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August 2012 Newsletter

SAC Lawsuit Filing Delayed

The filing of the lawsuit against the Plumas NF Travel Management Plan (TMP) is still being delayed while Butte County is attempting to negotiate green sticker use on some roads with the Forest Service.

At the Butte County Board of Supervisors meeting 8/14/12, several people spoke to the board and asked them to move forward with the litigation. Speakers included Gabe Eggen of Chico Honda Motorsports, Amy Grant of CORVA, as well as Matt Colwell and Corky Lazzarino of SAC. The Supervisors' response was that they had already voted 4-1 in favor of litigation, and would move forward with the lawsuit when the time is right. Butte County is meeting with the Forest Service and Plumas Co. in the next few weeks in hopes of wrapping up their negotiations.

Sierra Access Coalition and the California Off-Road Vehicle Association have been working with Butte and Plumas Counties on the lawsuit against the Plumas NF TMP. Our attorney has written the final complaint which the plaintiffs have approved. The next step is filing. However, Butte County wants to try to negotiate with the Forest Service once again before filing the lawsuit.

SAC has learned taking on the expense and responsibility of a lawsuit has to be done when the time is right and all parties are ready to take on the hard work associated with being a plaintiff. As Butte County tries once again to negotiate with the Forest Service, they believe they are doing their best to address their residents' concerns, to give the agency one final chance to get it right. SAC supports these efforts in the recognition that Butte County is our partner in the lawsuit, and as such, it is in everyone's best interest to work together.

At our attorney's advice, SAC will wait until Butte County goes through the next round of negotiations. Then we will schedule a conference call with all the plaintiffs to decide when to proceed.

In the meantime, you can help us get ready for the lawsuit. See the article on page two of this newsletter.

PLEASE HELP US RAISE MONEY FOR OUR LEGAL DEFENSE FUND! We accept donations and are selling t-shirts and hats on our website www.sierraaccess.com THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



- Lawsuit against Plumas NF Travel Management Plan still on hold
- Butte County is negotiating with Plumas NF officials
- SAC and others spoke at the Butte County Board of Supervisors Meeting August 14

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How You Can Help Our Lawsuit

It is difficult to find the patience to wait to file the lawsuit, but we are taking advantage of this time to document problems and issues related to motorized access to the Plumas NF. To this end, we need your help.

SAC is asking for your help to document Forest Service unwillingness to work on access issues since the implementation of the Travel Management Plan in 2010. For example, SAC has continued to try to work with the Plumas NF on several issues:

- If you have been cited for a violation of the Travel Management Plan, we would like to hear from you. This year the Law Enforcement Officers are supposed to be “educating” the public about the new restrictions rather than writing citations. If you have been cited, please send us the location (road number or other description), the officer’s name, the date and time, and the details of the citation.
- The public has asked for groomed snowmobile trails around Lake Davis, which would increase tourism and recreation. Instead the FS said their Preferred Alternative was to have a groomed trail up Jackson Creek near Cromberg, which is low elevation southern exposure and doesn’t have enough snow to groom most of the year which would leave the groomer stranded. The public comments have not always been taken seriously. But the proposal is evolving and the Forest Service seems to be beginning to listen to the public.
- The FS Schedule of Proposed Actions, which is a list of future projects, calls road decommissioning and road closure projects “Transportation Planning” or “Road Management”. So it is difficult for the public to identify projects that propose to close roads. Also the FS is proposing new regulations that will allow them to close roads with less public involvement.
- Last year the Forest Supervisor said advance notices of all proposed road decommissioning would be sent to SAC so the information could be sent out to members. To date, none have been sent to us, yet there are several ongoing projects with road decommissioning. They are not following through with the commitments they made.
- The FS made a commitment to SAC to do mixed-use studies, which would allow green sticker vehicles on 7 routes. Two of those routes (Bagley Pass and a portion of the Sloat-McRae Road) were made a lower maintenance level, which allows green sticker vehicle use. However, the other 5 routes were either denied or just simply disregarded. One of these routes is a major connection between Mt Hough District and Beckwourth District. After making the commitment to SAC, we were told there is no one on the Plumas NF who is trained to do mixed-use studies. This was not a good faith effort on their part.
- There are major mistakes on the Motor Vehicle Use Map such as:
 - * Problems with access using the Four Trees Road through private property;
 - * A large loop of over 10 miles of system roads south of Frenchman has no right-of-way, which cuts off access to approx. 7 square miles of public land;
 - * Several other routes that don’t have legal right-of-way are shown, which leads the public onto private property..



By consciously leaving these routes on the Motor Vehicle Use Map after being informed of the problems, the Forest Service is encouraging trespass. However the FS is not willing to correct them until July 2013 at the earliest. And corrections are not being posted on the USFS website. In the meantime, the public is at risk of being cited or confronted by private landowners.

