

## Chapter 2: The Alternatives

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered for the Tahoe National Forest Motorized Travel Management EIS. It describes both alternatives considered in detail and those eliminated from detailed study. The end of this chapter presents the alternatives in tabular format so that the alternatives and their environmental impacts can be readily compared.

Based on the issues identified through public comment on the Proposed Action, the Forest Service developed five action alternative proposals to the Proposed Action alternatives that achieve the purpose and need differently than the Proposed Action. In addition, the Forest Service is required to analyze a No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action, alternatives to the Proposed Action, and the No Action Alternative are described in detail below. This chapter is divided into five parts:

- How the alternatives were developed;
- Elements common to all alternatives, including motorized mixed use, routine maintenance, mitigation measures, monitoring and implementation strategy.
- Alternatives considered in detail, including cross country travel, additions to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS), establishment of motorized “Open Areas,” changes to the NFTS, and proposed Forest Plan amendments;
- Alternatives that were considered, but eliminated from detailed analysis. This section includes the rationale for eliminating these alternatives; and
- Comparison of the alternatives.

### How the Alternatives Were Developed \_\_\_\_\_

The Forest Service used the significant issues listed in Chapter 1 to develop the alternatives to the Proposed Action. The alternatives provide different approaches to:

- Fulfill the purpose and need for the project as described in Chapter 1, and
- Address the significant issues.

In addition to the issues raised during the 30-day public scoping period, two groups submitted alternative proposals for consideration by the Forest Service. The six action alternatives incorporate elements of these proposals as well as other comments submitted by the public. In addition, information gathered by the Forest Service in their consultation and discussions with tribal representatives, local counties, State and Federal agencies, and Forest Service employees was used to develop and refine the alternatives.

### Modifications to Alternatives between Draft and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement \_\_\_\_\_

The following modifications were to the alternatives as they were displayed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

- The corrections to the existing NFTS as described in Chapter 1 were incorporated into each of the alternatives.
- Modifications were made to the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 6) in response to public comments on the Draft EIS including:
  - § Shortened the seasonal restrictions on motorized vehicle use by one month for routes on the westside of the Forest to enhance opportunities for motorized recreation.
  - § Allowed wheeled over-the-snow motorized vehicle use on 3.6 miles of the Fordyce jeep trail when 15 inches of snow is present on the ground.
  - § Increased protection for the Forest’s Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) not to adding Route YRN-M3b, located in the West Yuba IRA, to the NFTS.
  - § Limited year-round motorized mixed use (highway-legal vehicles sharing roads with non-highway legal vehicles) to roads less than 3 miles in length that have a low mixed use crash probability combined with a low mixed use crash severity, or that are consistent with the California Vehicle Code Division 16.5.
  - § Allowed motorized mixed use on certain roads longer than 3 miles, but only during deer hunting season, which ensures a low mixed use crash probability and severity will be maintained on these roads.
  - § Allowed motorized mixed use on certain routes recommended by the public during the comment period. These routes, which have been identified in our NFTS objectives as Maintenance Level 3 roads (typically low speed, single lane roads with turnouts maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car), will now be maintained as Maintenance Level 2 roads (roads open for use by high clearance vehicles).
  - § Ensured that the public has adequate access to important non-motorized recreation opportunities on the Forest by allowing such places to be safely reached in highway legal vehicles.
  - § Added numerous, primarily short unauthorized route segments recommended by the public, to the NFTS to provide motorized access to dispersed recreation sites where no significant adverse resource impacts were associated with such additions.
  - § Established “Open Areas” at the Boca, Stampede, and Prosser Reservoirs to provide motorized access to the shorelines.
  - § Incorporated additional mitigation measures for specific routes to minimize impacts associated with motorized vehicle use, which will allow these routes to be added to the NFTS in a sustainable manner.

## Elements Common to All Alternatives \_\_\_\_\_

### Motorized Mixed Use

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 7705 defines motorized mixed use as the designation of an NFTS road for use by both highway-legal and non-highway-legal motor vehicles. The Forest Service considers roads

maintained for use by high clearance vehicles (Maintenance Level 2) as roughly graded and considers operation of non-highway legal vehicles on these roads to be consistent with state law.

The following proposals related to motorized mixed use apply to all action alternatives:

- **Vehicle classes allowed on unauthorized routes added to the NFTS as roads.** Unauthorized routes considered for addition to the NFTS under one or more of the action alternatives have been determined not to have significant safety concerns that could not be mitigated (Appendix A, Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information). All vehicle classes (including highway-legal and non-highway-legal vehicles) would be allowed if the route is added to the NFTS as a road. Use by non-highway-legal trail vehicles would be allowed on routes added to the NFTS as motorized trails.
- **Vehicle classes allowed on existing NFTS high clearance 4WD roads.** All existing high clearance NFTS four-wheel drive (4WD) roads have been determined to have minimal safety concerns (see Transportation section). All vehicles classes (including highway-legal and non-highway-legal vehicles) would be allowed on these types of roads in all action alternatives (Alternatives 2-7).
- **Vehicle classes allowed on existing NFTS passenger car roads.** Roads currently maintained for passenger cars are being considered for mixed use where such use is currently prohibited. (See Transportation section in Chapter 3 for more information.) All vehicle classes (highway-legal and non-highway-legal vehicles) would be allowed to use all or segments of these roads in the action alternatives (Alternatives 2-7). Non-highway-legal vehicles would not be allowed on any other passenger car roads, and operators of non-highway legal vehicles on roads where mixed use is allowed would be required to possess a valid driver's license and insurance.

## Parking

Under all action alternatives, parking would be restricted to one vehicle length off of designated roads and motorized trails.

## Routine Maintenance

Maintenance is defined as ongoing upkeep of a road necessary to maintain or restore the road in accordance with its road management objectives (FSM 7714). Under all alternatives, an annual maintenance plan for NFTS roads and trails would be developed at the beginning of the road maintenance season. Routine maintenance includes cleaning and repairing drainage structures (i.e., water bars, culverts and rolling dips); berm removal; clearing the travel surface of obstacles such as rock, slough, trees, and brush; clearing obstacles such as downed trees; blocking and naturalizing multiple routes or shortcuts; and incidental replacement or repair of existing structures such as barriers, walls, or causeways.

Roads and trails in need of maintenance at the beginning of the maintenance season (e.g., to address concerns related to spring run off, winter tree and snag fall and other environmental factors) are the first priority. Later in the season, maintenance focuses on maintaining high traffic volume roads; major repairs such as culvert replacement; and repairs needed to prevent or mitigate resource damage.

## Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures would be required for any of the motorized roads or trails proposed for addition to the NFTS and established “Open Areas” in any of the action alternatives. Mitigation measures are contained in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information). The mitigation measures fall in the following general categories. See Table 2-1 for the summary of proposed mitigation measures.

**Table 2-1. Summary of Proposed Mitigation Measures by Alternative**

		Alt 2	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
<b>Watershed</b> (includes improving stream crossings, placing drainage structures, repairing gullies, minor rerouting, placing barriers, removing structures, constructing waterbars, and closing adjacent spurs)	Routes	36	11	37	28	25
	Acres	60	0	0	244	0
	Miles	41.5	16.6	42.4	34.6	30.4
	Cost	\$154,700	\$65,500	\$136,200	\$43,200	\$119,500
<b>Botany</b> (includes installing waterbars, placing barriers, minor reroutes and noxious weed removal)	Routes	17	8	19	14	13
	Acres	2,589	0	0	244	0
	Miles	23.7	12.8	23.7	19.0	19.1
	Cost	\$42,350	\$6,250	\$43,750	\$22,550	\$37,250
<b>Wildlife</b> (includes placing barriers and conducting bat surveys)	Routes	2	0	2	3	1
	Miles	.5	0	.5	.5	.2
	Cost	\$1,000	0	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$500
<b>Safety</b> (includes closing adits, approving mixed use, installing signs, removing logs and labeling water sources)	Routes	6	1	6	6	3
	Miles	5.9	2.9	5.9	5.9	3.6
	Cost	\$6,000	\$500	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$2,000
<b>Lands</b> (includes completing law enforcement agreements and obtaining permission from private landowners)	Routes	6	3	19	4	6
	Acres	60	0	0	0	0
	Miles	6.4	1.9	14.6	3.2	6.3
	Cost	\$2,250	\$750	\$5,000	\$1,250	\$1,750

