

The Planning Process

Scoping is the first step to involve the public in the environmental impact analysis process. Scoping includes holding meetings and providing opportunities for the public to comment. The NPS uses your comments to ensure that it is considering all of the possible alternatives for the management of the resource.

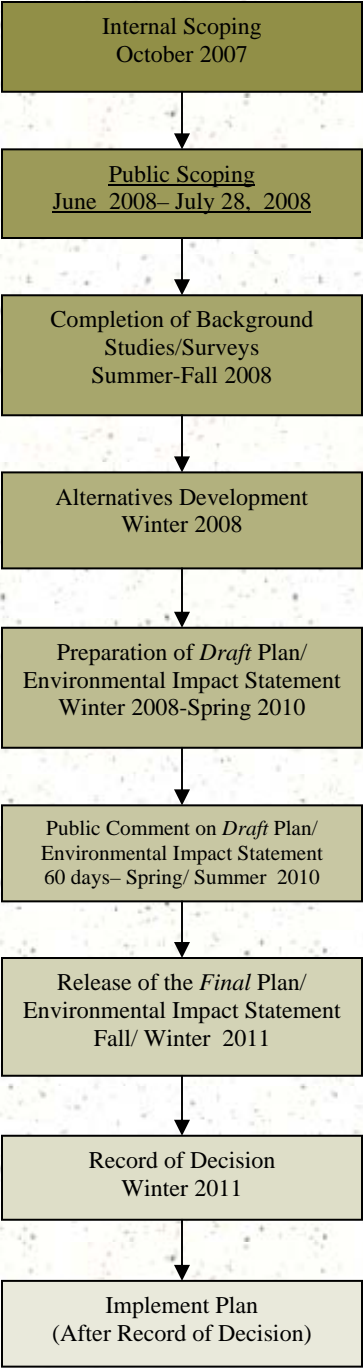
How to Comment

There are several ways to provide comments:

- Attend a public meeting
- Submit comments electronically at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/LAMR> (select ORV Management Plan and Regulation)
- Submit written comments by mail to:
Superintendent,
Lake Meredith NRA
RE: ORV Management Plan
P.O. Box 1460
Fritch, TX 79036

The comment period for scoping will be open until **July 28, 2008**.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment -including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
P.O. Box 1460
Fritch, TX 79036-1460



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Lake Meredith
National Recreation Area

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan and
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Scoping

July 8-10, 2008

You're Invited!
Your Participation Will Help Shape This Plan

Because of your interest in the Lake Meredith National Recreation Area (NRA), we are requesting your input for developing an Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) at Lake Meredith NRA.

The National Park Service (NPS) requests your participation in the project planning process to identify potential environmental impacts, issues, concerns, and alternative concepts. The NPS would like to discuss the proposal and gather any thoughts, ideas, or comments that you may have regarding this project.

Open House	Thursday, July 10, 2008 6:00 pm—8:00 pm The Ambassador Hotel 3100 I-40, Exit 68B Amarillo, Texas
Tuesday, July 8, 2008 6:00 pm—8:00 pm Sanford-Fritch Middle School Cafeteria 536 Eagle Blvd, Fritch, Texas	Format The meeting will consist of an open house with NPS staff on hand to visit with you, answer questions, and record your input.
Wednesday, July 9, 2008 6:00 pm—8:30 pm First State Bank Community Room 500 E. First Street Dumas, Texas	Attendees may also submit comments on written forms available at the meeting or on-line or by mail as described inside this newsletter.

Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

Lake Meredith was created for the impoundment and diversion of water for Texas panhandle municipalities in the early 1960s. In 1990, Lake Meredith became a national recreation area for the purpose of providing for public outdoor recreation use and to protect the scenic, scientific, cultural, and other values contributing to the public enjoyment of Lake Meredith's lands and waters.

There are two authorized off-road vehicle (ORV) use areas at Lake Meredith National Recreation Area (Recreation Area), Blue Creek and Rosita (also known as Rosita Flats). The two areas were designated as ORV areas in the 1970s by special regulation 36 CFR § 7.57. ORV use is authorized from cutbank to cutbank along approximately 275 acres of Blue Creek. ORVs are allowed in the Rosita area below the 3,000 foot elevation.

In 2005, Lake Meredith NRA and other park units were sued for allowing ORV use in areas without a special regulation and for failing to monitor ORV use. In response to the lawsuit, the Recreation Area initiated this planning effort in October of 2007 with internal scoping. The plan, and regulation if needed, will address ORV use at both Rosita and Blue Creek.



Rosita ORV Area

NPS photo

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed ORV plan is to manage ORV use in the recreation area for visitor enjoyment and recreation opportunities, while minimizing and correcting damage to resources.

Need for Action

The need for the ORV plan is to:

- Comply with Executive Order 11644, Use of Off Road Vehicles on Public Lands, as stated in the court case of *Friends of the Earth v. Department of Interior*;
- Provide for sustainable recreational ORV use areas;
- Address the lack of an approved plan, which has led to ORV use outside of authorized areas;
- Address resource impacts resulting from ORV use.

Preliminary Management Concepts

The NPS has identified several concepts that might be considered for managing ORVs at the Recreation Area. These include:

- A land exchange could take place between the NPS and the State of Texas; Rosita Flats for state lands desirable to NPS.
- Develop a permit system for ORV use.
- ORV use could be confined to designated routes, areas could be closed or fenced, seasonal closures could occur, or ORV use could be banned from all or certain areas of the recreation area.
- Enforcement of use outside of authorized areas could include fines, penalties, or revocation of privileges.
- Areas or use could be rotated, or other areas opened to ORV use, such as along the lakeshore if the lake level continues to recede.
- Camping and fires could be confined to designated areas only.
- Visitor experience could be improved by such things as enhanced partnerships with ORV groups or interpretive trail routes for ORV users.
- Additional speed limits or safety equipment could be required.

Objectives are what must be achieved to a large degree for the action to be considered a success. All alternatives selected for detailed analysis must meet all objectives to a large degree, and resolve the purpose and need for action.

Objectives of the Plan

Visitor Use and Safety

- Manage ORV use to minimize conflicts among different ORV users.
- Promote safe operation of ORVs and safety of all visitors.

Management

- Build stewardship through public awareness and understanding of NPS resource management and visitor use policy and responsibilities as they pertain to the recreation area and ORV management.
- Develop a monitoring plan that allows the park to establish the number of ORVs the park is able to support.

Park Operations

- Identify needs and costs necessary to implement an ORV plan.
- Minimize impacts to park operations and costs necessary to implement an ORV plan.

Natural Resources

- Minimize adverse impacts to threatened, endangered, and other protected species and their habitats.
- Define effective strategies for soil erosion control and restoration of plant resources to support wildlife populations.

Cultural Resources

- Preserve and protect significant cultural resources within the recreation area.
- Work with interested parties to identify cultural resources that could be adversely affected by ORV use.



Blue Creek ORV Area

NPS photo