



Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland



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U.S. Forest Service Releases Proposed Management Direction for Recreational Sport Shooting

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests released the proposed Forest Plan Management Direction for recreational sport shooting activities on National Forest System lands in Boulder, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer and Park counties.

The proposed Forest Plan direction includes two goals and four objectives for recreational sport shooting. A map displays this proposed direction on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests identifying the National Forest lands suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting using current regulations, not suitable for dispersed recreational sport shooting, and proposed as designated shooting areas.

In general, suitable lands for recreational sport shooting included areas that were further than one-half mile from residential subdivisions or concentrated high use recreation areas. Approximately 1.1 million acres (or 80% of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests) are proposed as suitable for recreational sport shooting. Conversely, areas that were not suitable for recreational sport shooting were generally within one-half mile of residential subdivisions and concentrated recreation use areas. Approximately 287,000 acres (or 20% of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests) are proposed as not suitable for recreational sport shooting.

Two designated shooting areas are also identified; one at Allenspark in Boulder County and one at Devils Nose in Clear Creek County. However, the proposed Forest Plan direction includes an objective that additional designated shooting areas will be identified in other counties within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

Proposed management direction does not include any change in management for lawful hunting activities.

The proposal has two primary purposes (1) protecting public health and safety and (2) providing guidance and management for an important and growing use of the National Forests. As population along the Front Range has increased, so has the number of people who live near and use the National Forest. In urban interface areas, housing development within a quarter mile of National Forest System lands has increased by as much as 29% since 1989. In addition, the participation rate in recreational sport shooting and other recreation activities has increased. The mixing of recreational sport shooting activities on National Forest lands in close proximity to residences and other high use public areas is causing safety concerns.

Developing Forest Plan direction specifically for recreational sport shooting will explicitly address this use and provide a framework for management. This framework will also direct the Forest to coordinate and cooperate with the counties and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to identify designated shooting areas. These areas may occur on National Forest System lands or other public lands and will be set aside and publically available for recreational sport shooting.

This proposed action follows the May 2, 2015, requested for comments on an initial proposal for Forest Plan direction for recreational sport shooting. While the initial proposal did not include specific Forest Plan direction, comments were helpful in understanding the public's view on the need for direction. Approximately 300 comments were received and along with other data helped in the development of this proposal.

The U.S. Forest Service is requesting comments on this proposal for 30 days from the date of the publication notice in the Fort Collins *Coloradoan* published July 10, 2015. Public comments will help shape the Forest Service's proposal and identify issues and concerns during environmental review. Comments can be submitted electronically at comments-rm-arapaho-roosevelt@fs.fed.us. Information about this project and how to comment can be found at: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/recshootingmgt. For more information about recreational sport shooting visit: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/targetshooting.

After considering comments, the U.S. Forest Service will prepare an environmental assessment and may develop reasonable alternatives to this proposal. The environmental assessment will disclose the social and environmental impacts of the proposed direction and any alternatives. The environmental assessment will also be circulated for public comment.

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