

## Inyo National Forest Route Designation Process

### **Travel Analysis Criteria – January 2007 Starting Point**

The attached table shows criteria used in making team recommendations for the “starting point” for a proposed system of routes for the Inyo National Forest. The criteria are based on national guidance, and were modified and fine-tuned to local area needs by many members of the local public.

These criteria were used in conjunction with the “Recommendation Guide” to provide a consistent approach to how each route was considered for its appropriateness on the Inyo National Forest Transportation System. The team applied the criteria to routes in two of the eleven analysis areas on the Forest. For every route in the Inyo Mountains and Mammoth East Analysis Areas, these criteria were considered and applied objectively by a team of five Forest employees with varied specialties and backgrounds. (Information about this team is available on the Inyo NF website.)

The Criteria and the Recommendation Guide provide the framework for a “risk/benefit analysis” associated with placing a route on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) and designating it for motorized use. For every route in the two analysis areas, the team worked through each of the six criteria groups (three subgroups in the “Concerns and Risks” and three in the “Benefits and Access Needs” categories), and assigned a rating of High, Medium, or Low to each of the six groups. These ratings were combined into one rating for risks and one for benefits. Using the two overall ratings, the team consulted the Recommendation Guide for a recommended action – either to put a route on the map for motorized travel, leave it off the map, or put it on the map after future mitigation to resolve the key concern. Some routes were also shown as being limited to single-track (motorcycle) travel.

Information and data used by the team was gained from a variety of sources. The public has provided route-specific input about risks and opportunities of each route and the destination(s) that it accesses. Years of field surveys by various specialists provided data on resources and other concerns and often potential opportunities, such as campsites or other facilities. The amount of available data for each route varied. Some routes had very detailed, clear information, and others had less. When necessary, various maps and data were reviewed to determine the likelihood of opportunities, such as viewpoints, past mining activities or campsites, as well as potential risks, such as stream channels and severe steepness.

National direction states that Forests should designate the minimum transportation system necessary to meet administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands. With this in mind, the team developed considerations to apply to routes in more heavily roaded areas of the Forest, where many routes provide access to the same general Forest area. No specific density triggered review using these considerations, since so many factors affect what constitutes a “minimum system” for any area. These considerations are attached.

Audio presentations with very condensed examples of how these criteria were applied to some routes are available on the Inyo National Forest website at [www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/)

# Travel Analysis Criteria

Preliminary Release – January 2007

Concerns and Risks	Benefits and Access Need
<p><b><u>Resource Values</u></b>  <i>Unique concerns affecting this route.            Specific resources affected by this route</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural or Historic resources</li> <li>• Soils, Erosion, Watershed condition</li> <li>• Vegetation</li> <li>• Wildlife</li> <li>• Road Density</li> <li>• Vegetation Recovered</li> <li>• Visuals</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Destination Opportunities</u></b>  <i>What's at the end of the route?            Why are people going here?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campsites</li> <li>• Day use area – Picnics, fishing, swimming</li> <li>• Fuel wood gathering</li> <li>• Views and Vista points</li> <li>• Unique or unusual features</li> <li>• Historical Structure or Feature</li> <li>• Hunting</li> <li>• Tribal uses</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Direction, Law, Forest Plan</u></b>  <i>Consistency with overriding laws, direction,            policy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel Management Rule - Minimum System</li> <li>• Wilderness areas, non-motorized direction</li> <li>• National, Regional and Forest Guidance</li> <li>• Conflict with Laws</li> <li>• Memorandum of Understandings</li> <li>• Forest Plan Consistency</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Administrative Needs</u></b>  <i>Commercial, specially permitted, and USFS            access.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Rights of access</li> <li>• Commercial Permits (Mining, Timber, Grazing, Honey, etc.)</li> <li>• Research and other Special Use Permits</li> <li>• Fire suppression, Fuels Reduction</li> <li>• Wildlife improvements – guzzlers, water, etc</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Management Considerations</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintainability/Stability/Sustainability</li> <li>• Cost and budget considerations</li> <li>• Likelihood and cost of mitigation</li> <li>• Maintenance by Non-Forest entities</li> <li>• Proximity to alternate route (Duplicate/Parallel)</li> <li>• Public Safety</li> <li>• Private Property - Rights-of-Way.</li> <li>• Conflicts – Motorized and non-motorized</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Travel Experience/Need</u></b>  <i>Experience while on route. Unique travel            opportunity.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique setting, exceptional route location</li> <li>• Particular type of vehicle</li> <li>• Challenge/ease/difficulty</li> <li>• Historical value of road</li> <li>• High demand, use</li> <li>• Primary/Arterial route</li> <li>• Key to connecting loops or arterial routes.</li> </ul>

**Considerations for determining need for routes in high density areas:**  
*[Preliminary Release – January 2007]*

- Route is in a high density area, with many routes going to same general area.
- Route has no identified or evident unique opportunity.
- Changed purpose (for instance: skid trail in an area no longer logged).
- Parallel/Duplicate – provides exact or very similar purpose as adjacent route.
- Terrain features and geography do not provide experiential/visual separation from nearby routes.
- Very low evidence of use compared to others in very close proximity.
- Recovering due to lack of use (heavily overgrown).
- Identified resource concern compared to others in high density area.
- Substantial concerns/issues identified by public and/or agency staff.