		Alt 2	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
<b>Recreation</b> (includes placing barriers, removing obstructions and restricting to day use only)	Routes	9	4	9	14	5
	Miles	4.6	1.5	4.6	4.0	4.3
	Cost	\$5,500	\$2,000	\$5,500	\$8,000	\$3,500
<b>Air Quality</b> (encapsulating asbestos)	Routes	1	0	3	1	1
	Miles	.6	0	1.2	.5	.6
	Cost	\$10,000	0	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Heritage</b> (installing barriers)	Routes	5	2	6	5	2
	Acres	2,589	0	0	0	0
	Miles	6.5	2.0	7.0	5.0	2.4
	Cost	\$8,850	\$3,850	\$8,350	\$5,850	\$3,850
<b>Total Routes with Mitigation</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Total Acres and Miles with Mitigation</b>		<b>2,649 Acres 43.8 Miles</b>	<b>18.2 Miles</b>	<b>54.2 Miles</b>	<b>244 Acres 37.7 Miles</b>	<b>30.0 Miles</b>
<b>Total Cost with Mitigation</b>		<b>\$240,650</b>	<b>\$77,850</b>	<b>\$256,300</b>	<b>\$103,350</b>	<b>\$173,350</b>

**Note:** Table 2-1 does not list any mitigation measures for Alternatives 1 and 3 because there are no roads, trails, or areas being added to the National Forest Transportation System. Numbers may not add up due to rounding. Totals do not sum due to multiple mitigations required for individual routes.

**Scheduling of mitigation measures would be based on the following considerations:**

- Roads and trails where the location or deteriorated condition is causing substantial effects to riparian, watershed, threatened, endangered or sensitive species, or significant cultural resources whether or not motorized vehicle use is occurring.
- Mitigations on routes requiring relatively low-cost, easily implemented work, such as signage or simple barriers.
- Roads and trails that provide connectivity and important access for the transportation network or other routes that have been identified as providing key public benefit and opportunities.

Routes with mitigations would not be open to motorized use until this work is accomplished. After mitigation has been performed, the route would appear as a designated public motorized road or trail on the next revision of the MVUM. Mitigations have been analyzed for their potential to reduce or eliminate effects on specific resources associated with motorized use of the routes. These effects are disclosed in the resource sections of Chapter 3.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring is critical for evaluating the effectiveness of management decisions and the accuracy of analysis assumptions and conclusions. Monitoring of road and trail conditions is required, and must meet regional and/or national standards. If monitoring determines additional resource damage is occurring, steps to prevent further damage may be taken. If the mitigations are not effective or are not possible, additional road or trail closures may be required and would require additional NEPA analysis.

Proposed route-specific monitoring varies by alternative. As identified in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information), resource specialists have identified approximately 84 routes where site-specific monitoring would be needed if the routes are added to the system for public use in an alternative. These include monitoring effects of the routes on botany, heritage, watershed and recreation resources. In some cases, one route may be monitored to assess conditions of multiple resources.

In addition to effectiveness monitoring related to the actions of this project, many other forms of monitoring and data collection take place on the Forest. These include ongoing monitoring that is already prescribed, such as surveys of roads and trails for infrastructure condition, monitoring of cultural resource sites, noxious weed spread, rare plants, or wildlife surveys. Some of this monitoring may directly or indirectly assess the effects of roads or trails on resources, as well as generally assessing conditions of roads for stability and maintenance. While these monitoring efforts are not prescribed in this Travel Management EIS, these data would also be used whenever possible, in assessing either the effectiveness of the actions proposed or in adjusting future travel management actions. The Forest Service would conduct implementation monitoring based on Appendix M (OHV Monitoring) and summarized in Table 2-2.

**Table 2-2. Summary of number of routes with monitoring requirements by resource category and alternative**

Resource Category	Alt 2	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
<b>Botany</b> (Number of routes)	5	1	5	6	4
<b>Heritage</b> (Number of routes)	48	18	50	65	9
<b>Watershed</b> (Number of routes)	13	4	16	16	13
<b>Recreation</b> (Number of routes)	1	0	1	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b> (Number of routes) (Total cost)	<b>67</b> <b>\$20,865</b>	<b>23</b> <b>\$5,755</b>	<b>72</b> <b>\$21,115</b>	<b>88</b> <b>\$24,020</b>	<b>26</b> <b>\$9,250</b>

**Note:** Table 2-2 does not list monitoring requirements for Alternatives 1 and 3 because there are no roads or trails being added to the NFTS.

## Implementation Strategy

After a decision is made, a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) would be created and made available to the public at no cost. This map would be the legal document displaying designated NFTS roads, trails, and established “Open Areas” on the Forest which may be legally traveled with a motorized vehicle, as well as the allowed vehicle class, and any seasonal or other use restrictions. As changes or corrections are made to the transportation system in the future, the MVUM would be periodically revised and reissued. NFTS roads and trails open to public use would be signed on the ground with a road or trail number and any regulatory information that may apply to the route.

## Alternatives Considered in Detail

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The action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) and the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) are considered in detail. The No Action Alternative represents the continuation of cross country travel including continued use of all unauthorized routes by motor vehicles. Alternative 1, required by the

implementing regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), serves as a baseline for comparison among the alternatives.

The planning area includes National Forest System land on the Tahoe National Forest. It does not include any private, state or other federal lands. Each alternative assumes that other adjacent federal lands will be managed according to existing management plans and applicable federal laws. Each alternative also assumes that private lands will meet applicable state and federal land use regulations.

**The alternatives are described in five parts:**

1. **Cross Country Travel:** All of the action alternatives prohibit wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS motorized trails, and established “Open Areas” by the public except as allowed by permit or other authorization. Prohibition of cross country travel addresses the need to regulate unmanaged motor vehicle use.
2. **Additions to the NFTS:** Some action alternatives would add unauthorized routes as roads and trails to the NFTS by vehicle class and season of use. Additions are considered in order to respond to the need to provide motor vehicle access to dispersed recreation opportunities and to provide a diversity of motorized recreation opportunities. For purposes of this analysis, each of these roads and trails is identified by a unique number. Resource specialists conducted their site specific review of each proposed route. All proposed route additions have assigned road or trail management objectives. All proposed additions would receive the appropriate level of routine maintenance, such as brushing, signing, cleaning and clearing debris. For some routes, no work beyond routine maintenance would be needed. For others, additional mitigation would be needed to bring the route up to a safe and environmentally sustainable condition. The specific mitigations must be completed prior to designation of the route on the MVUM for public motorized use. Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information) shows the specified vehicle class, season of use, and mitigations for all proposed route additions. Additional details on each route are contained in the Project Record.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** Two action alternatives would establish motorized “Open Areas” by vehicle class and season of use. Establishing new “Open Areas” are being considered in order to respond to the need to provide motor vehicle access for dispersed recreation opportunities and to provide a diversity of motorized recreation opportunities. For purposes of this analysis, each of these “Open Areas” is identified by name. Resource specialists conducted their site specific review of each proposed “Open Area.” All established “Open Areas” would receive the appropriate level of routine maintenance such as brushing, signing, cleaning and clearing debris. For some “Open Areas”, no work beyond routine maintenance would be needed. For others, additional mitigation is needed to bring the area up to a safe and environmentally sustainable condition. The specific mitigations must be completed prior to establishment of the “Open Area” on the MVUM for public motorized use. Appendix A shows the specified vehicle class, season of use and mitigations for all proposed established “Open Areas.” Additional details on each “Open Area” are contained in the Project Record.

