



Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

March 2010



Record of Decision

Black Hills National Forest Travel Management Plan

Black Hills National Forest
Custer, South Dakota



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 General Location	1
1.2 Purpose and Need	1
1.3 Proposed Action	2
2. Decision and Rationale	4
2.1 My Decision	4
2.2 Rationale for My Decision	9
3. Public Involvement	19
3.1 Scoping	19
3.2 Draft Environmental Impact Statement	20
3.3 Response to DEIS, and Changes from Draft to Final	20
4. Alternatives Analyzed in Detail	20
4.1 Alternative A, No Action	20
4.2 Alternative B	21
4.3 Alternative C	21
4.4 Alternative D	21
4.5 Alternative E	21
4.6 Alternative B, as Modified – the Selected Alternative	21
5. Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study	22
6. Environmentally Preferred Alternative	22
7. Findings Required by Laws and Regulations	22
7.1 Clean Air Act of 1970	22
7.2 Clean Water Act	22
7.3 Endangered Species Act of 1973	23
7.4 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969	23
7.5 National Forest Management Act of 1976	23
7.6 National Historic Preservation Act of 1966	24
7.7 Other Laws and Executive Orders	25
8. Implementation	25
8.1 Implementation Date	26
9. Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities	26
10. Contacts	27
11. Signature and Date	27
Appendix A: Design Criteria and Mitigation	29
Appendix B: Forest Plan Changes for Forest Management	37
Appendix C: Record of Decision Map Packet	41

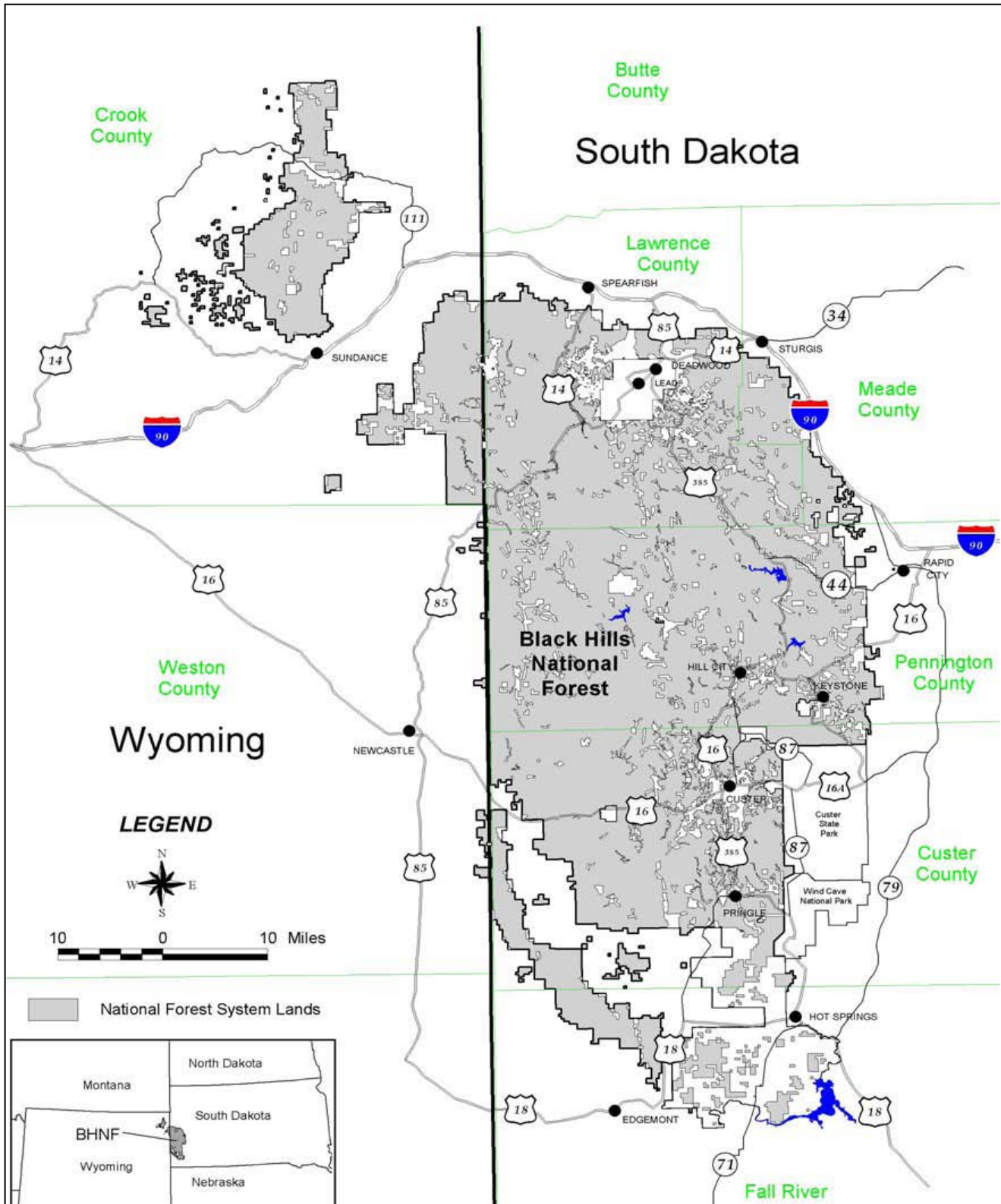


Figure 1. Black Hills National Forest planning area (Source: USDA Forest Service 2004)

Black Hills National Forest Travel Management Plan Record of Decision

Custer, Fall River, Lawrence, Meade and Pennington Counties, South Dakota and Crook and Weston Counties, Wyoming

Lead Agency:	USDA Forest Service Black Hills National Forest
Responsible Official:	Craig Bobzien, Forest Supervisor 1019 N 5 th Street, Custer, SD 57730
For Information Contact:	Tom Willems, Travel Management Planner (605) 673-9217

1. Introduction

1.1 General Location

The project area consists of Federal public lands managed by the Black Hills National Forest (Forest), comprising approximately 1.2 million acres in western South Dakota and eastern Wyoming. The bulk of the Forest is located in a contiguous block in western South Dakota, with parcels in eastern Wyoming, including the Bear Lodge Mountains. The gross area within the administrative boundary of the Forest is 1.5 million acres. Approximately 300,000 acres of lands of other ownerships lie within the Black Hills. Most of the lands on the periphery of the Forest are also nonfederal land and privately owned. Many of the private lands near and within the Forest boundary are subdivided residential properties, small businesses, recreational ranches, and small working ranches. Figure 1 is a vicinity map of the planning area.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this action is to improve management of motorized vehicle use on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Black Hills National Forest in accordance with regulations at 36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295, and as described in “Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule” (Federal Register, Vol. 70 No. 216; the 2005 Travel Management Rule, or, the Rule). This action is needed to:

- Identify an official travel system and update the Forest travel map.
- Develop a transportation system to meet the increasing demand for recreational travel opportunities and to provide a range of quality experiences for a wide variety of Forest users.
- Reduce adverse impacts caused by unmanaged cross-country and road and trail usage in order to maintain and conserve the condition of ecosystems and watersheds.
- Specify roads, trails, and areas open to motorized use.
- Closely align travel and recreation opportunities offered to the public with the Forest's management capability.

The purpose and need is explained in more detail in Chapter 1 of the final environmental impact statement (FEIS).

1.3 Proposed Action

Alternative B represents the action proposed by the Forest Service to the public in 2007 with some modifications based on further public input. Alternative B was developed to meet the purpose and need. It would designate certain roads and trails open to motorized vehicle travel on lands administered by the Forest. Designation includes assigning a class of vehicle and season of use to these designated roads or trails. The agency proposed a well-designed “active” motorized travel system to improve the current “passive” or unmanaged off-highway vehicle use. An active system would meet a variety of motorized and nonmotorized recreation needs and desires while reducing effects of motorized recreation on natural resources and neighbors (see “National Forest Advisory Board Recommendations” below). Alternative B is described in detail in Chapter 2 of the EIS, along with other alternatives that were considered in making this decision.

The proposed action would increase the miles of motorized trails from the current 36 miles to 663 miles, and decrease the road system from 3,740 miles to 3,466 miles. Trails would provide users a variety of experiences by identifying trails open to all, trails for motorcycles, and trails for varying width of vehicles. The specific mileages for these routes are shown in Table 1 in the ROD, and in Chapter 2 of the EIS. Routes open to public use would be officially designated on a Forest motor vehicle use map (MVUM). Routes not shown on the motor vehicle use map would not be available for motorized use. The motor vehicle use map would be the primary tool used to determine compliance and enforcement with motorized travel designations on the ground. Limited cross-country travel would be allowed on 179,000 acres of NFS land for the purposes of game retrieval, elk only, and dispersed camping. This would reduce cross-country travel from the current year-round 864,000 acres, with the intent to reduce impacts to cultural sites, reduce user conflicts, and improve soil, water, and other natural resource conditions.

