



NATIONAL FORESTS IN FLORIDA

Access Designation Process



Update

May 2002

Forest Supervisor's Message

The analysis of alternatives for the Access Designation process is underway and planned to be completed in November 2002. Since the Access Process is one of our priority issues, I have recently decided to consolidate the environmental analysis of the pro-

posals from the Osceola, Ocala and Apalachicola National Forests into a single Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS will appear in the Federal Register in early May. It seems appropriate to conduct the analyses

simultaneously for the three forest in order to ensure consistency, appropriately address the issues, and facilitate decision-making.

Marsha Kearney
Forest Supervisor

Road and Trail Inventory Complete

With the road and trail inventory complete on all three forests, we can begin to develop and map the alternatives to be analyzed. The road and trail inventory was accomplished with a global positioning system (GPS), and has given us a variety of accurate and detailed information on existing

conditions. For example, the total amount of roads, trails and travelways currently existing in the restricted areas is 567 miles on the Osceola NF, 2,489 miles on the Ocala NF, and 1,456 miles on the Apalachicola NF. In addition, over 500 trash dumps were identified in the first two weeks of

GPS mapping on the Apalachicola NF, more gopher tortoise burrows were discovered on the Osceola NF, and a number of OHV concentrated use areas were noted and recorded on the Ocala NF. This information will be utilized in the environmental analysis of the various alternatives.

Proposed Schedule

The planned schedule for completion of the access designation process is to complete the Draft of the Environmental Impact statement and release it for public comment by November

2002. During the 45-day comment period, public workshops will be scheduled to answer questions about the Draft. Your comments on the Draft EIS and its analysis will help us improve

the document and find a solution that protects your precious resources and provides opportunities for you to enjoy your national forests.