4. **Changes to the NFTS:** With the exception of Alternative 3, the action alternatives propose various changes to the existing NFTS including changes to vehicle class and season of use, and reopening Maintenance Level 1 roads. Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information) shows the specified vehicle class, season of use, and mitigations for proposed changes to the existing NFTS under each alternative.
  - a. **Vehicle class** - The action alternatives may include limited changes to the vehicle class allowed on existing NFTS roads and/or trails. Vehicle class indicates the type of vehicle (passenger car, motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle, etc) allowed to operate on a road or trail. Some alternatives add vehicle classes to roads and/or trails where that use is currently prohibited. Some alternatives add vehicle classes resulting from changes in maintenance levels. These changes respond to the need to provide a diversity of wheeled motorized recreation opportunities and access.
  - b. **Season of Use** - The action alternatives vary in terms of which roads, trails and areas would have motorized travel prohibited during specified times of year. Wet weather seasonal restrictions are specified in some of the alternatives to minimize erosion and protect water quality.
  - c. **Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads** - Some alternatives include opening Maintenance Level 1 (ML 1) roads to public use, where such use is currently prohibited, to enhance motorized recreation opportunities. These changes respond to the need to provide a diversity of wheeled motorized recreation opportunities and access.
5. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** Some of the action alternatives include an amendment to the Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP 1990) to remove the November 1 to May 1 seasonal closure in the Sugar Pine area (Management Area 84 Humbug Sailor) on key winter deer range to improve motorized recreation opportunities.

## Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the other alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative, no changes would be made to the NFTS and there would be no prohibition of cross country travel (see Table 2-3). Current management plans would continue to guide project area management. The Travel Management Rule would not be implemented, and no motor vehicle use map (MVUM) would be published. Motor vehicle travel by the public would not be limited to designated routes. Unauthorized routes would continue to proliferate and would have no status or authorization as NFTS facilities.

1. **Cross Country Travel:** Public wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS trails, and outside established “Open Areas” would continue, except as otherwise prohibited.
2. **Additions to the NFTS:** No unauthorized routes would be added to the NFTS as roads or motorized trails under this alternative.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** No additional motorized “Open Areas” would be established under this alternative.
4. **Changes to the NFTS:** No Changes to the NFTS would be made in this alternative.

5. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** No amendments would be made to the Forest Plan.

Table 2-3 displays a summary of the existing conditions due to no action in this alternative. A map displaying this alternative is included in digital format on the CD attached to this document, and may be found in the Project Record located at the Tahoe National Forest Supervisors Office in Nevada City, California.

**Table 2-3. Alternative 1 - Summary of Actions (Existing Condition)**

Action type		Action Proposed
<b>1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)</b>		Prohibitions continue on 81,975 acres.  Continues on 754,066 acres
<b>2. Additions to the NFTS</b>	a. Roads added to the NFTS open to high clearance vehicles	0.0 (miles), 0 (roads)
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS	0.0 (miles) 0 (trails)
<b>3. Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”</b>		None
<b>4. Changes to the NFTS</b>	a. Passenger car roads where both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles will be allowed to use the same road.	0.0 miles
	b. Passenger car roads that will be downgraded to high clearance roads so that both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles can use the same road	0.0 miles
	c. Change in Season of Use	0.0 miles
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads	0.0 (miles), 0 (roads)
<b>5. Amendments to the Forest Plan</b>		None

## Alternative 2: Increased Motorized Recreation and Access Opportunities

Alternative 2 responds to the issue of inadequate motorized recreation opportunities. This alternative is based on the Proposed Action (Alternative 7), with additional routes and mixed use to provide more access and motorized recreation opportunities. During scoping, the Tahoe National Forest received numerous site specific suggestions for additional motorized roads, trails and established “Open Areas” that would improve public access and enhance motorized recreation opportunities. Unauthorized routes and closed NFTS roads site-specifically requested by the public during scoping were added in this alternative, provided they were consistent with law, regulation, and policy. In addition, site specific recommendations for “Open Areas” proposed by the public during scoping were also established in this alternative provided they were consistent with law, regulation and policy.

1. **Cross Country Travel:** Public wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS trails, and outside established motorized use areas would be prohibited, except as allowed by permit or other authorization.

2. **Additions to the NFTS:**
  - a. Under this alternative, 114 segments of unauthorized routes totaling 5.0 miles would be added as roads open to high clearance vehicles to the NFTS.
  - b. 54.6 miles (87 routes) of unauthorized routes would be added as motorized trails to the NFTS.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** Four areas totaling 2,649 acres would be established as motorized “Open Areas” open to all vehicles under this Alternative.
4. **Changes to the NFTS:**
  - a. **Change Vehicle Classes through Mixed Use:** Change vehicle class on 241.5 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through approval of mixed use.
  - b. **Change Vehicle Classes through Maintenance Levels:** Change vehicle class on 157.2 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through the conversion of Maintenance Level 3 (ML 3) roads to Maintenance Level 2 (ML 2). For each of these roads an entrance strategy (i.e. waterbars) and road conditions would be implemented to be consistent with use by high clearance vehicles. These roads would then be maintained as ML 2 to prevent unacceptable resource damage from occurring. Once the Forest Engineer determines these roads have reached ML 2 conditions they would be placed on the MVUM and signed as available for use by non-highway legal vehicles.
  - c. **Changes in Seasonal Restrictions:** Seasonal restrictions for deer winter range would be changed from “May 1 to November 1”, to “Open Year Round” on 10.5 miles of roads resulting from the Forest Plan Amendment to Management Area 84 (Humberg-Sailor)
  - d. **Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads:** No ML 1 roads would be opened to motorized use.
6. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** The Tahoe National Forest LRMP would be amended to remove the November 1 to May 1 seasonal closure in the Sugar Pine area (Management Area 84 Humberg Sailor) on key winter deer range to improve motorized recreation opportunities.

Table 2-4 displays a summary of the actions proposed in this alternative. A complete listing of roads, trails and areas to be added into the NFTS; including the vehicle class and, if applicable, seasonal use restrictions; can be found in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information). A map displaying this alternative is included in digital format on the CD attached to this document, and may be found in the Project Record located at the Tahoe National Forest Supervisors Office in Nevada City, California.

Table 2-4. Alternative 2 - Summary of Actions

Action type		Action Proposed
1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)		Prohibited on 833,392 acres
2. Additions to the NFTS	a. Roads added to the NFTS	5.0 (miles), 114 (roads)
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS	
	Trails open to high clearance trail vehicles	24.3 (miles), 69 (trails)
	Trails open to ATVs and motorcycles only	4.4 (miles), 3 (trails)
	Trails open to motorcycles only	25.9 (miles), 15 (trails)
	<b>Total all trails</b>	<b>54.6 (miles), 87 (trails)</b>
3. Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”		Greenhorn Area (60 acres) Prosser, Boca and Stampede Reservoirs (2,589 acres)
4. Changes to the NFTS	a. Passenger car roads where both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles will be allowed to use the same road	241.5 (miles)
	b. Passenger car roads that will be downgraded to high clearance roads so that both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles can use the same road	157.2 (miles)
	c. Change in Season of Use	10.5 (miles)
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads	0.0 (miles), 0 (roads)
5. Amendments to the Forest Plan		Management Area 84 (Humbug Sailor) Deer Winter Range Seasonal Restriction Removed

### Alternative 3: Cross Country Travel Prohibition Only – No Changes to the Existing National Forest Transportation System

Alternative 3 responds to issues of (1) adverse effects of motorized recreation use on non-motorized recreation experiences and (2) potential adverse impacts from motorized recreation use on natural and cultural resources. As such, Alternative 3 would prohibit cross country travel, and proposes no new additions to the NFTS. This alternative also provides a baseline for comparing the impacts of other alternatives that propose changes to the NFTS. None of the unauthorized roads or trails would be added to the NFTS. No additional “Open Areas” would be established.

1. **Cross Country Travel:** Public wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS trails, and outside established motorized use areas would be prohibited, except as allowed by permit or other authorization.
2. **Additions to the NFTS:** No unauthorized routes would be added to the NFTS as roads or motorized trails under this alternative.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** No additional motorized “Open Areas” would be established under this alternative.
4. **Changes to the NFTS:** No changes to the NFTS would be made in this alternative.
5. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** No amendments would be made to the Forest Plan.