A Forest Plan amendment would be required to implement the proposed action. Changes to existing Forest Plan direction would take two general forms. First, where existing objectives provide quantities for road and trail mileage and cross-country area, these would be amended to conform to the quantities provided by this alternative. Second, certain standards and guidelines would be updated to conform to the Rule and amended regulations, to provide that motorized vehicle use would be allowed on roads, trails, and areas only as shown on the motor vehicle use map or as contained in a Forest Travel Order.

1.3.1 National Forest Advisory Board Recommendations

The Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB), authorized by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, is comprised of 16 members representing diverse interests in South Dakota and Wyoming. The Board was asked to provide recommendations to guide motorized travel planning on the Forest, and it has been instrumental in assisting the Forest Service in outreach and collaboration with the public. Recommendations were developed after seeking input from large audiences attending seven meetings. These recommendations along with additional public comments helped shape the proposed action, additional alternatives, and my decision.

Based on public input solicited and received, the NFAB Travel Management Subcommittee issued a report on June 8, 2006 (Blair et al. 2006). The report contained eleven core recommendations regarding design and management of a designated system of motorized roads, trails, and areas. The report made it clear that these recommendations “are intended to be general in nature.” The eleven recommendations offered by the Travel Subcommittee were approved by the NFAB and are summarized as follows:

1. **Our Setting/Niche.** “The Subcommittee recognizes that motorized vehicle use including OHVs is an important part of the recreation experience on the Forest. The Subcommittee recommends that an OHV trail system be developed, within the context of overall motorized uses, which provides for a variety of opportunities but does not dominate or unreasonably interfere with other multiple uses of the Forest.”
2. **Active or a Passive System?** “The Subcommittee recommends an “active” system versus a passive one. A *passive system* is similar to what we have today — routes and areas are designated as open or closed, and people use these routes/areas as desired. An *active system* is one that is specifically designed, maintained, and enforced to provide for specific uses. The Subcommittee recognizes that funding would play a large role in the size and nature of the system.” (Emphasis added.)
3. **What are the economic and funding issues?** “The Subcommittee recognizes that the size and nature of an OHV system would depend substantially on the funding sources available. The Subcommittee supports pursuing all possible funding options.”
4. **What would be the role of the States and local communities in developing and managing an OHV trail system?** “The Subcommittee recommends that OHV management on the Forest be a cooperative effort between the Forest Service, the States of South Dakota and Wyoming, and local counties. The Forest Service would have primary responsibility for an OHV trail system (as well as other transportation systems) on Forest lands.”
5. **What should the system look like/consist of?** “The group likes the concept of ‘Gateway Communities’ or of at least connecting/tying in communities in some fashion. In general, the system should consist of a main arterial system extending throughout the Forest and a network of routes branching off the main system. The focus would be on multiple scale loops as opposed to dead-end spurs. Many of the routes would be shared by multiple users... The group recognizes that, for the most part, there are already an adequate number of routes on the Forest that could be developed into a system [and that] some current, non-system routes may need to be included in the system.” The Subcommittee wrote that they did not envision that a large number of new routes would be developed, and that the development of new connections or “limited new routes...should be off-set by the removal of other existing routes. In the end, there should be less ‘tracks on the ground’ than currently exists.”
6. **How do we address populated areas?** “General consensus was that it is important to limit the amount of noise and potential conflicts adjacent to communities/ subdivisions, and that an OHV trail system should focus more on areas away from populated areas.” The Subcommittee recognized that concentrating motorized use near populated areas “can be a nuisance for some and cause conflicts” and that efforts should be made to reduce this nuisance and conflicts. The Subcommittee noted that providing motorized access from these areas while reducing conflicts could be “the most difficult aspect of the entire process.”
7. **Game Retrieval.** “The Subcommittee recommends that allowances be made for game retrieval as part of the motorized use designation process.” The Subcommittee recommended further that the program on the Forest should be consistent with other Federal and State agencies, notably Custer State Park, and that “No unacceptable

resource damage, as defined by the Forest Service, will occur as part of retrieval operations.”

8. **Firewood Collecting.** The Subcommittee recognized that many residents collect firewood on the Forest to heat their homes, and recommended “that motorized use to collect firewood:
 - a. require a firewood permit.
 - b. be limited to areas designated by the Forest Service which can be modified as needed.”
9. **Dispersed Camping.** “The Subcommittee recommends that dispersed camping using motorized vehicles off designated routes be allowed, but motorized vehicles be restricted to within 300 feet of an open designated route using the most direct route to the camp site.”
10. **Cross-Country Motorized OHV Use.** “The Subcommittee recommends that cross-country motorized OHV travel be allowed only within designated areas. Exceptions to this would be for administrative and permitted uses, public safety, fire suppression, and search and rescue.” The Subcommittee offered no recommendation as to the size and nature of these designated areas.
11. **Mud-Bogging.** “The Subcommittee recommends that no mud-bogging be allowed on National Forest System lands,” noting the resource damage that accompanies such use.

2. Decision and Rationale

2.1 My Decision

This record of decision (ROD) documents my decision and rationale for the actions I am authorizing under the USDA Forest Service 2005 Travel Management Rule. This decision reflects over four years of highly engaged public involvement, collaboration, and consultation with individuals, groups, agencies, Tribes, and local governments with both common and widely diverse interests, coupled with the environmental analysis necessary for me to make an informed decision. I appreciate the time, energy, and viewpoints that were contributed by so many to shape a wide range of options that have been considered for this decision.

Based on my review of the environmental analysis and input from the public, I have decided to implement a motorized vehicle system that I will describe as “**Alternative B, as Modified,**” as this system reflects similar intent as the proposed action described under Alternative B in the draft and final environmental impact statements (DEIS and FEIS). The DEIS did not indicate a preferred alternative, in effect giving the public a broader opportunity to comment on various alternatives or features of alternatives. The modifications to Alternative B reflect the public response to the DEIS and further environmental analysis. My decision incorporates components analyzed and described in each of the alternatives (A through E). These components are within the range of the components described in the FEIS (see “Alternatives Considered in Detail” in the FEIS and Table 1 below). The effects of Alternative B, as Modified, are within the range of effects described in the FEIS. The designated motorized system routes, game retrieval, dispersed camping, and other components and features of the decision are shown on maps in Appendix C:

Record of Decision Map Packet. The specific routes selected are shown in a detailed, searchable, database route list available at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills> (route miles are summarized in Table 1). Due to its length, I am incorporating that list by reference. Table 1 compares the alternatives and displays my decision (see column titled “Alternative B Modified”).

Table 1. Comparison of alternatives and decision summary [() = miles open seasonally]

Proposed Travel Designation	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative B Modified
Road miles	3,740 (668)	3,466 (837)	3,582 (992)	2,877 (626)	3,740 (668)	3,157 (993)
Trail miles	36 (24)	663 (338)	771 (370)	320 (141)	36 (24)	707 (329)
Total miles	3,776 (692)	4,129 (1,175)	4,353 (1,362)	3,197 (767)	3,776 (692)	3,864 (1,322)
Roads - highway legal	3,580 (656)	1,240 (249)	704 (70)	2,297 (361)	3,580 (656)	2,609 (773)
Roads - open to all	160 (12)	2,226 (588)	2,878 (922)	580 (265)	160 (12)	548 (220)
Trails open to all	0	173 (65)	176 (76)	118 (48)	0	148 (67)
Special vehicle designation: trails 62 inches or less in width SD*	0	319 (177) SD	380 (196) SD	150 (62) SD	12	397 (152) SD
Trails 50 inches or less in width WY	36 (24) SD12	95 (95) WY	80 (73) WY	31 (31) WY	24 (24)	72 (72) WY
Trails motorcycle only	0	76 (1)	134 (25)	21 (0)	0	90 (38)
Total miles	3,776 (692)	4,129 (1,175)	4,353 (1,362)	3,197 (767)	3,776 (692)	3,864 (1,322)
Trailheads	7	31	34	23	7	20
Game retrieval	864,000 acres	300 feet= 179,000 acres	385,500 acres	0	0	294,800 acres
Dispersed camping	864,000 acres	100 feet= 63,500 acres	300 feet= 184,000 acres	0	0	300 feet= 135,500 acres

*EIS analyzes the effects of use of vehicles 65" or less in width.

Note: Mileages listed in this document and the EIS are close but may not be exact. Map locations and calculations are derived from our current technology but there may be minor errors. I believe the accuracy is sufficient for the environmental analyses and public disclosure of effects in order to make an informed decision.