- The FS vowed to schedule meetings with SAC to discuss items such as the major errors on the Motor Vehicle Use Map, but the FS never followed through to schedule these meetings as they promised.
- In April the FS promised to have a meeting with SAC to discuss future road closures on Feather River District. To date this meeting has not been scheduled and no one has contacted SAC.

There are numerous examples of the FS continuing their pattern of not working with SAC, the public, and the counties.

If you know of additional problems, please let us know.

If you see errors on the Motor Vehicle Use Map, please let us know. This is very important.

MOST OF ALL.....PLEASE HELP US RAISE MONEY FOR OUR LEGAL DEFENSE FUND! We accept donations and are selling t-shirts and hats on our website www.sierraaccess.com THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

SAC in the Plumas Co. Fair Parade

A group of SAC members were in the Quincy Fair Parade in downtown Quincy on August 11. The theme of the Fair and Parade was "The Magic of Country Living".

Our group represented motorized and non-motorized users of the forest which included several jeeps, including two restored vintage jeeps, snowmobiles, quads, side-by-sides, hikers, and bicyclists. We had a Grizzly Bear, compliments of Van Probst, which was a real hit. [Click here for photos.](#)

Our group took First Place! Thank you to everyone who participated. We had fun, and reminded people that SAC is still here working to preserve access to your forest.



Crocker Campground Negotiations

The Crocker Campground in Clover Valley along the Beckwourth-Genesee Road is a favorite for OHVs. ([click here for a map](#)) However, there will soon be no legal access in and out of the campground for green sticker vehicles. The Travel Management Plan closed the road over to Lake Davis to green sticker vehicles, and the planned paving of the county road in Clover Valley will make that road illegal for OHV use. The project is funded by the Federal Highways Administration. SAC objected to this situation since OHVs have very limited camping options available to them.

SAC spent the past several weeks negotiating with the Forest Service, Plumas County, and Federal Highways. We believe a solution has been found. The Forest Service has agreed to build an alternate OHV route out of the campground that will let green sticker vehicles (quads, motorcycles and side-by-sides) travel to the end of the pavement in Clover Valley, heading towards the Clover Valley Ranch and other points north. The trail can also be used by mountain bikes and equestrians.



The Forest Service has made it a priority to do the environmental analysis for the new route. If an agreement could not be reached with SAC, the funding for the multi-million dollar paving project would have been at risk. So we are pleased that the project will move forward and that the Forest Service is working with the OHV community to preserve access to the few campgrounds that still allow access for OHVs.

The Crocker Guard Station, pictured above, is 100 years old. Plan to celebrate the history and the restoration and review plans for the station's repurposing as a recreation rental on Friday, September 28, 2012 from 3:00- 8:00 pm. A barbeque provided by the Portola Rotary Club will anchor the event hosted by the Beckwourth Ranger District. Call the Beckwourth Ranger District at 530-836-2575 for more information.

OHVs and Snowmobilers: Lake Davis Winter/Summer Recreation Proposal

The Forest Service is still seeking public input for the development of winter and summer recreation in the Lake Davis area. To date there have been three public meetings. The last meeting was July 31.

Local businesses are very involved in the planning process, and the public should also voice their ideas and concerns. Supervisor Terry Swofford has been attending public meetings and the Plumas County Coordination Council is becoming involved in the project planning.

Two options for groomed snowmobile trails were developed in the first two public meetings. However, at the last public meeting on July 31 several people want

ed the project to be cancelled and leave the current situation as it is, without grooming and without restrictions.

The FS is not supportive of grooming completely around the lake due to three pairs of nesting bald eagles.

The Forest Service has not decided how to proceed with this project proposal.

One alternative, which has been developed by the Forest Service, is to restrict motorized use in all the meadows on the west side of the lake to protect the eagles.

Concurrently, there is also a plan being developed for summer use in the Lake Davis/Jackson Creek area. SAC is also asking the public to propose summer routes, whether motorized or non-motorized, for the area.

SAC will continue to work with the FS regarding this project.

We are currently working on mapping some trails systems and will be proposing connecting the Mt Hough trails (see the article below) with trails in the Lake Davis area to provide a continuous ride. Please send us your ideas and locations of trails you would like to see built or maintained.

Mt. Hough/South Park Trails Proposal

The area known as "South Park", which is generally located between Chandler Road and the Cascades on Spanish Creek is being proposed as a non-motorized trail system to be set aside for bicycles, equestrians, and hikers.

In exchange for this non-motorized area, Ranger Mike Donald has agreed to create a new motorized trail system on Mt. Hough, from the railroad tracks above Chandler Road northwest, to Crystal Lake, Taylorsville, east to Grizzly Ridge and down Grizzly Ridge to Squirrel Creek. The trail system can be accessed from the Quincy side of Mt. Hough as well as from the Taylorsville side. The long-term vision for the trail system is to connect it to Lake Davis, which would be an incredible ride.