Table 2-5 displays a summary of the actions proposed in this alternative. A map displaying this alternative is included in digital format on the CD attached to this document, and may be found in the Project Record located at the Tahoe National Forest Supervisors Office in Nevada City, California.

**Table 2-5. Alternative 3 - Summary of Actions**

Action type		Action Proposed
<b>1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)</b>		Prohibited on 836,000 acres
<b>2. Additions to the NFTS</b>	a. Roads added to the NFTS	0.0 (miles), 0 (trails)
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS	0.0 (miles), 0 (trails)
<b>3. Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”</b>		None
<b>4. Changes to the NFTS</b>	a. Passenger car roads where both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles will be allowed to use the same road	0.0 (miles)
	b. Passenger car roads that will be downgraded to high clearance roads so that both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles can use the same road	0.0 (miles)
	c. Change in Season of Use	0.00
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads	0.0 (miles), 0 (roads)
<b>5. Amendments to the Forest Plan</b>		None

## Alternative 4: Increased Resource Protection

Alternative 4 responds to issues of (1) adverse effects of motorized recreation use on non-motorized recreation experiences and (2) potential adverse impacts from motorized recreation use on natural and cultural resources. It addresses these issues by prohibiting cross country travel and adding fewer routes to the NFTS than the Proposed Action. Alternative 4 is based on the Proposed Action contained in the Notice of Intent as modified by an alternative submitted by an environmental group coalition during scoping.

1. **Cross Country Travel:** Public wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS trails, and outside established motorized use areas would be prohibited, except as allowed by permit or other authorization.
2. **Additions to the NFTS:**
  - a. Under this alternative, 85 segments of unauthorized routes totaling 3.7 miles would be added as roads open to high clearance vehicles to the NFTS.
  - b. 22.6 miles (27 routes) of unauthorized routes would be added as motorized trails to the NFTS.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** No additional motorized “Open Areas” would be established under this alternative.
4. **Changes to the NFTS:**
  - a. **Change Vehicle Classes through Mixed Use:** No changes would be made to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through approval of mixed use.

- b. **Change Vehicle Classes through Maintenance Levels:** Change vehicle class on 3.4 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through the conversion of ML 3 roads to ML 2. For each of these roads an entrance strategy (i.e. waterbars) and road conditions would be implemented to be consistent with use by high clearance vehicles. These roads would then be maintained as ML 2 to prevent unacceptable resource damage from occurring. Once the Forest Engineer determines these roads have reached ML 2 conditions they would be placed on the MVUM and signed as available for use by non-highway legal vehicles.
  - c. **Changes in Seasonal Restrictions:** Wet weather seasonal closures would be added from January 1 to May 31 in the Burlington area and January 1 to April 30 on the remainder of the Forest on native surface roads and motorized trails. A total of 1,312.1 total miles would have changes in seasonal restrictions.
  - d. **Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads:** One ML 1 road (.1 miles) would be reopened to motorized use.
5. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** No amendments would be made to the Forest Plan.

Table 2-6 displays a summary of the actions proposed in this alternative. A complete listing of roads, trails and areas to be added into the NFTS; including the vehicle class and, if applicable, seasonal use restrictions; can be found in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information). A map displaying this alternative is included in digital format on the CD attached to this document, and may be found in the Project Record located at the Tahoe National Forest Supervisors Office in Nevada City, California.

**Table 2-6. Alternative 4 - Summary of Actions**

Action type		Action Proposed
<b>1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)</b>		Prohibited on 836,000 acres
<b>2. Additions to the NFTS</b>	a. Roads added to the NFTS open to high clearance vehicles	3.7 (miles), 85 (roads)
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS	
	Trails open to high clearance trail vehicles	5.6 (miles), 19 (trails)
	Trails open to ATVs and motorcycles only	2.9 (miles), 1 (trail)
	Trails open to motorcycles only	14.1 (miles), 7 (trails)
	<b>Total all trails</b>	<b>22.6 (miles), 27 (trails)</b>
<b>3. Establishment of Motorized "Open Areas"</b>		None
<b>4. Changes to the NFTS</b>	a. Passenger car roads where both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles will be allowed to use the same road	0.0 (miles)
	b. Passenger car roads that will be downgraded to high clearance roads so that both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles can use the same road	3.4 (miles)
	c. Change in Season of Use	1,312.1 (miles)
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads as trails open to Motorcycles only	0.1 (miles), 1 (road)
<b>5. Amendments to the Forest Plan</b>		None

## Alternative 5: Increased Motorized Recreation Access plus Reopening Maintenance Level 1 and Temporary Roads

Alternative 5 responds to the issue of inadequate motorized recreation opportunities. This alternative is based on the Proposed Action contained in the Notice of Intent as modified by an alternative submitted by the Blue Ribbon Coalition during the scoping process. This alternative focuses on adding unauthorized routes to the NFTS and making changes to the existing NFTS to provide enhanced motorized vehicle access and motorized recreation opportunities across the Forest.

1. **Cross Country Travel:** Public wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS trails, and outside established motorized use areas would be prohibited, except as allowed by permit or other authorization.
2. **Additions to the NFTS:**
  - a. Under this alternative, 112 segments of unauthorized routes totaling 5.0 miles would be added as roads open to high clearance vehicles to the NFTS.
  - b. 75.4 miles (141 routes) of unauthorized routes would be added as motorized trails to the NFTS.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** No additional motorized “Open Areas” would be established under this alternative.
4. **Changes to the NFTS:**
  - a. **Change Vehicle Classes through Mixed Use:** Change vehicle class on 241.5 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through approval of mixed use.
  - b. **Change Vehicle Classes through Maintenance Levels:** Change vehicle class on 157.2 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through the conversion of ML 3 roads to ML 2. For each of these roads an entrance strategy (i.e. waterbars) and road conditions would be implemented to be consistent with use by high clearance vehicles. These roads would then be maintained as ML 2 to prevent unacceptable resource damage from occurring. Once the Forest Engineer determines these roads have reached ML 2 conditions they would be placed on the MVUM and signed as available for use by non-highway legal vehicles.
  - c. **Changes in Seasonal Restrictions:** Wet weather seasonal closures would be added from January 1 to May 31 in the Burlington area and January 1 to April 30 on the remainder of the Forest on native surface roads and motorized trails. A total of 1,396.7 total miles would have changes in seasonal restrictions.
  - d. **Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads:** One hundred thirteen ML 1 roads (93.4 miles) would be reopened to motorized use.
5. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** The Tahoe National Forest LRMP would be amended to remove the November 1 to May 1 seasonal closure in the Sugar Pine area (Management Area 84 Humbug Sailor) on key winter deer range.

Table 2-7 displays a summary of the actions proposed in this alternative. A complete listing of roads, trails and areas to be added into the NFTS; including the vehicle class and, if applicable, seasonal use restrictions; can be found in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information). A map displaying this alternative is included in digital format on the CD attached to this document, and may be found in the Project Record located at the Tahoe National Forest Supervisors Office in Nevada City, California.