2.1.1 Designated Motorized System

Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only

Roads open to highway-legal vehicles only will total 2,609 miles. Operators must meet applicable State law for driver and vehicle licensing. About 773 of the 2,609 total miles will be seasonally restricted.

Roads Open to All Vehicles

Roads open to all vehicles will total 548 miles. My decision preempts State law in South Dakota by allowing non-highway-legal vehicles on these public roads, although State law requirements for licensing of vehicle operators will still be in effect. In Wyoming, these roads are enrolled in the State ORV program and its requirements for vehicles and operators are in effect. About 220 of the 548 total miles will be seasonally restricted.

Trails Open to All Vehicles

Trails open to all vehicles will total 148 miles. About 67 of the 148 total miles will be seasonally restricted.

Trails Open to Motorcycles Only

Motorcycle-only trails will total 90 miles. These trails are for single-track (two-wheeled) motorcycle use. About 38 of the 90 total miles will be seasonally restricted.

Trails Open to Vehicles 50 Inches or Less in Width, in Wyoming

Trails 50 inches or less in width will total 72 miles. These trails provide an off-highway riding recreational experience on routes enrolled in the State of Wyoming OHV trail system. Machines must have an authorization sticker from the State. All 72 miles will be seasonally restricted.

Special Vehicle Designation, Trails Open to Vehicles 62 Inches or Less in Width, in South Dakota

Special designation trails 62 inches or less in width in South Dakota will total 397 miles (see “Trails with Special Designations” on page 17). This network of trails connected by roads in South Dakota will provide quality off-highway recreational riding experiences on machines that do not need to be State highway legal. About 152 of the 397 total miles will be seasonally restricted.

2.1.2. Trailheads

A total of 20 trailheads will serve the designated motorized system. These are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Ranger District</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Ranger District</u>
Reuter	Bearlodge	China	Mystic
Blacktail	Bearlodge	Stageyard	Northern Hills
Ditch Creek	Mystic	Minnesota Ridge	Northern Hills
Red Fern	Mystic	Dalton Lake	Northern Hills
Neck Yoke	Mystic	Camp 5	Northern Hills
Pine Grove	Mystic	Pilot Knob	Northern Hills
Shanks Quarry	Mystic	Piedmont	Northern Hills
Schroeder	Mystic	South Boxelder	Northern Hills
Victoria	Mystic	Spearfish Quarry	Northern Hill
Thompson	Mystic		
Dutch Creek	Mystic		

2.1.3 Motorized Big Game Retrieval, Elk Only

Motorized big game retrieval, elk only, will be allowed on approximately 294,800 acres as shown on four maps in Appendix C: Record of Decision Map Packet. The maps indicate where elk can be retrieved with a motorized vehicle within 300 feet of certain designated roads in South Dakota and Wyoming, and other areas where elk can be retrieved with a motorized vehicle within one mile of certain designated roads in South Dakota.

2.1.4 Dispersed Camping

Motor vehicle use for dispersed camping will be allowed within 300 feet of certain designated Forest roads where motor vehicle use is allowed. Designated roads are shown in Appendix C: Record of Decision Map Packet. The area open to dispersed camping totals an estimated 135,500 acres. Dispersed camping is not permitted in or near developed recreation sites, or on adjacent lands of other ownership such as the Mickelson Trail right-of-way.

Resource damage is not allowed as a result of dispersed camping (for example, cutting live vegetation or leaving wheel ruts on the ground). Crossing streams is prohibited if water is present (except on designated routes), and crossing wetlands is prohibited. Moving, going around, going over or going past barriers (e.g., gates, rock berms, barriers, and signs) is not allowed.

2.1.5 Decibel Limits

My decision establishes sound level limits at 96 decibels (dB[A]) for off-highway vehicles (OHVs) manufactured on or after January 1, 1998, with a sound level limit of 99 dB(A) for vehicles manufactured prior to January 1, 1998.

2.1.6 Closing Motorized Cross Country Travel

The Forest will be closed to unrestricted motorized cross-country vehicle travel unless specifically designated as open. Two areas, less than 5 acres each, are designated open for cross-country travel. Other cross-country, motorized travel is authorized for the purposes of game retrieval, elk only, and dispersed camping as described above in “Motorized Big Game Retrieval, Elk Only” and “Dispersed Camping”.

2.1.7 Forest Plan Amendments

This decision includes nonsignificant Forest Plan Amendment No. 10 to the 1997 Revised Forest Plan as Amended. There are several parts to this amendment. Goal 4 in the Revised Forest Plan provides for scenic quality, a range of recreational opportunities, and protection of heritage resources in response to the needs of Forest visitors and local communities. In order to implement this decision and the 2005 Travel Management Rule, and to update Forest Plan direction, my decision amends several objectives under Goal 4 having to do with the amount and distribution of motorized use allowed on- and off-road. It also amends several Forestwide standards and guidelines to make it clear that motorized travel opportunities will be as displayed on the Forest motor vehicle use map. Finally, my decision amends standards and guidelines for several management areas, changing existing wording allowing motorized use unless restricted to indicate that motorized travel is allowed where specifically designated. These changes will align Forest Plan language with the intent and direction in the 2005 Travel Management Rule. Specific changes are shown in Appendix B to this Record of Decision.

2.1.8 Forest Orders

Any existing Forest Orders that are not consistent with this Record of Decision will be rescinded. Any new orders that are necessary for implementation of this Record of Decision will be issued. Orders are posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills>.

2.1.9 Motor Vehicle Use Exemptions

The Rule contains specific language regarding use and exemptions. My decision includes the following provisions that are applicable under Federal regulations, existing agency policy, or changing circumstances:

After National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands have been designated pursuant to 36 CFR 212.51 on an administrative unit or a Ranger District of the National Forest System, and these designations have been identified on the motor vehicle use map, it is prohibited to possess or operate a motor vehicle on National Forest System lands in that administrative unit or ranger district other than in accordance with those designations, provided that the following vehicles and uses are exempted from this prohibition:

- a. aircraft;
- b. watercraft;
- c. over-snow vehicles;
- d. limited administrative use by the Forest Service;
- e. use of any fire, military, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle for emergency purposes;
- f. authorized use of any combat or combat support vehicle for national defense purposes;
- g. law enforcement response to violations of law, including pursuit;
- h. motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulations; and
- i. use of a road or trail that is authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a State, County, or other local public road authority.

2.1.10 Miners

Nothing in the Rule or this decision revokes any rights held by miners or others.

2.1.11 Treaty Rights

Nothing in the Rule or this decision alters or is inconsistent with any treaty rights held by tribal governments.

2.1.12 Staged Implementation

My decision will be implemented under the provisions of the 2005 Travel Management Rule and the features described in this document. Certain features or components of this decision will not be available for use initially, and will be implemented as appropriate design criteria are applied, such as on construction of trailheads or routes. Available funding will affect the rate of implementation. This decision recognizes that the Forest has been granted the authority to collect

special recreation permit fees to operate the off-highway vehicle system as authorized under the Recreation Enhancement Act of 2005.

2.1.13 Changes in System and Route Use

My decision recognizes and anticipates that certain designated routes may not be available in any particular season or year because of contractor or timber purchaser operations, public safety, or resource concerns, leading to reduced miles available for OHV operation. The total off-highway vehicle miles shown in this decision will not likely be available in a given year, some trails being closed for project work or seasonal closures. Substitute trails may, or may not, replace the closed trails at the discretion of the responsible line officer, based on case-by-case circumstances.

Routes designated in this decision may change over time. The Rule recognizes that designations of roads, trails, and areas for motorized vehicle use are not permanent and that environmental impacts, administrative needs, changes in demand, route construction, and monitoring conducted under the Rule may lead land managers to revise designations over time, closing, opening, or changing designated routes as needed to meet Forest management purposes and missions, including annual project planning (36 CFR 212.54, 212.57). Nothing in this decision precludes future project-specific environmental analyses or Forestwide strategic or project plans from proposing construction, removal or reconstruction of system roads and trails, or annual changes to roads, trails and areas as conditions warrant through appropriate project and other decision authorities.

2.2 *Rationale for My Decision*

I am selecting Alternative B, as Modified, because it meets the purpose and need, addresses the NFAB recommendations, and because it represents the best balance of the social, economic, and environmental interests and effects. I will explain my rationale for the selected alternative as a whole, and for the component parts in the following sections.

2.2.1 Meets Purpose and Need

Alternative B, as Modified, meets the spirit of the Rule, and will allow the Forest to implement an official travel system for motorized use and update the Forest travel map. My decision will help meet the increasing demand for recreational travel opportunities and provide a range of quality experiences for other Forest users. It achieves these purposes in a more balanced way when compared with the other alternatives.

