



NEWS RELEASE

Nebraska *National Forest*

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Motorized Restrictions Extended in Burned Areas

The green carpet of new grass in many areas of the 2006 Dawes County Complex fires in northwest Nebraska is starting to reduce the likelihood that a hard, fast rain event will cause extensive erosion to the burned hillsides. However, Forest Service managers want to allow more time for new plants to become established before lifting motor vehicle restrictions.

The special order requiring motor vehicles to remain on designated roads within the Spotted Tail and Roberts Tract Fire areas is set to expire on July 1, 2007. The new order will extend the restriction until the end of the year.

“We used an airplane to drop nearly five tons of native grass seed on parts of the Spotted Tail Fire south of Chadron,” said Charlie Marsh, Pine Ridge District Ranger. “The native seed, in combination with the natural recovery and well-timed rains has helped to stabilize many of the steep slopes where the fire burned intensely. We’re hoping for more rains to help the plants build their root systems before we open the area to motorized traffic,” he added.

Currently, motor vehicles are allowed to operate off designated roads unless specifically prohibited. However, by extending the motorized restriction, the Spotted Tail Area, which is a popular spot for off-road riding will remain off-limits until December 31, 2007. Most of the Roberts Tract Fire burned in the Pine Ridge National Recreation Area where motor vehicle travel has been prohibited since the mid-1980’s.

Cross-country motorized travel is due to be phased out in the near future to be in line with national Forest Service direction to allow vehicle travel on designated routes or areas only. Anyone interested in participating in the process to decide which routes and areas will be open for motorized travel on the Pine Ridge Ranger District or the Oglala National Grassland should contact Charlie Marsh, and request to be added to the Travel Management mailing list.

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