

NEWS RELEASE

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Eldorado National Forest
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Forest Service Approves Rubicon Trail Easements and Route Improvements

Placerville, CA.....Improvements to the Rubicon Four-Wheel-Drive Trail in the Eldorado National Forest reached a major milestone today. After completing a final environmental impact statement, Forest Supervisor Kathy Hardy announced her decision to issue a road easement to El Dorado County for the Rubicon Trail where it crosses National Forest lands and to authorize a number of road and recreational opportunity enhancements.

In a document called a Record of Decision, Hardy authorized the installation and construction of a new bridge, an elevated rock ford, numerous erosion control features, and five toilets. She also designated new travel routes and parking areas off the Rubicon Trail and adopted both a saturated soil management strategy that provides direction for wet season vehicle use and a resource monitoring strategy.

“Protecting resources and providing recreational opportunities are high priorities for both the Forest Service and El Dorado County,” said Hardy. “A lot of work has been done in recent years to improve this county road and my decision will help to ensure that National Forest resources are protected in the years ahead. I think this is a win-win for the resources and the recreating public.”

In addition to issuing an easement to El Dorado County for the Rubicon Trail, Hardy’s decision authorized the following activities:

- Construction of a new bridge just downstream from the Ellis Creek ford.
- Removal of an existing timber bridge constructed by Friends of the Rubicon (an OHV organization) and replacing it with a three sided bottomless arch type culvert.
- Construction of an elevated rock ford at Little Rubicon River crossing below the Buck Island Lake outlet.
- Installation and maintenance of erosion control features along the Rubicon Trail from Wentworth Springs Campground to the county line as described in the Rubicon Trail Saturated Soil Water Quality Protection Plan Technical Report.
- Implementation of a saturated soil management strategy that provides direction for wet season vehicle use.
- Construction and maintenance of five vault toilets along the Rubicon Trail.
- Closing and rehabilitating approximately two miles of unauthorized routes on National Forest Lands.
- Adding 15 short, previously unauthorized, routes to the National Forest Transportation System and designating them as motorized four-wheel-drive trails open to high clearance vehicles.
- Designation of 12 areas where vehicles may park off designated motorized vehicle routes.

Hardy’s decision also includes direction for monitoring activities intended to evaluate the effectiveness of the erosion control features, reduce the spread of invasive species, and prevent harm to cultural resources.

Maps, the FEIS and a complete copy of the Forest Supervisor’s decision are posted on the Eldorado National Forest website at: www.fs.usda.gov/eldorado.