Each of the Alternatives B, C, D, and E, and Alternative B, as Modified, would reduce adverse impacts caused by unmanaged cross-country and road and trail usage in order to maintain and conserve the conditions of ecosystems and watersheds. Alternative A, the “no action” alternative, does not meet the purpose and need as adverse impacts would continue to occur.

Alternative B, as Modified, offers many recreation opportunities over time. The decision will be implemented in stages that are within the Forest’s management capability. In summary, Alternative B, as Modified, meets the purpose and need.

2.2.2 How Environmental Issues Were Considered and Addressed

Designated Motorized System

My decision designates 3,864 total miles for motorized travel, which is similar to the total miles proposed under Alternatives A and E. However, my decision increases the current number of system trail miles from 36 to 707 miles. This will be accomplished mainly by converting existing roads to trails and by constructing and reconstructing trails. I believe it is in the public interest to have fewer roads and more motorized trails. My decision maintains the largest component of the total system as roads and allows public access for legal reasons, forest management and emergency response, and recreational purposes.

The vast majority of comments received from the public, agencies, and Tribes centered on the motorized trail system. I am designating 707 miles of system trails to provide diverse motorized recreational opportunities in off-highway settings rather than in roaded settings. I believe this will better meet user interests, is affordable, and best manages public safety risks. Many of the motorized users requested more trails to be considered than the 771 miles shown under Alternative C, as well as all of the existing roads. Many motorized users requested more trails in the Southern Hills. Others, including the Environmental Protection Agency, cited support for Alternative D, which includes 320 miles of trails and the smallest road system.

Proponents of Alternatives D and E cited the low cost of implementing these alternatives. The EIS discloses that these alternatives are the most affordable. I believe a well-placed 707-mile trail system will better provide a diversity of motorized recreational experiences, and will better disperse users and reduce crowding. These interests were cited often by those favoring Alternative C.

I did not choose to have the smaller scale trail system represented by Alternatives D and E because it could lead to more congestion on designated motorized routes and would limit the variety of experiences for motorized recreationists. Proponents of Alternative D cited the benefits of avoiding or reducing impacts to nonmotorized users and natural resources. I carefully weighed these interests, as these are interests in common with Alternative B. As disclosed in the EIS, the site-specific locations of the trail system have a major influence on the predicted effects. My decision in selecting Alternative B, as Modified, includes specific alternative designs to reduce impacts to nonmotorized users and natural resources. Shown below are the results of those modifications displayed by key resource area and indicator measures discussed in the EIS.

Botany

In response to public comment and further analysis performed by Forest Service specialists, my decision makes several changes to the motorized systems proposed in Alternatives B, C, and D to further protect botanical resources. Alternative B, as Modified, significantly reduces the impacts to Region 2 sensitive plant species, plant species of local concern, botanical areas, and fens as compared to Alternatives B, C and D as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Routes requiring design criteria, removal or rerouting to avoid impacts to special status plant species or areas

Species	Occurrence	Route number	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. B Modif.
Routes to be designed, removed, or rerouted to avoid impacts to Region 2 sensitive species						
Bearlodge Ranger Dist.						
<i>Botrychium campestre</i>	BOCA5-8	872.3		X		
<i>Botrychium lineare</i>	BOLI7-1	864.1 (outside Dugout Gulch Botanical Area)	X	X		
<i>Carex alopecoidea</i>	CAAL8-12	U71002	X			
	CAAL8-31	841.1L	X	X		X
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	CYPA19-10	863.2C	X	X		
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> var. <i>americanum</i>	VIOPA2-2, VIOPA2-16	864.1 (in Dugout Gulch Botanical Area)	X	X		
	03DUG3A, 94S460B	U650017	X	X		
Northern Hills Ranger Dist.						
<i>Carex alopecoidea</i>	CAAL8-22	U710024		X		
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	950070B	U080045	X	X	X	
<i>Platanthera orbiculata</i>	01G040	CZ0418 U010076	X	X		
	PLOR4-18	U010071	X	X		
<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	SACA13-2	567.1F	X	X	X	
	SACA13-2	172.1A	X	X	X	
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> var. <i>americanum</i>	VIOPA2-4	U080156	X	X		
	980010	CZ4846	X	X		X
Mystic Ranger Dist.						
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	CYPA19-2	CZ1790	X	X	X	
Routes requiring design criteria to avoid impacts to Black Hills NF plant species of local concern						
Mystic Ranger Dist.						
<i>Gentiana affinis</i>	07M008A	CZ4927		X		
Hell Canyon Ranger Dist.						
<i>Gentiana affinis</i>	GEOF-4	HC9	X	X		
	07B040A	CZ3526	X	X		
	07B042	HC1	X	X		
Routes requiring design criteria to avoid impacts to M.A. 3.1 Botanical Areas						
Bearlodge Ranger Dist.						
Dugout Gulch Botanical Area		864.1C	X	X		
		864.1	X	X		
		864.1A	X			
Routes requiring design criteria to avoid impacts to fens						
Mystic Ranger Dist.						
South Fork Castle Creek fen		385.1A	X	X	X	
Newton Fork fen		304.1L	X	X	X	

Hydrology

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and several groups and individuals raised concerns about impacts to aquatic resources and water quality, particularly streams listed as impaired for temperature by the States of South Dakota and Wyoming under the Clean Water Act. My decision reflects a number of changes designed to address these concerns with the resulting effects displayed in Tables 3 and 4. Water quality and the condition of streams will be improved greatly over the current condition by reducing the number of crossings of perennial streams, and by improving the condition of the remaining crossings where needed by incorporating design features to bring them to standard. As shown in Table 3 below, use on well over 1,000 perennial stream crossings will be eliminated. My decision also reduces the total number slightly from the number shown in Alternative B.

Table 3. Perennial Stream crossings by alternative (these indicators apply to the hydrology and fisheries resources)

Indicator	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E	Alt. B Modif.
Number of road/trail crossings on perennial streams Forestwide	1,778	547	536	455	547	530

Table 4. Impaired stream crossings by alternative

Impaired stream crossings	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E	Alt. B Modif.
Total number of road/trail crossings on impaired streams Forestwide	131	30	32	28	28	29

My decision will significantly reduce crossings of impaired streams compared to the existing condition under Alternative A (Table 4), and is a slight reduction from the proposed action. With respect to the remaining crossings, specific features to improve water quality will be implemented (as shown in Appendix A: Design Criteria and Mitigation on p. 31 of this document), including watershed conservation practices and best management practices. Sediment introductions to streams will be minimized by such measures as armoring stream crossings, providing drainage for roads and trails, and providing buffers for trailheads. Applicable permits (i.e., storm water, 404) will be obtained where required during the implementation phase of this project.

Wildlife

The EIS discloses a number of benefits to wildlife as a result of designating a motorized system and eliminating most cross-country travel. Most of the indicators are described in relation to meeting the Forest Plan goals and objectives. As stated in the EIS, Alternatives B and C would move the Forest away from the wintertime objective of one mile of open road per square mile for Management Area 5.4, Big Game Winter Range Emphasis. This was proposed in an effort to provide more motorized recreation opportunities for the public. Specific route changes in my decision will move the wintertime road density back similar to the existing condition, though not quite to the lower level of Alternative D (Table 5). While several routes were changed in the

decision to reduce winter road density, several main connector trails near communities such as Rapid City, Piedmont, Hill City, Rockerville, and Nemo were retained in Management Area 5.4. Closing more routes to meet Forest Plan road density objectives would have further reduced recreational opportunities near these communities. In Management Area 5.43, my decision will reduce the route density more than the other alternatives, and will still meet the Forest Plan objective.

Table 5. Comparison of winter open route density (miles/square mile) in Management Areas 5.4 and 5.43 by alternative

Management Area	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E	Alt. B Modif.
5.4 (wintertime objective of 1.0 mile/sq. mile or less of open roads)	1.22	1.35	1.38	1.09	1.22	1.23
5.43 (objective same as for MA 5.4)	0.99	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.99	0.83

Cultural Resources

My decision for the road and trail system will have no direct effects on cultural resources. The EIS identified five sites that would require mitigation under Alternative B. The routes included under Alternative B, as Modified, avoid these sites and no mitigation is necessary.

Recreation Interests and Conflicts with Other Users

The EIS states that Alternative B would meet most NFAB recommendations to provide an active travel system while protecting resources and reducing conflicts with other users. In reading the public comments and listening to the public, the top social issue is potential conflicts with motorized and nonmotorized recreation interests. Groups and individuals on both sides of the issue expressed concerns that too much attention was being paid to the other side, and that the other group does not value the opinions or preferences for recreation being held by the commenter. Many adjacent private landowners expressed concerns about noise, dust, and resource damage from motorized recreationists while other landowners from the same area wanted direct motorized access from their land or business to the Forest.

