

## ***(For From Where I Stand)***

### ***Information misleading. Check the facts.***

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Executive Director  
Sierra Access Coalition*

Firewood cutters, hikers, campers, motorcyclist, 4-wheelers, hunters.....virtually everyone who uses the forest needs to recognize the damaging impact the newly released Plumas National Forest Travel Management Plan will have on the community, businesses, and their personal activities.

Sierra Access Coalition (SAC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We are your friends and neighbors, local to this area, with over 1000 members who work to preserve forest access for everyone. The United States Forest Service, our land managers, announced their decision in last week's newspaper on the Travel Management Plan which will greatly restrict motorized access across the entire forest.

Your friends and neighbors in SAC have been intimately involved in this process since the inception six years ago and up until now have enjoyed a good working relationship with the Plumas National Forest, but we are very disappointed in the manner that the USFS skewed the statistics in the newspaper to try to make the plan more palatable to the public. Remarkably, there is no mention in the article about the impact to: firewood cutters, dispersed campers, hunters, etc. This is very disturbing, because everyone will see significant impacts.

For example:

- Woodcutters will be limited to designated roads
- Campers outside of developed campgrounds will have to carry all their camping gear to their campsites (which is particularly a problem for equestrians)
- Motorhomes will be limited to camping within one vehicle length of the dusty road, etc.

This is because the new rule limits all vehicles to parking no more than one vehicle length off a designated road. This one vehicle length limitation is already being enforced on our forest roads.

- There is no consideration for group parking, especially when pulling trailers
- Trailheads which traditionally provide ample parking, are not provided
- Hunters will have no access to retrieve their game
- Hikers will not be able to drive to all their favorite trailheads
- People will have to walk significantly further to get to their favorite fishing or swimming hole
- Motorized access for the disabled and elderly who can't hike simply won't be allowed

The USFS is giving us very misleading facts.

1,107 miles of routes were inventoried. The bottom line is 942 miles of roads and trails will be closed to public use.

Two examples of misleading information from last week's newspaper:

Mileage Claimed

By USFS

Single-Track

Motorcycle Trail:

FS Claim	Reality
3855 mi	20.3 mi

ATV (50" wide):

FS Claim	Reality
3,802 mi	28.2 mi

The USFS claims that there are 3,855 miles available for unlicensed motorcycle use. In reality, only 20 miles of "single-track" motorcycle trails are being added to the entire forest. In fact, on Beckwourth District there are 0 miles being added and only 2 miles on Mt. Hough District. When they claim 3,855 miles in their statistics, they are including the main roads which are quite different from the trails that dirt bikes use. Since existing roads were not part of this project, any inclusion of this mileage in their statistics is irrelevant.

Likewise, they say there are 4,383 miles available for 4x4 use. That might be an accurate statement if a person defines "4-wheeling" as driving on a flat, main road. The USFS definition of a 4x4 road apparently would include Hwy 70.

For a more accurate summary of the decision, and an analysis of the mileage, see the SAC website at: [www.sierraaccess.com](http://www.sierraaccess.com)

There are public meetings this week regarding the Travel Management Plan:

- Wed., Nov. 17 at the Beckwourth Ranger Station in Blairsden from 4:00-6:00 pm
- Thurs. Nov. 18 at the Mt. Hough Ranger Station on Hwy 70 from 4:00-6:00 pm

Representatives from SAC will be at the meetings, but it's also very important for the public to attend. You can't win if you don't play the game.

It is unfortunate that the Plumas N.F. has construed the facts and not displayed the information regarding this decision more clearly. This is extremely discouraging to the public and especially to those who volunteer their time to maintain our public lands.