

My name is Doug Shippy and I have a business here in Elko that sells all terrain vehicles. Most of my customers use their vehicles in the National Forest and I hear their concerns over the proposed restrictions contained in the Forest Service Travel Management Plan. They are very unhappy at the prospect of losing the ability to use the Forest the way generations have in the past.

I have learned that this is not just an Elko County problem but that many other counties in Nevada and in surrounding states are not only unhappy with their Travel Management Plans but want the plans thrown out.

Following is a statement sent to me by Amy Granat who heads up the California Off Road Vehicle Association:

The Travel Management Plan discourages everyone from visiting the forest. Our forests changed from welcoming all visitors, to a forest closed to all travel and uses, unless a specific road or trail appears on a map. The plan has criminalized activities of the average visitor, warned them of expensive tickets if they venture off a road for big game retrieval, decide to camp in an area that is not specifically designated on a map, or travel on a road that had been used for more than 50 years, in many cases. The affects on the disabled and elderly are devastating, greatly limiting where they can go, with no thought to the disproportionate affect it would have on their access. Throughout California, people stopped visiting rural communities, because the Forest Service has sent a clear message with Travel Management - we don't want you in our forests anymore.

The California Off Road Vehicle Association represents more than twenty thousand people who are actively engaged in activities on the Forest and are concerned that, as Amy wrote,

Travel Management has criminalized many of the traditional activities of the average visitor. Many of our Elko County Forest visitors will stay away when they learn that if they are found on a closed road, even if it is not marked closed, they may be subject to a \$5,000.00 fine or six months in jail. Closing roads without marking them closed, putting citizens in jeopardy, is un-American.

The economic impact to Elko County caused by the Travel Management Plan, as explained here today, is incredible. The vehicles I sell are used for many purposes on the Forest, one being prospecting. The economic driver in Elko County is mining but the big mines were not found by big mining companies but by prospectors who sold their find to a big mine. Taking away the ability to travel off of designated roads in search of minerals will cost Elko County and the nation tens of millions.

Another use of my vehicles is for big game retrieval. Many hunters will stay away knowing they cannot leave the road to pick up their deer. Recreation is second only to mining in importance to the Elko County economy. If you want to camp with your kids where your family camped when you were a kid you will be fined and jailed if you leave the road more than the distance of one car length to camp. It will cause you to go to Disney Land instead.

Many of my customers, after asking permission, drive their vehicles across someone's property to go on the Forest. Now those roads leaving private property will be closed and without use will in a short time disappear. They then cannot be used for early fire containment, search and rescue or for any other purpose. The impact to human structures adjacent to the Forest in the case of a fire is significant with no ability to reach the fire before it becomes a serious threat. It is estimated that about ninety percent of property owners, when asked, will allow someone to cross

their property, so if the Forest Service closes all roads leaving private property, it will be the Forest Service, not the land owner that locks the public off the Forest.

I think we cannot overstate the importance to wild life, which includes endangered species, for having roads available for fighting fires. Because of misguided BLM and Forest Service policies millions of animals have already burned needlessly. This plan will increase the number of animals, including Sage Grouse, that will burn.

The Forest Service Rangers have shown great disrespect to Elko County by refusing to include any Elko County economic or recreational proposals in their plan. Therefore, Elko County Commission and Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone rejected the proposed Forest Service Plan and have taken the position that the Forest Service should start over on Travel Management, taking the County and Tribe in as true partners in a plan that gives consideration to those things important to all the people of Elko County.

A petition has started circulating in Elko County that demands that the Forest Service scrap plans to close roads and stop cross country travel. It also demands that the Forest Service reassign Ranger Gar Abbas. He told us that no roads would be closed. That was false.

Thank you.