By selecting Alternative B, as Modified, I have made a number of changes that reflect further considerations for both motorized and nonmotorized opportunities. My decision incorporates a large number of looped trails, supported by the public. My decision drops several “dead end” routes that did not go to a featured destination. Many commenters pointed out that this could lead to pioneering new unauthorized trails, and I agree. My decision drops or restricts motorized travel routes into a number of locations described in the Forest Plan as “semi-primitive nonmotorized” areas, or locations described as “walk-in” areas by South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGFP) and a number of other agencies, groups and individuals. (Please note that “walk-in areas” is a term used by the public and my decision does not imply that nonmotorized uses such as horses and mountain bikes are being restricted in this decision.) Many expressed concerns about motorized trails located adjacent to areas favored by nonmotorized recreationists, such as the Dakota 50 mountain bike trail event that has been authorized annually under a special use permit. I looked at the relation of each trail location to such nonmotorized use areas (map available in project record) and I have decided to drop

motorized segments east of the Spearfish Quarry, and to relocate a short segment of the mountain bike event trail in the Red Lake area west of Savoy, in order to reduce user conflicts.

Alternative B, as Modified, reduces the miles of routes within a half-mile of nonmotorized trails from levels proposed in Alternatives B and C, as summarized in Table 6. My decision also reduces the number of miles of routes close to non-National Forest System lands from the current level.

Table 6. Comparison of indicator measures describing potential conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized recreationists

ISSUE 4 –Social and economic concerns	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E	Alt. B Modif.
Miles of NFS motorized routes within ½-mile of a nonmotorized trail	318	358	382	211	318	318
Miles of designated NFS motorized routes through or within 300 feet of non-NFS lands	504	490	500	423	504	465

Alternative B, as Modified, focuses on providing public access to the motorized route system. A number of commenters requested motorized access directly from private homes or businesses to the National Forest. I am continuing to apply the principle that “access for one is access for all,” to avoid tacit Forest Service designation of recreational portals on lands of other ownerships. Therefore, no new private roads or trails are designated as part of this decision. Similarly, a number of individuals also sought access from lands of other ownership (such as public rights-of-way and municipalities) to the motorized trail system. For example, individuals from the Piedmont area and Hill City submitted routes and trailheads that I considered. I believe local jurisdictions have an important role in designating access portals to the motorized system from within their jurisdictions. For this reason, I specifically invited comment from municipalities and local governments. I have decided not to include certain routes at this time, and will do so in the future only when they are appropriately affirmed and agreed to with the neighboring entities having jurisdiction.

My decision provides for an array of motorized recreation opportunities including single-track trails for motorcycles, trails for vehicles 62 inches and less in width in South Dakota, trails for vehicles 50 inches and less in width in Wyoming, and others as shown in Table 1 on page 5. Motorcycle enthusiasts responding to the DEIS requested more miles of routes; others requested that motorcycles be given “corridors” to ride rather than designated trails, and that challenge areas such as “hill climbs” be provided. I am designating 90 miles of single-track motorcycle trails based on public comments and the analysis conducted by specialists. Corridors are not being included because of the inability to protect cultural sites and the effects that multiple braided trails can have over time. I dropped certain routes shown in Alternatives B and C due to impacts to plants and wildlife, and dropped steeper “hill climb” routes, which would cause significant rutting and soil erosion. I have included routes for “rock crawler” and 4 x 4 enthusiasts as part of the “trails open to all” designation. The public requested motorized trails in the southern Hills and my decision includes trails in this area.

My decision responds to the growing interest, reflected in public comment, to include more trails for utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) in South Dakota. This decision designates a number of routes for vehicles 62 inches and less in width, described in more detail in the section entitled “Trails with Special Designations” on page 17. In Wyoming, my decision is consistent with Wyoming statute and therefore includes trails for vehicles 50 inches and less in width. Operators of wider vehicles have recreational opportunities on other routes consistent with applicable laws described in the “Designated Motorized System” section on p. 5.

My decision also responds to many citizen requests that youth (underage drivers) be able to ride with other family members. Alternative B, as Modified, increases total trail miles above Alternative B and connects more looped trail systems. This is important because neither South Dakota nor Wyoming require operator licenses for those operating motor vehicles on trails.

The designated motorized system of roads and trails that I am creating would require maintenance and administration that would, in turn, require resources including money and people to operate the system. As noted in the EIS, costs of building, maintaining, and administering the system will be higher than current appropriated dollars can pay for without supplemental income streams or contributed volunteer labor or grants. In making this decision, I will rely on authority already granted to me under the Recreation Enhancement Act to collect special recreation permit fees from users of the OHV system. With this additional revenue stream, my decision can be implemented economically in stages as funding becomes available.

My decision to reduce the size of the road system will slightly reduce the need for road maintenance, recognizing the Forest will still have deferred maintenance needs to maintain the road system to standard.

Trailheads

My decision to establish 20 trailheads is based on the need to provide public access, protect cultural resources, and to improve safety for motorized users. In reviewing the public comments, cultural resource impacts, and configuration of the trail system under this decision, I believe fewer trailheads are appropriate and can be implemented at a lower cost than the 31 trailheads originally proposed under Alternative B.

Motorized Big Game Retrieval, Elk Only

In reaching my decision on motorized retrieval of big game, elk only, I considered a number of factors including: 1) heritage values and compliance, 2) effects on other natural resources, and 3) public and agency comments. The State of Wyoming Game and Fish Department recommended allowing motorized game retrieval, elk only, within 300 feet of certain designated Forest roads. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks asked for more areas for motorized retrieval of harvested elk than were shown in Alternative B. The public comments and the alternatives varied widely, from those seeking unlimited motorized game retrieval opportunities to those that favored none. My decision to authorize seasonal retrieval of elk on a total of about 295,000 acres is 116,000 acres more than shown in Alternative B, the proposed action. My decision was based upon the low number of elk retrieved each year, the ability to monitor and protect known cultural and heritage sites, finding a balance in divergent public interests, and responding to the interests of the State game management agencies.

My decision retains the “walk-in” character in certain land areas recommended by SDGFP and various groups and individuals. My decision also partially addresses the SDGFP concern for potential meat spoilage in early season hunts. Some commenters asked for motorized retrieval of

deer. I decided not to include deer because of the lighter weights of deer versus elk, later hunting seasons for deer than for elk, and greater potential effects on heritage resource sites and natural resources that would occur because of the higher number of animals that could be retrieved. The Fall River County Commissioners asked for game retrieval on lands within their county, but the high density of cultural resource sites, the lack of cultural resource surveys, and the high cost of these surveys, preclude game retrieval in most of Fall River County.

Dispersed Camping

My decision authorizes motorized dispersed camping within 300 feet of certain designated Forest roads where motor vehicle use is allowed (FSM 7715, 74; 36 CFR 212.51(b)), and if appropriate within specified time periods. Designated roads provide visitors an opportunity to enjoy a semi-primitive and/or natural setting with the convenience of roadside camping. My decision to enlarge the area from within 100 feet of roads as shown in the proposed action to 300 feet provides more opportunities to camp away from dust and noise that is common along roads. It also coincides with most areas available for motorized elk retrieval.

I am not allowing motorized dispersed camping along trails at this time because the funding was not available to survey and assess all of the potential natural and cultural resource impacts during this planning phase.

Decibel Limits

I decided to establish sound limit levels for motorized vehicles using the Forest. A level of 96 dB(A) is the standard level the American Motorcycle Association (AMA) has adopted for sanctioned events. The State of Colorado has passed legislation limiting sound levels to 96 dB(A) (99 dB(A) for vehicles manufactured prior to 1998), and the Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service has an established limit of 99 dB(A) that is now under review and expected to change to 96 dB(A) in keeping with national standards. Wyoming State law establishes sound levels at 102 dB(A), a level that is not responsive to the many comments we received on this issue. Dust and noise were the two most frequently reported "nuisance" items associated with OHV use during our planning process. The 96 dB(A) sound limit was proposed in the DEIS and was the subject of a number of comments. I believe this will allow most stock vehicles to use the motorized system, and that it can provide a reasonable limit on vehicle noise close to lands of other ownerships. It is, therefore, my decision to limit sound levels to 96 dB(A) for vehicles manufactured on or after January 1, 1998, with a sound level limit of 99 dB(A) for vehicles manufactured prior to January 1, 1998.

Closing Motorized Cross Country Travel

I am authorizing cross-country motorized travel for retrieval of harvested elk and for access to dispersed camping as described above. I am also authorizing motorized cross-country travel in two former rock quarry locations, one near Spearfish, and one near Sundance. The public requested areas where beginner or novice riders could practice and improve skills and these hardened areas can sustain cross-country use.