**Table 2-7. Alternative 5 - Summary of Actions**

Action type		Action Proposed
<b>1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)</b>		Prohibited on 836,000 acres
<b>2. Additions to the NFTS</b>	a. Roads added to the NFTS open to high clearance vehicles	5.0 (miles), 112 (roads)
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS	
	Trails open to high clearance trail vehicles	44.7 (miles), 120 (trails)
	Trails open to ATVs and motorcycles only	4.8 (miles), 5 (trails)
	Trails open to motorcycles only	26.0 (miles), 16 (trails)
	<b>Total all trails</b>	<b>75.4 (miles), 141 (trails)</b>
<b>3. Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”</b>		None
<b>4. Changes to the NFTS</b>	a. Passenger car roads where both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles will be allowed to use the same road	241.5 (miles)
	b. Passenger car roads that will be downgraded to high clearance roads so that both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles can use the same road	157.2 (miles)
	c. Change in Season of Use	1,396.7 (miles)
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads (total)	93.4 (miles), 113 (roads)
	(as Roads open to all vehicles)	79.3 (miles)
	(as Trails open to ATVs and motorcycles only)	13.9 (miles)
	(as Trails open to motorcycles only)	0.1 (miles)
<b>5. Amendments to the Forest Plan</b>		Management Area 84 (Humbug Sailor) Deer Winter Range Seasonal Restriction Removed

## Alternative 6: Preferred Alternative Motorized Access and Resource Protection

Alternative 6 is the preferred alternative. It responds to issues of providing motorized public access and recreation opportunities while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources. It is designed to provide a diversity of road and trail opportunities for experiencing a variety of environments and modes of travel consistent with the National Forest’s recreation role and land capability. Alternative 6 would provide motorized access to dispersed recreation opportunities (camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, etc.) and a diversity of motorized recreation opportunities (4WD Vehicles, motorcycles, ATVs, passenger vehicles, and so forth).

1. **Cross Country Travel:** Public wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS trails, and outside established motorized use areas would be prohibited, except as allowed by permit or other authorization.
2. **Additions to the NFTS:**
  - a. Under this alternative, 346 segments of unauthorized routes totaling 13.1 miles would be added as roads open to high clearance vehicles to the NFTS.
  - b. 48.3 miles (106 routes) of unauthorized routes would be added as motorized trails to the NFTS.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** Under this alternative, three areas totaling 244 acres would be established as motorized “Open Areas” open to highway legal vehicles only.
4. **Changes to the NFTS:**
  - a. **Change Vehicle Classes through Mixed Use:** Change vehicle class on 130.8 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFS roads where such use is currently prohibited through approval of mixed use. Of this total, approximately 117.5 miles would be open to mixed use only during deer hunting season (September 22 to November 4). Outside of hunting season, these roads would be open to highway legal vehicles only.
  - b. **Change Vehicle Classes through Maintenance Levels:** Change vehicle class on 122.0 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through the conversion of ML 3 roads to ML 2. For each of these roads an entrance strategy (i.e. waterbars) and road conditions would be implemented to be consistent with use by high clearance vehicles. These roads would then be maintained as ML 2 to prevent unacceptable resource damage from occurring. Once the Forest Engineer determines these roads have reached ML 2 conditions they would be placed on the MVUM and signed as available for use by non-highway legal vehicles.
  - c. **Changes in Seasonal Restrictions:** Wet weather seasonal closures from January 1 to May 31 in the Burlington area and January 1 to April 30 on the remainder of the Forest on native surface roads and motorized trails would be added to minimize erosion and protect water quality. In addition, over the snow travel would be permitted on 3.6 miles of the Fordyce Jeep trail when 15 inches of snow is present on the ground. A total of 1,369.5 total miles would have changes to seasonal restrictions.
  - d. **Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads:** Thirteen ML 1 roads (11.4 miles) would be reopened to motorized use.
5. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** The Tahoe National Forest LRMP would be amended to remove the November 1 to May 1 seasonal closure in the Sugar Pine area (Management Area 84 Humbug Sailor) on key winter deer range.

Table 2-8 displays a summary of the actions proposed in this alternative. A complete listing of roads, trails and areas to be added into the NFTS; including the vehicle class and, if applicable, seasonal use restrictions; can be found in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information). A map

displaying this alternative is included in digital format on the CD attached to this document, and may be found in the Project Record located at the Tahoe National Forest Supervisors Office in Nevada City, California.

**Table 2-8. Alternative 6 - Summary of Actions**

Action type		Action Proposed
<b>1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)</b>		Prohibited on 835,800 acres
<b>2. Additions to the NFTS</b>	a. Roads added to the NFTS open to high clearance vehicles	13.1 (miles), 346 (roads)
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS Trails open to high clearance trail vehicles Trails open to ATVs and motorcycles only Trails open to motorcycles only <b>Total all trails</b>	22.6 (miles), 89 (trails) 4.8 (miles), 5 (trails) 20.9 (miles), 12 (trails) <b>48.3 (miles), 106 (trails)</b>
<b>3. Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”</b>		Prosser, Boca and Stampede Reservoirs (244 acres)
<b>4. Changes to the NFTS</b>	a. Passenger car roads where both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles will be allowed to use the same road	130.8 (miles)
	b. Passenger car roads that will be downgraded to high clearance roads so that both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles can use the same road	122.0 (miles)
	c. Change in Season of Use	1,369.5 (miles)
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads (total) (as roads open to all vehicles) (as trails open to ATV’s and motorcycles only) (as trails open to motorcycles only)	11.4 (miles), 13 (roads) 2.7 (miles) 8.5 (miles) 0.1 (miles)
<b>5. Amendments to the Forest Plan</b>		Management Area 84 (Humbug Sailor) Deer Winter Range Seasonal Restriction Removed

## Alternative 7: Proposed Action as Identified in Notice of Intent (NOI)

Alternative 7 is the Proposed Action as published in the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register.

1. **Cross Country Travel:** Public wheeled motor vehicle travel off designated NFTS roads, NFTS trails, and outside established motorized use areas would be prohibited, except as allowed by permit or other authorization.
2. **Additions to the NFTS:**
  - a. Under this alternative, no unauthorized routes would be added as roads to the NFTS.
  - b. 36.7 miles (36 routes) of unauthorized routes would be added as motorized trails to the NFTS.
3. **Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”:** No additional motorized “Open Areas” would be established under this alternative.

4. **Changes to the NFTS:**
  - a. **Change Vehicle Classes through Mixed Use:** No changes would be made to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFS roads, where such use is currently prohibited, through approval of mixed use.
  - b. **Change Vehicle Classes through Maintenance Levels:** Change vehicle class on 3.4 miles to allow licensed operators of non-highway legal vehicles to operate on NFTS roads where such use is currently prohibited through the conversion of ML 3 roads to ML 2. For each of these roads an entrance strategy (i.e. waterbars) and road conditions would be implemented to be consistent with use by high clearance vehicles. These roads would then be maintained as ML 2 to prevent unacceptable resource damage from occurring. Once the Forest Engineer determines these roads have reached ML 2 conditions they would be placed on the MVUM and signed as available for use by non-highway legal vehicles.
  - c. **Changes in Seasonal Restrictions:** No changes in seasonal restrictions would be made.
  - d. **Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads:** Two ML 1 roads (1.1 miles) would be reopened to motorized use.
5. **Amendments to the Forest Plan:** No amendments would be made to the Forest Plan.

Table 2-9 displays a summary of the actions proposed in this alternative. A complete listing of roads, trails and areas to be added into the NFTS; including the vehicle class and, if applicable, seasonal use restrictions; can be found in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information). A map displaying this alternative is included in digital format on the CD attached to this document, and may be found in the Project Record located at the Tahoe National Forest Supervisors Office in Nevada City, California.

**Table 2-9. Alternative 7 - Summary of Actions**

Action type		Action Proposed
<b>1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)</b>		Prohibited on 836,000 acres
<b>2. Additions to the NFTS</b>	a. Roads added to the NFTS open to high clearance vehicles	0.0 (miles), 0 (roads)
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS	
	Trails open to high clearance trail vehicles	16.9 (miles), 26 (trails)
	Trails open to ATVs and motorcycles only	3.4 (miles), 2 (trails)
	Trails open to motorcycles only	16.4 (miles), 8 (trails)
	<b>Total all trails</b>	<b>36.7 (miles) 36 (trails)</b>
<b>3. Establishment of Motorized "Open Areas"</b>		None
<b>4. Changes to the NFTS</b>	a. Passenger car roads where both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles will be allowed to use the same road	0.0 (miles)
	b. Passenger car roads that will be downgraded to high clearance roads so that both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles can use the same road	3.4 (miles)
	c. Change in Season of Use	0.0 (miles)
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads (total)	1.1 (miles) 2 (roads)
	(as roads open to all vehicles)	0.9 (miles)
	(as trails open to motorcycles only)	0.1 (miles)
<b>5. Amendments to the Forest Plan</b>		None

## Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study \_\_\_\_\_

NEPA requires that Federal agencies rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). Public comments and internal scoping suggested the alternatives and are briefly described below along with a brief response discussing the reasons for eliminating them from detailed study.

