVA has coordinated with the Forest Service to form a task force dedicated to investigating and reducing bias against motorized enthusiasts. Send all documentation, including when, where and badge number to [amy.granat@corva.org](mailto:amy.granat@corva.org).
4. Be prepared to pack out your game without using an off-road vehicle or truck. The restrictions on traveling more than one car length off the roads are illogical, but until we can bring more pressure to bear on the

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Forest Service to rescind this rule, we have to follow the rule or face federal fines.

5. Be aware that most forests have some sort of seasonal closure. Ask at the office, or look on the website and make sure you know when the forest is scheduled to close down for the winter. In many cases, these closures will curtail hunting seasons. Express your displeasure to your friends, but not at Forest Service personnel. These rules were decided by regional and national officials, in some cases local personnel are not in favor of these restrictions.

Above all, be aware that CORVA, and many on-the-ground groups are trying to work within the system to challenge these restrictions. More than anything else, these hard-working folks are dedicated to regaining access to the forest for you, and future generations. To this end, Sierra Access Coalition, along with Plumas County and CORVA are preparing to file a lawsuit against the Plumas National Forest challenging the Forest Service in court over the decisions made during Travel Management. Although we are filing suit against one forest, all the forests in California will be affected if our charges are held up in court. We are defending traditional American sporting activities, and in return we need you to support our lawsuit. This legal effort will be funded by the hard-working Americans most affected by Travel Management, and every single dollar helps us achieve our goals.

CORVA supports sportsmen and supports access to hunting and fishing areas, as well as off-road areas. No matter what the size of the tire, green-sticker or street legal, we're all looking for the same thing, access to our public lands.

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