I recognize that many members of the public want to be allowed to continue to ride cross-country as they have in the past. However, I have decided to not allow motorized cross-country travel other than for the purposes listed above, in order to protect natural and cultural resources and to better balance motorized and nonmotorized recreation uses of the Forest (subject to the exemptions described in the section entitled "Motor Vehicle Use Exemptions" on p. 8). The

current and predicted impacts of unmanaged cross-country travel on natural and cultural resources are widespread and are described in Chapter 3 of the EIS.

2.2.3 Factors Other Than Environmental Consequences

Public Safety and State Law

I carefully considered public safety and state law in making my decision. In the 2005 Travel Management Rule, the agency acknowledges there can be a need to mix highway-legal and non-highway-legal vehicles on some National Forest System roads, a concept often referred to as “motorized mixed use.” I have the delegated authority to designate roads as “motorized mixed-use roads.” Where I designate roads as mixed use, I understand that I am pre-empting State law for vehicle licensing requirements on those roads (State laws normally apply to roads open to public travel).

The Travel Management Rule requires that any decision to allow motorized mixed use be informed by a mixed-use study conducted by a professional engineer. In considering roads for mixed use, I used professional engineering studies performed under the “Guidelines for Engineering Analysis of Motorized Mixed-use on National Forest System Roads” (USDA Forest Service 2005). I evaluated the safety and engineering design features and added costs of administering and enforcing regulations on mixed-use roads. I also considered the public’s recreational interests and the practical safety risks of travelling on mixed-use roads. In light of these considerations, I have decided to designate 548 miles of mixed-use roads as “roads open to all vehicles” (220 of the 548 total miles seasonally closed). This mileage is similar to that proposed under Alternative D, which emphasizes public safety. Public safety was a major consideration in my decision on this issue. My decision designates some roads open to all vehicles in order to connect motorized trail systems or to reach destinations where trail access is not proposed at this time.

Trails with Special Designations

The Rule provides the ability to make special designations for vehicle use. My decision makes a special designation for vehicles 62 inches and less in width to operate on certain trails in South Dakota. My decision will provide trail opportunities for many of the “side-by-side” passenger UTVs in addition to the straddle mount ATVs. There are several factors that I considered in this decision including user experiences, public interest, vehicle specifications, State laws, safety, resource impacts, and costs. For purposes of analysis, the EIS displays alternatives and discloses impacts for use of motor vehicles 65 inches and less in width.

The UTV is growing in popularity. It is considered an off-highway vehicle by manufacturer’s statements of origin and most models manufactured in this category are 62 inches and less in width. Vehicles wider than 62 inches, in the 62- to 65-inch range and beyond, more typically include heavier, highway-designed 4 x 4 vehicles such as small pickups, sport utility vehicles, and a small number of UTV models, as noted in a report on vehicle types and widths in the project record. The trail system in South Dakota will focus recreation opportunities for the smaller and lighter vehicles 62 inches and less in width. This can be implemented with narrower trails, sharper corners, smaller stream crossings, and smaller cattleguards to provide this type of unique user experience. Therefore, I decided not to allow vehicles larger than 62 inches in width for most of the trail system. Larger vehicles are being provided opportunities on other roads and trails open to all. (The trail system designation in Wyoming will continue to be 50 inches and less in width, as the Forest plans to continue participating in the Wyoming Off-Road Recreational Vehicle Program.)

Public Interest in Having More Trails in the Southern Black Hills

During the comment period on the DEIS significant public interest was expressed in including more trails in the southern Black Hills on the Hell Canyon Ranger District. In response to this interest, and with consideration of the fact that many off-highway vehicle users are not licensed to operate on public roads, I decided to convert some roads to trails in the Martin and Antelope Basin areas. I believe these trails will provide for safer and improved riding opportunities than would be found on mixed-use roads. Additional trailheads and looped trails are foreseeable in the southern Black Hills, but are not a part of this decision.

Gateway Communities

Members of the public and the NFAB recommended designating a network of looped trails, and requested that the OHV trail system connect to communities in some fashion. In the FEIS, we called these gateway communities. Most communities occur on private land, and most roads and trails within and adjacent to communities are not administered by the Forest Service, but rather, by local jurisdictions. Throughout the public involvement process, numerous contacts were made to local governments to formulate alternatives to consider in making my decision. My intent is to include routes that connect a community to the OHV trail system at locations supported by the local jurisdiction, and where the appropriate design features and public access are provided. Local jurisdictions were asked to provide responses to specific routes proposed and being considered near their boundaries. One community responded but most did not. As a result, my decision will locate the OHV trail system some distance from most *potential* gateway communities. OHV riders will access Forest roads and trails as permitted by state and local jurisdictions. I expect potential gateway communities will come forward with trail connector plans over time.

Persons with Disabilities

I believe my decision makes a sufficient number of diverse routes available to motorized recreationists and that no particular provision is necessary for people with disabilities who depend on motorized transportation to enjoy the Forest. Under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no person with a disability can be denied participation in a Federal program that is available to all other people solely because of his or her disability. However, there is no legal requirement to allow people with disabilities to use OHVs or other motor vehicles on roads, trails, and areas closed to motor vehicle use because such an exemption could fundamentally alter the nature of the Forest Service's travel management program (7 CFR 15e.103). Reasonable restrictions on motor vehicle use, applied consistently to everyone, are not discriminatory (also see EIS Chapter 3, "Recreation" section).

Access to Private Lands or Other Jurisdictions

I have maintained reasonable access to other ownerships where appropriate, where required by law, where it makes sense environmentally, and where the public interest is best served. I have made every effort to follow the principle that access for one is access for all so that single purpose or restricted use of routes on public lands is the exception in accordance with Forest Service policy.

In reviewing the cumulative effects of the alternatives on recreation use, I noted that other ownerships provide other recreation opportunities. Private lands could provide moto-cross and mud bogging, for example. Other national forests and grasslands also provide opportunities, such as Railroad Buttes on the Buffalo Gap National Grassland. My decision took into account other

uses on other ownerships in evaluating what motorized recreation opportunities are available in the local and regional area.

2.2.4 Environmental Documents Considered in Making the Decision

A number of other documents have been specifically incorporated by reference into the analysis in the EIS for this project. Some of these documents include:

- the 1997 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the Black Hills National Forest (the Forest Plan), and the associated EIS and ROD;
- the Revised Forest Plan as amended by the Phase II Amendment, and the associated EIS and ROD;
- various annual Forest monitoring reports;
- the Forest Roads Analysis Report of October 2005;
- the Forest Travel Analysis Process Report of September 2007;
- the Engineering Report for Motorized Mixed-Use Designation, Black Hills National Forest, July 2009;
- recommendations by the National Forest Advisory Board;
- resource reports and other supporting information and analysis.

2.2.5 Best Available Science

My decision is based on consideration of the best available science. The record contains a thorough review of relevant scientific information and responsible opposing views, and where appropriate, acknowledges incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty and risk. Specifically, the extensive literature cited by specialists, listed in Appendix C to the EIS, shows that relevant literature has been reviewed and considered in preparing the EIS. In addition, the record shows that literature cited by the public during the comment period has been reviewed and considered as appropriate. Resource specialists have acknowledged their use of the best science available to them in preparation of the EIS.

2.2.6 Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Policies

For a complete discussion of how this decision complies with laws, regulations and policy, please see Section 7, “Findings Required by Laws” on page 22.

3. Public Involvement

3.1 Scoping

The public involvement effort for this travel plan was extensive over four years beginning in 2006. Formal scoping began in September 2007 when the notice of intent was published in the Federal Register. Prior to this, the Forest Service participated in public meetings and workshops to better understand the Rule and future motorized travel on the Forest. The NFAB hosted five public meetings and conducted an extensive user survey prior to issuing recommendations in 2006. During the formal scoping period, the Forest Service held four meetings with over 700 people in attendance, and each of four ranger districts held an open house. Both general and very specific input was received from the public. Over 700 letters and emails were received. Approximately 2,000 comments helped shape the issues and alternatives in the draft EIS.

3.2 Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) was issued for public comment. The 45-day comment period began March 20, 2009. At public request, it was extended another 14 days, to May 18, 2009. The DEIS was sent or made available electronically to over 500 individuals and groups; State legislators and members of Congress; Governors of the States of Wyoming and South Dakota; county commissioners; and to numerous local, State and Federal agencies, and Tribes. Public comment came in the form of distinct letters, form letters, and e-mails. Over 1,250 individual responses were received, each containing comments ranging in number from one to several hundred.

