

Settlement opens trails in Eldorado National Forest

Off-roaders can rev up their engines.

An agreement reached by conservation groups, off-roaders and the counties of El Dorado, Alpine and Amador settles litigation going back to the 1990s by resolving the status of contentious trails in Eldorado National Forest.

Under the agreement, some trails and dirt roads will reopen, others would remain closed and still others would begin restoration of past damage.

The deal allows for 24 routes to open immediately, closure of 18 routes, and commits the U.S. Forest Service to review all the routes over the next three years and take corrective action to protect meadows, streams and springs.

Forty-two routes in the Eldorado National Forest were closed in 2012 because a federal judge determined designating the routes through meadows violated the forest plan, which bans roads in meadows. Subsequently, forest managers did a new analysis.