### **Alternative A: Prohibit OHV (Non-Highway Legal) Use**

This alternative would prohibit all non-highway legal use and allow only highway legal vehicles on the Tahoe National Forest.

**Response:** Prohibiting all non-highway legal vehicles does not meet the purpose and need for this project to provide a diversity of motorized recreation. OHVs (4X4 vehicles, motorcycles, ATVs) are an important component of the diversity of motorized recreation. Also, it is not consistent with California Vehicle Code or Forest Service policy.

### **Alternative B: Add All Unauthorized Routes to the System**

This alternative would add all existing unauthorized routes to the NFTS. It would also include contingent motorized access based on acquiring rights-of-way.

**Response:** Adding all unauthorized routes to the system does not meet the purpose and need for this project to make limited changes to the existing NFTS and identify existing routes for addition to the NFTS since it fails to address the criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 212, Subpart B of the Travel Management Rule. Also, it is not consistent with the Forest Plan direction for Restricted Motor Vehicle Travel Management (TNF LRMP 2007 as amended). Not all unauthorized routes are properly located to sustain motorized use and protect resources. The Forest Service does not have the authority to add routes to the system without a public right-of-way and current policy does not provide for adding routes contingent on future rights-of-way acquisition.

### **Alternative C: Trigger Seasonal Closure on and off throughout the Wet Season**

This alternative would close native surfaced roads when 1 inch of rain or more fell within a 24-hour time period. The roads would remain closed for 48 hours and then re-open. This closure would only occur during the wet season, generally November through mid May on the TNF.

**Response:** Seasonal closures are used to reduce wildlife disturbance; reduce soil compaction during wet weather; and, provide for public safety by closing routes during wet winter weather conditions when general motorized travel is considered unsafe. This type of triggered closure does not address rain events outside of the wet season. It does not respond to wildlife or soil resource protection issues, and it does not provide for public safety. In addition, implementation of rainfall based restrictions are not practical for many for many reasons including; 1) rainfall amounts vary locally, 2) soil conditions vary depending on

aspect and soil type and 3) difficulty of on-again off-again enforcement. Alternatives 1, 4 and 5 incorporate this concept to deal with rain events during the proposed season of use.

### **Alternative D: New Route Construction**

This alternative (developed through internal scoping based on public comments) would identify and include new route construction to complete loops, connect trails and bypass private property where no public right-of-way exists.

**Response:** New route construction is outside the scope of the purpose and need for this project to make limited changes to the existing NFTS and identifying existing routes for addition to the NFTS. New trail construction is identified as a potential future project and discussed in the cumulative effects analysis in Alternatives 1 and 4.

### **Alternative E: Non-Motorized**

This alternative would prohibit motorized use on the National Forest.

**Response:** The prohibition of motorized use across the entire National Forest is outside the scope of the purpose and need for this project to provide a diversity of motorized recreation and make limited changes to the existing NFTS. Also, it is not consistent with Forest Service policy (FSM 7702) which states in part: “The objectives of managing the forest transportation system and motor vehicle use on NFS roads, on NFS trails, and in areas on NFS lands are: 1. To provide sustainable access in a fiscally responsible manner to NFS lands for administration, protection, utilization, and enjoyment of NFS lands and resources consistent with the applicable land management plan. 2. To manage the forest transportation system and motorized and non-motorized uses on NFS roads, on NFS trails, and in areas on NFS lands within the environmental capabilities of the land.”

### **Alternative F: Grandfather User-Created Routes into the NFTS and Conditionally Add Routes Pending Further Analysis and Mitigation**

Suggested by the Blue Ribbon Coalition and other advocates of motorized recreation, this alternative would consider that many so-called “user-created” routes are actually Forest Service “facilities” since the agency expended appropriated funds to place them on previous or current maps or are/were maintained by Federal agents. Hence, these facilities are by definition actually system routes and should not be analyzed as unauthorized or “user-created” routes. This alternative would also convert “roads-to-single track trails” or “roads-to-motorized trails less than 50 inches in width” and “roads managed as motorized trails greater than 50 inches in width” to help achieve FS budget objectives while still providing a substantive recreational route network.

**Response:** Adding all unauthorized routes to the system is not feasible as many do not currently meet Forest Plan direction. Even though many of these routes have been in existence for a number of years, they were not evaluated for suitability as OHV trails and were not added to the system. They cannot be “grandfathered” into the system. Alternative 5 incorporates many of the proposed additions and other

components of this alternative. Also, it is against Forest Service policy to add routes to its transportation system that do not have legal access.

### **Alternative G: Add All Routes Receiving OHV Use**

Suggested by the Blue Ribbon Coalition and other advocates of motorized recreation, this alternative would designate, at a minimum, all of the system or facility roads and trails receiving current OHV use unless the individual route is causing a “considerable adverse affect.” It would designate the maximum number of important and historic user-created routes as identified by the public and re-open old existing trails that connect to worthwhile destinations. If a considerable adverse effect is found, review for mitigation (re-route, maintenance, closure, etc.).

**Response:** In addition to the Response to Alternative F (above), adding all routes receiving current OHV use is not consistent with the Forest Plan direction for Restricted Motor Vehicle Travel Management (TNF LRMP 2007 as amended). Some roads were identified in the 2006 OHV inventory as having OHV use. These roads previously closed under other NEPA decisions will not be re-opened. Alternative 4 incorporates some components of this alternative.

### **Alternative H: Close and Decommission NFTS Roads and Trails to Reduce Resource Impacts**

Suggested by the Wilderness Society and others, this alternative would close and decommission a number of roads and trails to reduce road density and disturbance to wildlife; prevent incursions into Wild and Scenic River corridors through road closures; reduce access adjacent to Wilderness through road closures; not add trails that are in Roadless Areas; implement a seasonal closure for the protection of wildlife; and, allow some number of motorized trails to be added to the NFTS.

**Response:** Decommissioning existing NFTS roads is outside the scope of the purpose and need for this project to make limited changes to the existing NFTS. Other resource management considerations are necessary to determine whether a route should be decommissioned (e.g. fuel treatment, vegetation management, fire suppression, special uses, special forest products, etc.) and those activities are outside the scope of this decision. Alternative 4 includes some components of this alternative.

### **Alternative I: Travel Corridors**

This alternative (developed through internal scoping based on public comments and developed as part of the Proposed Action described in the NOI) would prohibit cross country motor vehicle travel off NFTS roads and NFTS trails by the public except to allow vehicle access and parking up to 100 feet off NFTS routes for motorized dispersed camping.

**Response:** Allowing travel corridors on all routes, as an exception to prohibition of cross country motor vehicle travel, was proposed in the NOI as a way to possibly implement Forest Plan direction. Further review of this concept and public comments revealed a necessity to complete a more detailed and time consuming site-specific analysis covering thousands of acres where motor vehicles would be allowed to travel off NFTS roads. Potential impacts to cultural resources, threatened and endangered

species, wildlife and other resources would need to be analyzed. Based on recent evaluations of the timeline, budget and organizational capacity constraints, it is not feasible for the Forest to complete the required site-specific analysis needed to implement a travel corridor concept at this time. In its place, the Forest developed a strategy to provide access by proposing as many unauthorized recreational access spur routes as possible within the limited timeframe to complete this analysis. A limited number of routes were inventoried, evaluated and incorporated into Alternatives 1 and 4. Further inventory of recreational access routes is ongoing and is not precluded from future consideration in a subsequent NEPA analysis.

### **Alternative J: Designate Staging Areas in Addition to Proposed Routes and NFTS Changes**

This alternative was developed in response to comments received during scoping from people who would like staging areas designated in addition to proposed routes and NFTS changes.

**Response:** Designation of staging areas is outside the scope of this process. OHV users may stage from existing designated roads if they are within about 30 feet of the road. Separate staging areas would require construction, signing, and possibly other improvements. If needed in the future, such areas will be analyzed and authorized under separate analysis processes.

