



Plumas County Board of Supervisors

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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QUINCY, CALIFORNIA – The Plumas County Board of Supervisors has announced that Plumas County has joined co-plaintiffs Butte County, the California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) and the Sierra Access Coalition (SAC) in filing a lawsuit in federal court, challenging the Plumas National Forest (USFS) Motorized Travel Management Plan – Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement that were released on October 27, 2010.

The plaintiffs are being represented by Pacific Legal Foundation in Sacramento.

Plaintiffs contend that the Plumas National Forest utterly failed to “Coordinate” with Local Governments under the Travel Management Rule. The act of “coordination” is a special requirement upon the US Forest Service, established by Congress. Plaintiffs cite the following examples as consequences of the Plumas National Forest in failing to properly “coordinate” with Plumas County and Butte County:

- The Record of Decision closed 918 miles of existing unclassified roads and trails to motorized vehicle use and banned cross country travel across the more than 1.14 million acres of the Forest.
- A substantial number of additional roads and trails, representing approximately 1,107 miles, which had been lawfully used for motorized travel for years by the public, became subject to closure, all of which now, or will, impede recreational and access opportunities in Plumas National Forest.

Continued on Page 2

- Plaintiffs are challenging Federal Defendants’ decision to prohibit motorized travel on thousands of unclassified routes in Plumas National Forest that had been historically and lawfully used by the public for recreation, thereby preventing human access to a vast portion of the Forest, thus negatively affecting the human environment.
- Such decisions were made on the basis of the unexamined assumption that continued motorized access on many of the historically used routes would cause an unacceptable level of environmental harm. That conclusion was reached without the benefit of site specific environmental impacts analysis, as required by NEPA.
- A 36-acre area motorized open area, which was included as part of the preferred alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, was also eliminated in the decision, without any public comment.

Equally compelling are the plaintiff’s contentions that:

- The Closure of roads, segments and trails deprives disabled persons, who require motorized vehicle transport, to enjoy many parts of Plumas National Forest.
- The Forest Service’s decision also negatively impacts residents of Plumas and Butte Counties who depend upon access to the Forest for low-cost sources of food and fuel as well as adversely affecting numerous commercial interests in Plumas and Butte Counties that derive income from providing services related to motorized vehicle use and recreation, both for county residents and tourists attracted by the Forest’s recreational opportunities.
- Failure to follow the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to sufficiently analyze impacts to the “Human Environment.”

“The forest belongs to the people, and, in a responsible way, we ought to be able to use it,” said Plumas County Supervisor Terry W. Swofford. “This lawsuit is about the freedom to access public lands,” added Plumas County Supervisor Sherrie Thrall.

Filed with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, the case is titled as *Granat et al v. United States Department of Agriculture*. The Complaint is available for public viewing on the internet at: <http://www.countyofplumas.com/DocumentCenter/View/12476> Further information, including a video, a podcast, and an explanatory blog post, may be viewed at: www.pacificlegal.org

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