



File Code: 1950

Date: December 27, 2010

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce the release of the Gila National Forest (Forest) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the implementation of the USFS Travel Management Rule to manage motorized vehicle use on the Forest. The DEIS discloses the environmental impacts associated with six alternatives, including the No Action alternative, the Modified Proposed Action and four alternatives to the Modified Proposed Action. Of the alternatives under consideration at this time, Alternative G is the Preferred Alternative.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIS will be published in the Federal Register on or shortly after January 7, 2011. The date of publication in the Federal Register marks the start of the 60 day comment period. Check the Forest web site (<http://fs.usda.gov/goto/gila/travel>) for the exact date of publication.

Open houses will be held on the following days and times for the public to learn more about Travel Management, view the DEIS and maps, and learn how to participate. Forest personnel will be on hand to answer questions. Drop in at the following locations anytime between the hours listed below:

Date	Time	Location
Thursday, January 13, 2011	3-7 p.m.	Sierra Fair Building, Truth or Consequences
Saturday, January 15, 2011	10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Grant Co. Convention Center, Silver City, NM
Thursday, January 20, 2011	3-7 p.m.	Catron Co. Fairgrounds, Reserve, NM
Saturday, January 29, 2011	10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Hotel Encanto, Las Cruces, NM

Commenting on the DEIS

We invite you to review the DEIS and maps, and provide us with comments. Many comments were received over the past four years during public meetings and during scoping of the proposed action. Those comments helped develop the original Proposed Action and alternatives for the DEIS.

It is important to remember that this is just a draft. Your comments will be critical in refining this DEIS prior to the final decision, which is anticipated to be released in late spring or early



summer 2011. I encourage you to review the enclosed document and maps. Try to make your comments as site specific as possible. For example, identify road or trails you have concerns about by road number and state the reasons you are concerned about them. Refer to the document attached for more information on how to submit comments.

How and Where to comment:

The Forest encourages electronic mail. If submitting comments electronically, the format of attachments must be in plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), MS-Word (.doc) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), and sent to: *r3_gila_travel@fs.fed.us*. Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification of electronic comments. Please enter “*TM comments*” in the subject line of the e-mail. This email address automatically generates a “return receipt”, so you will know that we have received it. Use of any other email address will not generate a return receipt and could be missed. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to ensure that we have received your email.

Written comments on the DEIS can be mailed to: Gila National Forest, **Attn: Travel Management**, 3005 E. Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061.

Your comments can also be FAXed to 575-388-8222 or may be delivered by hand to the Gila National Forest Supervisor’s between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Those who provide comments during this comment period will be eligible to appeal the decision under the regulations. Interest expressed or comments provided on this project prior to or after the comment period will not constitute standing for appeal purposes. Comments submitted anonymously will be considered, however, persons submitting comments anonymously will not have standing to appeal. Comments must meet the requirements of 36 CFR 215.6.

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), please be advised that written comments received on the DEIS, including names and addresses, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

If you have any questions please contact the Forest Travel Management Coordinator, Lisa Mizuno, at (575) 388-8267 or *r3_gila_travel@fs.fed.us*. If you have specific questions on a road, trail, or area on a ranger district, contact one of the district rangers. Contact information for each of the offices is enclosed.

We look forward to hearing from you or seeing you at an open house.

Sincerely,

CRAIG G. COWIE
Acting Forest Supervisor