3.3 Response to DEIS, and Changes from Draft to Final

I personally read each comment submitted in response to the DEIS. I appreciate the time, energy, and passion expressed by all who shared their interests, views, and concerns. The comments provided a framework for further analysis the interdisciplinary team included in the FEIS, and, ultimately, contributed to my decision. Response letters and reports were divided into public concerns in six chapters of our response to your comments. These public concerns are subject areas expressing the same or similar kinds of comments. Responses were provided for each of those comment or concern areas. The extensive response to comments (available online and summarized in the EIS) describes how each comment was addressed in the EIS analysis but does not indicate how the comment was considered in the decision, because the EIS is prepared before the decision. The main changes between the draft and final EISs include adding a special vehicle designation for vehicles 65 inches and less in width, making route changes (types of use and correcting administrative errors), identifying beginner practice areas, and strengthening the effects analysis. These changes between the DEIS and FEIS are more completely described in Chapter 1 of the EIS.

4. Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

In response to agency and public issues, four action alternatives were developed. Alternatives B, C, D, and E were analyzed in detail along with the “no action” alternative (Alternative A). A general description of each of the alternatives is provided below, along with reasons I did not select the alternative. Specific information on the elements of each alternative is provided in Chapter 2 in the EIS, and in the EIS map package.

4.1 Alternative A, No Action

Alternative A would continue the current situation. NEPA regulations at 40 CFR 1502.14 require that “agencies shall ... include the alternative of no action.” This is intended to provide a baseline against which the effects of other alternatives can be measured. Under Alternative A, cross-country motorized use would continue on 864,000 acres and the current road and trail system would remain in place. Many members of the public and some local governments favored Alternative A. I did not select Alternative A because it does not meet the purpose and need, and would continue the adverse impacts caused by unmanaged cross-country travel on cultural sites, ecosystems, and watersheds.

4.2 Alternative B

Alternative B, the proposed action, would meet most of the NFAB recommendations to provide an active trail system while protecting resources and reducing conflicts with other users. The Forest received many comments in favor of Alternative B, and what it was intending to achieve. I did not select Alternative B as presented in the DEIS and FEIS. However, in response to public comments and additional analysis conducted by resource specialists, I made a decision to modify Alternative B to better meet a diversity of motorized recreation interests and settings while increasing protection of key resources and reducing conflicts with other users.

4.3 Alternative C

Alternative C would have provided the largest travel system. It would have provided the greatest number of roads open to all, the greatest number of mile of roads, and the greatest number of miles of trails in nearly every use class and location. It would have provided the greatest opportunity for game retrieval and dispersed camping. Many commented in favor of Alternative C and the features it included. I did not select Alternative C because many of the roads were not appropriate for “mixed-use” traffic, and many of the trail locations had undesirable impacts on cultural, botanical and water resources, and would have caused the greatest conflicts with nonmotorized users.

4.4 Alternative D

Alternative D would have provided the smallest motorized travel system and emphasized user safety. It would have provided the fewest number of roads and the fewest “mixed-use” roads. It would have provided a smaller looped trail system and no cross-country travel. Many commented in favor of Alternative D and the features it included. I did not select Alternative D because it did not provide an adequate trail system to meet the variety of motorized recreation interests.

4.5 Alternative E

Alternative E would have implemented the motorized travel system at the least cost and with the minimum actions necessary to meet the Rule. It would have maintained the existing road and trail system. There would not have been any cross-country travel or travel on authorized trails. Few commented in favor of Alternative E. I did not select Alternative E because it did not meet public expectations for an active motorized system.

4.6 Alternative B, as Modified – the Selected Alternative

Alternative B, as Modified, is my decision for the motorized travel system. It follows similar intent as described for Alternative B but was modified in response to public comment and analysis. The decision better meets a diversity of recreation interests and settings, while increasing protection of key resources and reducing conflicts with other users. The summary of road and trail system miles and features are summarized in Table 1 and specific routes are shown on attached maps. Components and features of my decision are described in the “Decision and Rationale” section, starting on p. 4.

Mitigation and Monitoring Requirements for the Decision

My decision includes several changes in the travel system that will avoid certain resources of concern. Certain routes are included that require mitigation. Tables from the EIS have been updated for the decision. Routes selected under this decision will meet the applicable mitigation shown in Appendix A: Design Criteria and Mitigation (p. 29 of this document), and appropriate monitoring described at the end of Chapter 2 in the EIS.

Implementation will be staged as described on page 8. Appropriate signing will be implemented on mixed-use roads. Storm water permits will be obtained where necessary from the States of Wyoming and South Dakota prior to implementation.

5. Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study

Chapter 2 of the FEIS describes the requirements for evaluating a range of reasonable alternatives and describes several alternatives that were considered but eliminated from detailed study. However, there are several components of these alternatives considered that were incorporated into one or more alternatives studied in detail, and included in the decision. Some examples that are partially included in my decision are: extending game retrieval (elk only) to one mile from designated roads, individual routes, and further consideration of “walk-in” areas.

6. Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The NEPA implementing regulations (Section 1505.2) require that the alternative(s) that best promotes national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA, Section 101, be identified in the decision as the “environmentally preferable alternative” or alternatives. This is ordinarily “the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources” (FSH 1909.15, 05). For this plan, I believe Alternative E is the environmentally preferable alternative. I considered Alternative D, but over 70 miles of new routes would be created in Alternative D. Alternative E would close the most area to cross-country motorized travel and not result in any new route construction.

7. Findings Required by Laws and Regulations

This EIS has been prepared in accordance with the following laws and regulations:

7.1 Clean Air Act of 1970

The Clean Air Act of 1970 and its amendments provide for protecting and enhancing the nation’s air resources. The Federal and State ambient air quality standards are not expected to be exceeded as a result of implementing Alternative B, as Modified. This action is consistent with the Clean Air Act.

7.2 Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act, as amended, regulates dredging and filling freshwater and coastal wetlands. Section 404 (33 USC 1344) of the Clean Water Act prohibits discharging dredged or fill material into waters (including wetlands) of the United States without first obtaining a permit

from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Wetlands are regulated in accordance with federal Non-Tidal Wetlands Regulations (Sections 401 and 404). No dredging or filling is part of this action and no permits are required. In addition, my decision will improve conditions with respect to temperature on State-listed impaired streams (FEIS, Chapter 3, Hydrology section). This project is consistent with the Clean Water Act.

7.3 Endangered Species Act of 1973

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 USC 1531 et seq.) requires that any action authorized by a Federal agency not be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat of such species. Alternative B, as Modified would have “no effect” on the black-footed ferret. The only population of prairie dogs, prey for black-footed ferrets, is next to Wind Cave National Park within the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve. The Preserve is closed to motorized off-road vehicle travel and would continue to be closed under this decision. There are no federally listed plants known to occur on the Forest.

7.4 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to complete detailed analyses of proposed actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The Act’s requirement to prepare an environmental impact statement is designed to provide decisionmakers with a detailed accounting of the likely environmental effects of a proposed action prior to adoption and to inform the public of (and encourage comments on) such effects. The FEIS analyses the alternatives and displays the environmental effects in conformance with NEPA standards. The procedural requirements of the NEPA have been followed.

7.5 National Forest Management Act of 1976

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) amends the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA) and sets forth the requirements for Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) for the National Forest System. This decision is consistent with the 1997 Revised Forest Plan as amended, as described elsewhere in this document and is thus consistent with the NFMA.

Forest Plan Consistency

There is a need to amend the Forest Plan to allow implementation of this decision. I have determined that one amendment to the Forest Plan is needed and appropriate as part of my decision to implement Alternative B as Modified. This amendment, Forest Plan Amendment No. 10, is described in the “Decision” section of this document under the heading Forest Plan Amendment, with all changes shown in Appendix B on page 37.

I have determined that Forest Plan Amendment No. 10 does not constitute a significant change to the Forest Plan in terms of the National Forest Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4)). I have determined that this amendment makes changes to general direction for the project area (Forest) to conform to terms of the 2005 Travel Management Rule. This decision does not change any management requirement in the Forest Plan designed to protect resources. Further, I have determined that the amendment will have no effect on the long-term relationship of goods and services projected by the Revised Forest Plan, and that this amendment does not substantially change desired land conditions as stated there. The public was notified at scoping that a Plan

amendment would be part of this proposal and the decision. The public was advised of the need for this amendment, and its components were described in the DEIS that was issued for public comment. Documentation of the NFMA significance review of amendment components is contained in the project file.

My decision to designate motor vehicle routes, game retrieval and dispersed camping using the features combined from each of the action alternatives is consistent with Forest Plan goals and objectives, standards and guidelines, as documented in the resource sections in Chapter 3 of the FEIS and in section 2.3, “Rationale for My Decision”. Forest Plan standards are inflexible and require that decisions comply with the standards or the Plan must be amended accordingly. Guidelines indicate desired trends in various resource conditions. We strive to meet guidelines, but no Plan amendment is required if a decision does not conform to a guideline. The rationale for any parts of this decision not conforming to guidelines is explained in the appropriate section of this document.