### **Alternative K: Allow Cross Country Motorized Use off Designated Routes in order to Retrieve Legally Taken Big Game Animals**

This alternative was developed in response to comments received during scoping from people who would like to utilize motorized vehicles off designated routes to retrieve downed big game.

**Response:** Allowing motorized off-road travel to any site where an animal is taken means that all lands on the Forest would be open to off-road vehicle use (for a specific purpose) during hunting season. While the period of use would be limited (+/- 8 weeks for rifle and archery seasons), the resulting impacts are considered to be similar to, but less intense than, those that would occur under the No Action Alternative. In addition enforcement would be difficult, if not impossible.

### **Alternative L: Responsible Recreation Alternative**

The Responsible Recreation Alternative would consider the value of historic human experience in the forest (including the 1850s). Such an alternative would provide the public with needed access to the Tahoe National Forest while meeting the ultimate goal of prohibiting cross country travel. All requested trails are currently in use, and user maintained as also demonstrated by the fact they were included in the inventory.

**Response:** The Responsible Recreation Alternative was considered but eliminated from detailed study due to its lack of site specificity in any actual proposals or recommendations. There was not sufficient substance to this proposal to judge its merits. In addition, the goals and objectives of this alternative were incorporated into Alternative 5.

## Alternative M: Stewards of the Sierra Alternative

Suggested by the Stewards of the Sierra, this alternative addresses issues and resource concerns raised in the DEIS. It prohibits cross country use, and meets public motorized access needs.

**Response:** This alternative was considered but eliminated from detailed study. Each of the site specific recommendations contained in this alternative were incorporated into the changes made to the Preferred Alternative including additional motorized access opportunities. The rationale for each of the site specific proposals in this alternative is described in Appendix A (Site Specific Road, Trail and Open Area Information) and/or the Project Record.

## Comparison of Alternatives

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This section of Chapter 2 compares the alternatives by summarizing key differences between the alternatives and provides a summary of the effects analysis for all alternatives. See Table 2-10 for the summary of proposed actions by alternative. See Table 2-11 for the summary comparison of NFTS road mileage by class of vehicle and season of use. See Table 2-12 for the summary comparison of NFTS motorized trail mileage by class of vehicle and season of use. See Table 2-13 for the criteria for adding motorized trails to the NFTS and establishing lands as “Open Areas.”

Table 2-10. Summary of Proposed Actions by Alternative

Action type		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
<b>1. Cross Country Travel (Acres)</b>		Prohibitions continue 81,975 acres  Continues on 754,066 acres	Prohibited on 833,392 acres  2,649 acres established open	Prohibited on 836,000 acres  <100 acres established open	Prohibited on 836,000 acres  <100 acres established open	Prohibited on 836,000 acres  <100 acres established open	Prohibited on 835,800 acres  <300 acres established open	Prohibited on 836,000 acres  <100 acres established open
<b>2. Additions to the NFTS</b>	a. Roads added to the NFTS (Number of Miles)	0.0	5.0	0.00	3.7	5.0	13.1	0.00
	(Number of Roads)	0	114	0	85	112	346	0
	b. Motorized Trails added to the NFTS (Number of Miles)	0.0	54.6	0.0	22.6	75.4	48.3	36.7
	(Number of Trails)	0	87	0	27	141	106	36
<b>3. Establishment of Motorized “Open Areas”</b>		None	Greenhorn Area (60 acres) Prosser, Boca and Stampede Reservoirs (2,589 acres)	None	None	None	Prosser, Boca and Stampede Reservoirs (244 acres)	None

Action type		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
<b>4. Changes to the NFTS</b>	a. Change in Class of Vehicles resulting from approval of mixed use	0.0	241.5	0.0	0.0	241.5	130.8	0.0
	b. Change in Class of Vehicles resulting from changes in maintenance levels	0.0	157.2	0.00	3.4	157.2	122.0	3.4
	c. Change in Season of Use	0.0	10.5	0.00	1,312.1	1,396.7	1,369.5	0.00
	d. Reopening Maintenance Level 1 Roads (Number of Miles) (Number of Roads)	0.0 0	0.0 0	0.0 0	0.1 1	93.4 113	11.4 13	1.1 2
<b>5. Amendments to the Forest Plan</b>		None	Management Area 84 (Humbug Sailor) Deer Winter Range Seasonal Restriction Removed	None	None	Management Area 84 (Humbug Sailor) Deer Winter Range Seasonal Restriction Removed	Management Area 84 (Humbug Sailor) Deer Winter Range Seasonal Restriction Removed	None

Table 2-11. Summary Comparison of NFTS Road Mileage by Class of vehicle and Season of Use

Class of Vehicle	Season of Use	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
<b>Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only</b>	Apr. 1 - Sep. 15	5.2	0.0	5.2	5.2	0.0	0.0	5.2
	Apr. 1 - Dec. 31	88.1	31.4	88.1	88.1	31.4	59.1	88.1
	May 1 - Dec. 31	150.7	29.7	150.7	150.7	29.7	57.9	150.7
	May 1 - Nov. 1	21.3	15.8	21.3	21.3	15.8	17.0	21.3
	All Year	351.4	141.4	351.4	348.1	141.4	230.2	348.1
<b>Roads Open to All Vehicles</b>	Jun. 1 - Nov. 1	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Aug. 1 - Dec. 31	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
	May 1 - Jun. 15 & Jul. 15 - Dec. 31	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Apr. 1 - Sep. 15	0.8	6.0	0.8	0.8	6.0	6.0	0.8
	Apr. 1 - Dec. 31	54.9	111.7	54.9	87.4	144.3	798.4	54.9
	May 1 - Dec. 31	268.0	389.7	268.0	1,286.2	1,563.4	715.6	268.0
	May 1 – Nov. 1	69.9	65.1	69.9	70.1	73.9	63.7	69.9
	May 1 – Sep. 15	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3
	All Year	1,044.0	1,268.2	1,044.0	0.0	132.6	4.6	1,048.3
<b>Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only except open to all vehicles during deer season (9/22-11/4)</b>		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.2	0.0
<b>Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only 5/1-9/21; All vehicles during deer season 9/22-11/4; and Highway legal vehicles 11/5-12/31.</b>		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	43.3	0.0
<b>Total NFTS Roads</b>		<b>2,067.6</b>	<b>2,072.6</b>	<b>2,067.6</b>	<b>2,071.3</b>	<b>2,152.0</b>	<b>2,083.4</b>	<b>2,068.5</b>

Note: numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Table 2-12. Summary Comparison of NFTS Motorized Trail Mileage by Class of Vehicle and Season of Use

Class of Vehicle	Season of Use	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Trails Open to High Clearance Trail Vehicles (4WD, ATV & Motorcycle)	May 1 – Jun. 15 & Jul. 15 – Dec. 1	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Apr. 1 – Dec. 31 & When 15" snow present	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0
	Apr. 1 – Dec. 31	4.8	4.8	4.8	5.1	6.1	88.5	4.8
	May 1 – Dec. -31	24.0	32.3	24.0	128.9	166.8	58.9	31.4
	May 1 – Nov. 1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
	May 1 – Sep. 15	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
	All Year	99.6	115.5	99.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	109.0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>133.9</b>	<b>158.1</b>	<b>133.9</b>	<b>139.5</b>	<b>178.6</b>	<b>156.4</b>	<b>150.7</b>
Trails Open to ATV's and Motorcycles Only	Apr. 1 – Dec. 31	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	34.2	2.2
	May 1 – Dec. 31	3.6	4.6	3.6	26.2	41.9	4.6	3.6
	All Year	19.6	23.1	19.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.1
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>28.9</b>
Trails Open to Motorcycles Only	Apr. 1 – Dec. 31	1.0	1.0	1.0	29.0	40.2	157.8	1.0
	May 1 – Dec. 31	18.1	28.0	18.1	150.8	151.4	28.8	24.7
	May 1 – Nov. 1	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
	All Year	146.4	162.5	146.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	156.4
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>168.8</b>	<b>194.8</b>	<b>168.8</b>	<b>183.1</b>	<b>194.9</b>	<b>189.9</b>	<b>185.4</b>
<b>Total NFTS Trails</b>		<b>328.1</b>	<b>382.8</b>	<b>328.1</b>	<b>351.0</b>	<b>417.6</b>	<b>385.1</b>	<b>365</b>

