

## Using Motorized Vehicles Eldorado National Forest

If you frequently visit the Eldorado National Forest, you have probably noticed an increase in the number of people using motorized vehicles. Nationally, there has been a 600% increase in the number of Off Highway Vehicles over the past 30 years. Our goal is to find ways to provide quality motorized opportunities while minimizing user conflicts and protecting forest resources.

### What Is Going On?

The Forest Service is complying with a court order to keep all wheeled motorized travel in the Eldorado National Forest on system roads and trails.

The Forest Service is engaged in a public process to evaluate existing routes and designate a route system. By 2007, the Eldorado will have a new designated motorized route system for wheeled vehicles.



### Project Contact Information: Route Designation Project

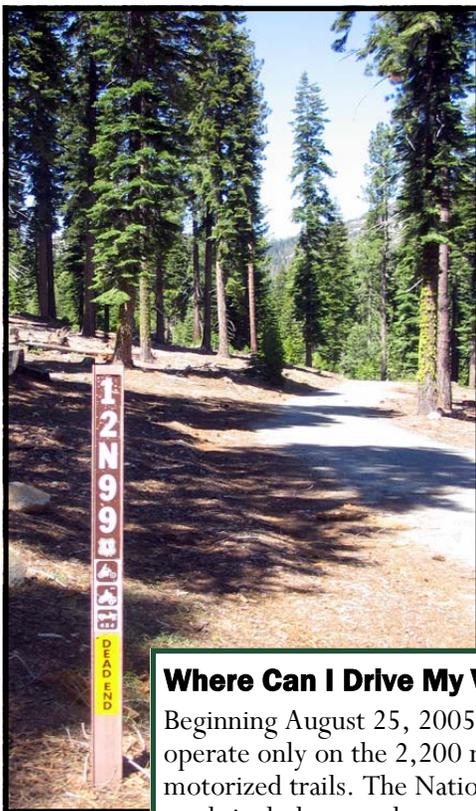
100 Forni Road  
Placerville, CA 95667

Hotline/Voicemail: (530) 295-5666

Email: [eldoradoroutes@fs.fed.us](mailto:eldoradoroutes@fs.fed.us)

### Who Does This Apply To?

This applies to all wheeled motorized vehicles including: cars, trucks, four-wheel drives, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), sand buggies, etc.



(Left) System route marked with post and road number. (above and right) Designated route sign.

### Where Can I Drive My Vehicle?

Beginning August 25, 2005, wheeled motor vehicles are allowed to operate only on the 2,200 miles of system roads and system motorized trails. The National Forest Transportation System of roads includes paved, graveled and dirt roads. Paved roads are legal assuming the vehicle is licensed to operate on a highway. All other routes have been closed by court order and interim Forest Order.





## How Do I Know Where These Routes Are?

- **Map:** The system routes will be displayed on a current Motor Vehicle Restrictions (MVR) map that will be available to the public, free of charge. If the road or trail is not shown on the current Motor Vehicle Restrictions map, it is not legal to drive on.
- **Route Markers:** These routes will be marked on the ground with a route marker and road or trail number. Paved roads are legal assuming the vehicle is licensed to operate on a highway.
- **Forest map website:**  
[www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/maps](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/maps).  
Download a map of the area you will be visiting.



(Above) Forest Highway sign – paved roads.



Forest system road markers (left, right and below).



Trail route marker. Look for the symbols that indicate the vehicle types that are allowed on a trail.

## Who Does This Affect?

This affects more than the Off-Highway Vehicle recreationists. If you camp outside of a developed campground or hunt, for example, you will also be affected. You need to be aware of the rules if you intend to travel off of system roads or trails to park.

**Dispersed Camping:** Visitors can camp free-of-charge just about anywhere in the national forest, unless it is specifically prohibited. Your vehicle, however, must be parked on a route that is signed as open for motorized vehicles (or within a reasonable distance so as not to block the roadway or create a safety hazard). You may not travel beyond gates and barriers.

Some of the “access” routes to remote spots along a river, stream, or lake are routes created over the years by visitors. If the route leading to a spot is not signed as shown in the pictures or shown on the current Motor Vehicle Use map, it is no longer open to drive on.

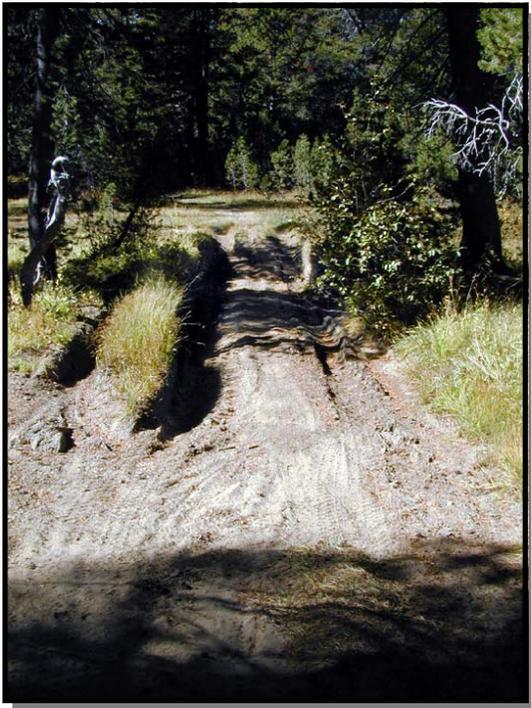
**Woodcutters:** Access off of system roads is controlled by your woodcutting permit. Please read all the instructions when you purchase your permit.

