

# News Release



USDA Forest Service  
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests  
Norwood Ranger District  
Norwood, CO

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **FOREST SERVICE ANNOUNCES THUNDER TRAILS DECISION**

**Norwood, CO, (September 23, 2011)** – Norwood District Ranger, Judy Schutza has released her decision to the public on the Thunder Trails Project environmental analysis. Schutza decided to implement Alternative 3 of the analysis, which includes the construction of a new 17.5 mile single-track trail system and to install site-specific closures on approximately 23 miles of user-created routes. These routes were identified for closure previously in the Uncompahgre Travel Management Plan. The decision will also keep Thunder Road (Forest Service Road 609) open to all motorized and non-motorized uses.

According to Ranger Schutza, “We are excited about the prospect of building new trails that are close to Norwood. We see a need to provide these opportunities and hope they will support the local economy.” The new trails will be open to motorcycles, mountain bikes, horses, and hikers. Schutza went on to state that it is her hope that trail construction can occur next summer.

The majority of the routes to be closed are old logging roads that were never effectively closed to travel. Some of the routes are new tracks that unauthorized vehicles have created and many of them are deeply rutted where vehicles have driven during wet conditions resulting in soil compaction and damage to vegetation. This is of particular concern in sensitive areas such as meadows and riparian areas which provide key wildlife habitat. The method of closures include: signing, installing physical barricades, seeding, planting, slash piling and in some cases, the use of an excavator to obliterate existing road beds and to break up compaction, and install earthen berms and water bars.

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Judy Schutza, Norwood Ranger District, at 970-327-4261.

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