Note: numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Table 2-13. Criteria for additions to the NFTS, re-opening Maintenance Level 1 roads and establishing lands as “Open Areas”

Criteria	Alt 2	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Site specifically recommended by the public during collaboration meetings held prior to the NOI	X	X	X	X	X
Site specifically recommended by the public during scoping on the Proposed Action in the NOI	X	X	X	X	X
Consistent with Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines	X	X	X	X	X
No significant resource concerns which could not be mitigated at this time	X	X	X	X	X
If access is required across private land, private landowner has not expressed opposition to public access	X	X	X	X	X
Not closed by a previous Forest Order	X	X	X	X	X
Not already a NFTS non-motorized trail	X	X	X	X	X
Not closed or scheduled for decommissioning in a recent NEPA decision (last 15 years)	X	X	X	X	X
No unacceptable public safety risks	X	X	X	X	X
Not adverse impacts to Lahontan Cutthroat Trout	X	X	X	X	X
Does not require new construction or significant re-routing	X	X	X	X	X
Previous NFTS road still receiving motorized use in the Cal-Ida, French Meadows, Mosquito Ridge or Boca/Prosser/ Stampede Reservoir areas			X		
Trail gradient less than 15%		X			
Not located within an Inventoried Roadless Area		X			
No significant impact on Inventoried Roadless Area characteristics				X	X
Not located within a Citizens Inventoried Roadless Area		X			
Not located within a proposed or designated Wild & Scenic River		X			
Provides a high quality off highway vehicle recreation opportunity				X	
Maintains the “Outstandingly Remarkable Values” of proposed and designated Wild & Scenic River	X		X	X	X
Not located within a California Spotted Owl or northern goshawk protected activity center (PAC)		X			
Not redundant with an existing NFTS road or motorized trail open to all vehicles				X	
No mitigation measures which could not implemented in a cost effective manner				X	
No conflicts with an approved mining Plan of Operation				X	
Does not encourage non-highway legal vehicles to use a road designated for highway legal vehicles only				X	

Criteria for Alternatives 1 and 3: No motorized roads or trails would be added to the NFTS. No additional lands would be established as “Open Areas.”

Table 2-14 below summarizes the effects analysis for all the resources by ranking each alternative regarding how well it provides for each of the indicators. The following rankings were used: A score of 7 indicates the alternative has the least impact for the resource related to the indicator. A score of 1 indicates the alternative has the greatest adverse impact for the resource. This information is listed at the end of

each resource section in Chapter 3, which describes the environmental consequences of the alternatives in detail.

**Table 2-14. Comparison Summary of Effects to All Resources across All Alternatives**

Indicator	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Air Quality	1	3	7	6	2	4	5
Soil Resources	1.2	2.4	5.4	5.4	3.4	4.0	4.2
Hydrology Resources	1	2	7	6	3	4	5
Terrestrial Species	1	3.6	7	6	2.2	3.2	5
Aquatic Species	1	3.2	7	6	2	3.8	5
Fire and Fuels Management	4	4.5	4	4	4	2.5	5
Heritage Resources	1	2	7	5	4	3	6
Plant Communities	1	3	7	5.8	2	4.4	4.8
Recreation - non-motorized	1	3	7	6	2	4	5
Recreation - motorized	7	4	1	2	6	5	3
Visual Resources	1	4	7	6	2	3	5
Transportation	5.7	3.3	5.3	4	3	3.7	3
Inventoried Roadless & Special Areas	1	3	5	7	2	6	4
Adjacent Ownerships	1	3.5	7	6	2	4	4.5
Society, Culture & Economy	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Table 2-15 provides a summary comparison of the key environmental effects and outputs for each affected resource by alternative. This information is presented in detail in each resource section in Chapter 3.

Table 2-15. Summary comparison of key environmental outputs and effects for specific resources by alternative

Resource Indicator Measure		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Air Quality	Amount of Native Surface Roads, Trails and Areas Open to Motorized Vehicles (Fugitive Dust)	5,293.8	4,053.5	3,595.6	3,625.3	4,167.8	3,803.4	3,636.7
	Native Surface Roads, Trails on Lands “Most Likely” to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos	121.0	76.1	67.4	70.3	77.5	73.0	70.9
Watershed	Amount of Native Surface Roads by Erosion Hazard Rating							
	Very High	287	205	176	176	215	179	177
	High	3,896	2,975	2,624	2,649	3,054	2,791	2,657
	Moderate	1,042	828	752	759	854	787	758
	None	59	42	38	39	42	40	40
	Cumulative Watershed Effects (Equivalent Road Acres)	16,030.1	13,253.7	13,179.5	13,205.9	13,446.3	13,275.9	13,219.6
Terrestrial Species	Old Forest Emphasis Areas within a 200-meter Zone of Influence of All motorized Routes (percent)	55%	39%	38%	38%	40%	39%	38%
	Motorized and Non-motorized Routes within Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers (miles)	293.5	199.5	195.4	195.4	214.0	199.2	198.6
Aquatic Species	Native Surface Stream Crossings (number of crossings)	3,310	2,593	2,462	2,480	2,622	2,580	2,481
	Native surface routes open to motorized use in RCA's (miles)	800	519.3	472.7	480.3	543.7	507.0	481.5
Cultural Resources	Cultural resource sites potentially impacted and/or requiring mitigation (number of sites)	926	110	0	25	104	90	18
Botany Resources	Sensitive/watchlist species and/or watchlist plant communities located within 0-100 feet of routes with weed occurrences within 0-100 feet of the route (relative amount)	Highest	High	Lowest	Low	High	Moderate	Low

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Resource Indicator Measure		Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
<b>Motorized Recreation Opportunities</b>	<b>NFTS Year round road and trail motorized opportunities (miles)*</b>	1,661.1	1,710.6	1,661.1	348.1	274.0	234.8	1,684.8
	<b>NFTS Seasonal road and trail motorized opportunities (miles)</b>	734.7	744.7	734.7	2,074.1	2,295.6	2,233.7	748.8
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2,395.8</b>	<b>2,455.3</b>	<b>2,395.8</b>	<b>2,422.2</b>	<b>2,569.6</b>	<b>2,468.5</b>	<b>2,433.6</b>
	<b>“Open Areas” (acres)</b>	754,066	2,649	<100	<100	<100	244	<100
	<b>Dispersed recreation sites with motorized access (number of sites)**</b>	N/A	182	0	107	188	437	29
<b>Non-motorized “Quiet” Recreation Opportunities</b>	<b>National Forest System (NFS) lands greater than ½ mile from any motorized road or trail (percentage of NFS lands)</b>	12.2%	16.6%	16.9%	16.8%	16.1%	16.7%	16.6%
<b>Affordability</b>	<b>Annual Operation and Maintenance Cost (millions of dollars)</b>	\$10.7	\$9.3	\$10.7	\$10.7	\$9.4	\$9.7	\$10.8
<b>Inventoried Roadless Areas</b>	<b>Total motorized roads and trails within Inventoried Roadless Areas (miles)</b>	206.9	156.6	149.0	149.0	160.3	152.6	155.2
<b>Social Impacts</b>	<b>Support for the lifestyles of motorized use advocates</b>	Substantial	General	Little	Little	General	General	General
	<b>Support for the lifestyles of non-motorized use advocates</b>	Little	Little	General	General	Little	General	General

\* Alternative 1 includes unauthorized routes and closed NFTS roads still receiving some motorized use

\*\* Under Alternative 1, access to dispersed recreation sites would continue. The number of sites accessed is difficult to determine. With continued cross country motorized travel under Alternative 1, access to dispersed recreation sites would be available on lands open to cross country motorized travel.