**Remember:** The California State Vehicle Code still applies in National Forests.

**Hunting:** Some visitors hunt or scout by patrolling the backroads in their vehicle. Please stick to the system routes. When you are on foot, keep in mind how far you will have to pack your “critter”. You can still use your non-motorized game cart.

**Exceptions:** The restriction of motor vehicles to system roads and trails does not apply to:

- ◆ Snowmobiles
- ◆ Watercraft
- ◆ Aircraft
- ◆ Non-motorized use (equestrian, mountain bikes)
- ◆ Uses authorized by permit, including permits for authorizing travel for the purpose of checking inventory.



Many non-system routes lack water drainage which can lead to damage to the road, adjacent vegetation, or other resources.



(Above) Some trails have been created by use. If there is no sign on the route showing it as a system route, it is closed. (Left) No Motor Vehicles route marker typically used to indicate a closure area.

### Where Can't I Drive?

- ◆ **Cross-Country travel** is prohibited.
- ◆ **User-created routes:** Over the years, visitors have created their own routes, or “opened” routes the Forest Service previously closed to prevent environmental damage. These routes are closed. The Forest Service has identified more than 600 miles of these user-created routes on this forest alone.
- ◆ **Gates/barriers:** Vehicles are not allowed to travel beyond gates or barriers.
- ◆ **Private land:** Use of roads on private land requires the permission of the landowner.
- ◆ **Restoration areas:** The Forest Service is charged with managing our natural resources. Areas that contain resource damage, such as erosion, stream sedimentation, damage to archeological sites and meadows, from motor vehicle use or other forest uses will and are being restored or rehabilitated, and closed, regardless of the Eldorado Motorized Route Designation Process.



Restoration areas. (Above) An example of a completed restoration project. This treatment was implemented in the Lyons Creek area on the Pacific Ranger District. (Left) Restoration area sign.

**District restoration/rehabilitation projects** that have already been planned to prevent or repair resource degradation will be on-going. These projects are a priority for the forest. Thus, if you see roads or trails being blocked or obliterated, a restoration project is being implemented, with proper environmental analysis and documentation.

## Route Designation Process

Each National Forest in California is designating their route system using the five-step process.

*On the Eldorado . . .*

**Step 1: Inventory**-The process starts with a complete inventory of all routes that now exist. This includes "user created routes" that were made by people traveling off road. All these "user created" routes, along with system trails and roads are displayed on the initial inventory maps which can be downloaded from the Route Project page or a CD is available from the Supervisor's Office. Forest staff have been mapping existing routes since 2002.

Project maps are available for your review. In this step, we want the public to review this inventory and let us know by September 1, 2005 if we have missed any routes or if the mapped routes are accurately located. The website and CD explain input procedures.

**Step 2: Interim Forest Order** -The Eldorado's Step 2 order is the judge's court ruling. An interim Forest Order was implemented on August 25, 2005 allowing wheeled motorized travel only on "system" roads and "system" motorized trails. This step is intended to stop the proliferation of additional "user-created" routes.

**Note:** For the purpose of checking the route inventory, a special use authorization can be obtained from the local Forest Service office for the specific dates of your trip.

**Step 3: Develop Proposed Route System** - In Step 3, the Forest Service will be engaging and involving the public. We want to know what types of experiences are a priority for you. With this input, the Forest Service will develop a proposed designated route system.

**Step 4: NEPA Process** - Once a proposed designated route system has been identified, the Forest Service will initiate the fourth step - an environmental analysis as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The environmental impacts of a proposed system will be analyzed and displayed. This step ends with a decision by the Forest Supervisor.

**Step 5: Final Forest Order** - The last step is the final Forest Order, which will require people to stay on the newly designated OHV routes.



## TREAD LIGHTLY PLEDGE

Travel & recreate with minimum impact.

Respect the environment and the rights of others.

Educate yourself. Plan and prepare before you go.

Allow for future use of the outdoors. By leaving it better than you found it.

Discover the rewards of responsible recreation.



## OFFICE LOCATIONS:

### Placerville Ranger District

7 ½ miles east of Placerville  
on Highway 50 - Cedar Grove exit #54  
4260 Eight Mile Road  
Camino, CA 95709  
(530) 644-2324

### Pacific Ranger District

16 miles east of Placerville  
on Highway 50 - Mill Run Road  
7887 Highway 50  
Pollock Pines, CA 95726  
(530) 647-5415

### Amador Ranger District

17 miles east of Jackson  
on Highway 88  
26820 Silver Drive  
Pioneer, CA 95666  
(209) 295-4251

### Georgetown Ranger District

3 miles east of Georgetown  
on Wentworth Springs Road  
7600 Wentworth Springs Road  
Georgetown, CA 95634  
(530) 333-4312

### Supervisor's Office

Placerville Drive/Forni Road exit, behind  
the Midas store.  
100 Forni Road  
Placerville, CA 95667  
(530) 622-5061

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