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Date: June 18, 2008

Subject: Forest Service and Mountain Biking

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and Deputy Chiefs

In 2006, the Forest Service renewed its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). Our agency has a strong partnership with IMBA and continues to work with IMBA to address issues of concern. The Forest Service provides thousands of miles of premier mountain biking trails. Of the 145,000 miles of National Forest System trails, we estimate that over 100,000 miles of our trails are open to mountain biking. As this use grows, I anticipate the Forest Service will have the opportunity to manage an increasingly significant number of miles of trails for mountain biking.

I want to emphasize that mountain biking is a non-motorized use of National Forest System trails, along with hiking and horseback riding. In our planning and policy documents, a distinction between mountain biking and motorized uses on our national forest system lands should be made.

The Forest Service and IMBA are implementing our renewed MOU. IMBA provides numerous hours of volunteer labor to assist us in maintaining trails for mountain biking. IMBA and our agency trail staff have worked with the Missoula Technology and Development Center in producing a handbook and DVD for sustainable mountain biking trails. Our trails program is increasingly dependent on volunteers and partnerships to maintain our network of trails. I encourage you to work with IMBA and its chapters to identify projects that will advance our MOU and mutually benefit our agency trails program.

If you have any questions about this Service-wide MOU or having IMBA members work with your local units, please contact Jonathan Stephens at (202) 205-1701.

/s/ Joel D. Holtrop
JOEL D. HOLTROP
Deputy Chief for National Forest System