However, the road that connects the Brady's Camp area to the Walker Mine area remains closed to green sticker vehicles. This was a critical



part of the project which has been denied by the FS. SAC has been discussing this issue with Ranger Mike Donald and it has yet to be resolved. On the positive side, most of the other trails that were requested appear to have a good chance of being approved for use. The environmental documentation is currently being prepared.

A RAC grant has been approved for some trail maintenance this year. The Forest Service applied for an OHV grant to fund the remaining trail work, but it was not approved by the state. So funding to implement the project still needs to be found.



New Mexico Travel Management Plan Appeal

Jemez Springs and Acequia Coalition Join OHV Appeal against Forest Closures

Albuquerque, New Mexico - August 20, 2012 - The Village of Jemez Springs and the Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias have joined with the New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance (NMOHVA) in filing an appeal against the Santa Fe National Forest. The groups oppose the Travel Management Decision made by Forest Supervisor Marcia T. Garcia. The decision eliminates all public motorized use on more than 75% of the existing roads and trails in the Santa Fe National Forest. It also bans using a vehicle to retrieve game and vehicle camping on more than 99% of the Forest.

"Most people have no idea how much of the Forest is lost with this decision or how much it will affect them. For example, the decision bans ALL car-camping along Forest Road 376, even on the side of the road opposite the river. That's the most popular camping area in the whole Forest," said Mark Werkmeister for NMOHVA. "This isn't just about OHV's."

"The Village of Jemez Springs views the Travel Management closures as a drastic measure that we believe will have severe economic consequences for the Village," said Mayor Edmund Temple. "As the Village exists as an in-holding within the Santa Fe National Forest, these restrictions to the public's access to public lands pose a threat to the very existence of the Village. Fishermen, hunters, wood cutters, campers, families on day trips, and tourists from around the United States and the world are the life blood of the Village. The Village supports responsible and reasonable restrictions to protect the health of our national forests, but the Village believes these proposed regulations go far beyond that standard.

We are proud the Village and Acequia Coalition joined with us to oppose this decision," said Werkmeister. "We must all work together to protect everyone's right to use our public lands."

The Appeal will be decided by the Regional Forester's office in Albuquerque. The 45 day deadline for ruling on the Appeal is October 4th.

More information is available by visiting www.nmohva.org or by contacting NMOHVA at 505-321-3155.

Statewide

CORVA is Working for OHVers—Join CORVA Now!

Calling all off-roaders, hunters, houndsmen, 4-wheelers: This year the California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) has been there for everyone throughout California, from WEMO to Clear Creek, the Rubicon to Pismo. CORVA will be litigating the Plumas NF Travel Management Plan along with Plumas County, Butte County and SAC. They are supporting us, now they need you - JOIN NOW, DONATE NOW, so CORVA can KEEP OFF-ROAD ON TRAIL in California. Go to www.corva.org to join or send a donation. Donations can be earmarked for SAC's Legal Defense Fund, if desired.

CORVA is a varied group of outdoor recreationists who are extremely active in promoting the positive aspects of vehicular access on public lands and protecting that right.

CORVA is composed of many owners of street legal and "Green Sticker" vehicles such as ATV's, motorcycles, 3-wheelers, trail bikes, and dune buggies, as well as 4X4 vehicles, dual sport motorcycles, bajas, and desert racers. Plus many others



that use access for; hunting, rockhounding, bird watching, fishing and others activities.

CORVA's main purpose is to work with the land managers for responsible off-highway vehicular access and recreation opportunities. Secondly, they educate their membership on the constantly changing rules and regulations and promote clean-up and trail maintenance projects.

CORVA is very active in the political arena and contributes to a lobbyist in Sacramento. They work closely with the State Department of Parks and

Recreation, [Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation \(OHMVR\) Program](#) from the user's standpoint. They provide a valuable resource to land managers in the form of dedicated OHV enthusiasts who believe in responsible vehicular access.

CORVA is active at all levels of the land management public process with both the BLM and the USFS. They do this by commenting on environmental documents on as many issues as possible and maintaining close relationships with personnel in the field as well as the staff.

They coordinate with other multiple use organizations ranging from snowmobiles to horse enthusiasts to protect multiple use rights from the environmental extremists. CORVA is "dedicated to protecting our lands for the people, not from the people."

Sierra Access Coalition on Facebook



Check out Sierra Access Coalition's group on Facebook. The Plumas Dirt Riders Club also has a page on Facebook.

If you have items you'd like us to post on Facebook or on SAC's website www.sierraaccess.com let us know. Email your news or suggestions to sierraaccess@digitalpath.net.