7.6 National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires Federal agencies to consider the potential effects of a preferred alternative on historic, architectural, or archaeological resources that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and to afford the President’s Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment. Section 110 of the Act requires Federal agencies to identify, evaluate, inventory, and protect NRHP resources on properties they control. Potential impacts to archaeological and historic resources have been evaluated in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. The South Dakota and Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) have been consulted and concur with my decision. Additionally, we have agreed with the Wyoming SHPO to complete remaining evaluations of eligibility for the NRHP before implementing this decision.

The NHPA provides comprehensive direction to Federal agencies to identify, evaluate, treat, protect, and manage historic properties. The NHPA expands the NRHP and it establishes the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and SHPOs. Section 106 of the NHPA directs all Federal agencies to take into account effects of their undertakings (actions, financial support, and authorizations) on properties included in or eligible for the National Register. The ACHP’s regulations (36 CFR §800) implement Section 106 of the NHPA. Section 110 of the Act sets inventory, nomination, protection, and preservation responsibilities for federally owned and administered historic properties.

The Forest has received concurrence from the South Dakota SHPO regarding the Forest’s recommendation that, with stipulations implemented to protect and/or monitor certain resources, this undertaking will result in “no adverse effect” to historic properties. The stipulations agreed to include the following: All sites within the South Dakota linear area of potential effect whose NRHP significance has not been formally determined not eligible, will be monitored over a multi-year period following distribution of the initial motor vehicle use map. A select subset of the historic properties that have been identified within areas where motorized game retrieval is permitted as a result of the undertaking will also be monitored.

The Forest developed a programmatic agreement with the Wyoming SHPO in which the Forest outlined a plan to complete NRHP evaluations prior to project implementation for all unevaluated cultural sites located in the Wyoming area of potential effect. The effects analysis for lands located in the State of Wyoming will be submitted to the Wyoming SHPO, pursuant to

stipulations in the programmatic agreement, once the NRHP evaluations have been completed, but prior to project implementation. This commitment under the programmatic agreement satisfies legal requirements for this decision.

7.7 Other Laws and Executive Orders

Several groups and individuals commented that road decommissioning and road closure are necessary to comply with certain laws. Forestwide route closures and decommissioning are not described in this decision. The regulations do not require me to identify roads to be decommissioned, but only to identify roads needed in a “minimum road system.” Some unused roads would be expected to be naturally decommissioned over time with no use. In other cases, a separate project decision can be made to decommission and rehabilitate routes where necessary, using appropriated funds.

7.7.1 Executive Order 11593

Executive Order 11593, entitled Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, also includes direction about the identification and consideration of historic properties in Federal land management decisions. The order, issued May 13, 1971, directs Federal agencies to inventory cultural resources under their jurisdiction, to nominate to the NRHP all federally owned properties that meet the criteria, to use due caution until the inventory and nomination processes are completed, and to assure that Federal plans and programs contribute to preservation and enhancement of properties not federally owned. This project satisfies the requirements of E.O. 11593.

7.7.2 Executive Order 11644

This order seeks to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands be controlled and directed to protect resources, promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various users of those lands. The purpose and need for this project addresses these elements by seeking to comply with the 2005 Travel Management Rule. The action alternatives address resource protection, user safety, and conflict among Forest users in different ways. The effects of the alternatives with respect to these objectives are disclosed in the resource sections in Chapter 3 of the FEIS, including the “Recreation”, “Soils”, and “Hydrology” sections. This decision complies with the terms of this order.

7.7.3 Executive Order 12898

A specific consideration of equity and fairness in resource decision-making is encompassed in the issue of environmental justice. Executive Order 12898 provides that, “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” No adverse effects from Alternative 2, as Modified have been identified on minority or low-income populations. See the “Socio-economics” section of Chapter 3 for more information.

8. Implementation

My decision will be implemented under the provisions of the Travel Management Rule. The Travel Management Rule requires publication of the motor vehicle use map. The map will be the principal tool for public education and enforcement.

8.1 Implementation Date

Implementation will occur on the effective date of the published motor vehicle use map, subject to administrative review timelines described below.

9. Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215 (June 2003). Written appeals must be submitted within 45 days following the publication date of the legal notice of this decision in the Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, South Dakota. The publication date of the legal notice of the decision in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Appellants should not rely on date or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Paper appeals must be submitted to:

USDA, Forest Service, Region 2
Attn: Appeal Deciding Officer
740 Simms St.
Golden, Colorado 80401

Appeals may be hand-delivered to the office address above between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays.

Electronic appeals must be submitted to: appeals-rocky-mountain-regional-office@fs.fed.us. In electronic appeals, the subject line should contain the name of the project being appealed. Electronic appeals must be submitted and readable in Microsoft Word, Rich Text or PDF format. When an appeal is electronically mailed, the appellant should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement confirming agency receipt. If the appellant does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of the appeal, it is the appellant's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means (36 CFR 215.15(c)(3)).

It is the appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient project- or activity-specific evidence and rationale, focusing on the decision, to show why my decision should be reversed. The appeal must be filed with the appeal deciding officer in writing. At a minimum, the appeal must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14, and include the following information:

- the appellant's name and address, with a telephone number, if available;
- a signature, or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the appeal);
- when multiple names are listed on an appeal, identification of the lead appellant and verification of the identity of the lead appellant upon request;
- the name of the project or activity for which the decision was made, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the date of the decision;
- the regulation under which the appeal is being filed, when there is an option to appeal under either 36 CFR 215 or 36 CFR 251, subpart C;
- any specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks and rationale for those changes;
- any portion(s) of the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement;


- why the appellant believes the Responsible Official's decision failed to consider substantive comments; and
- how the appellant believes the decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy.

Notices of appeal that do not meet the requirements of 36 CFR 215.14 may be dismissed.

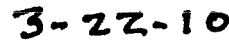
10. Contacts

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Tom Willems, Travel Management Planner, or Frank Carroll, Planning and Public Affairs staff officer, Black Hills National Forest, 1019 North 5th Street, Custer, South Dakota 57730, (605) 673-9200.

11. Signature and Date



CRAIG BOBZIEN
Forest Supervisor



Date

Appendix A: Design Criteria and Mitigation

Tables and narrative included in Appendix A reflect changes from the FEIS Appendix B design criteria, based upon the routes selected under the Decision.

Engineering and Transportation

Roads and trails that make up the Forest transportation system will be constructed and maintained, to the extent practical, in accordance with Forest Service design standards and R2 Watershed Conservation Practices Handbook.

Botanical Resources

Design criteria would be developed for the following routes to avoid or mitigate damage to R2 sensitive plant species, Forest plant species of local concern, M.A. 3.1 Botanical Areas, and riparian/wetland/fen areas (see Table A-1, next page).

Cultural Resources

The USDA Forest Service, in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, developed a policy statement in February 2005 designed to address specific issues related to the designation of motorized vehicle systems on the nation's national forests (USDA Forest Service 2005e). The policy stated that only certain elements of the 2005 Travel Management Rule are to be considered undertakings with the potential to affect historic properties, triggering evaluation under Section 106 of NHPA and 36 CFR §800. The categories cited are:

- construction of a new road or trail;
- authorization of motor vehicle use on a route currently closed to vehicles; and
- formal recognition of a user-developed (unauthorized) route as a designated route open to motor vehicles.

The following indicators are used to measure effects to cultural resources:

- number of historic properties within unauthorized routes at risk from ongoing use
- degree to which the integrity of historic property values are diminished

The magnitude of effect to a historic property's integrity determines the severity of any direct, indirect, or cumulative effects. A four-category system is utilized: no/negligible, minor, moderate, and major. These categories represent a progressive scale that provides a qualitative assessment of the severity of any direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to the integrity of a cultural resource site.

No distinction is made between "no" effect and "negligible" effect. The majority of cultural resources in the project area have been impacted by some type of motorized activity. The most innocuous effects can be described as "negligible" as opposed to "none." In either case, the effect to historic properties is minimal and no protection measures are required.

If the severity of effect is determined to be minor, some type of protection measure may be required. In nearly all cases the preferred method will be to include the site in a well-defined monitoring plan designed to ensure that the minor degree of disturbance (or potential for disturbance) initially noted does not exhibit a tendency to increase in severity over time.

TableA-1. Routes requiring design criteria, removal or rerouting to avoid impacts to special status plant species or areas

Species	Occurrence	Route number	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. B Modif.
Routes to be designed, removed, or rerouted to avoid impacts to Region 2 sensitive species						
Bearlodge Ranger Dist.						
<i>Botrychium campestre</i>	BOCA5-8	872.3		X		
<i>Botrychium lineare</i>	BOLI7-1	864.1 (outside Dugout Gulch Botanical Area)	X	X		
<i>Carex alopecoidea</i>	CAAL8-12	U71002	X			
	CAAL8-31	841.1L	X	X		X
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	CYPA19-10	863.2C	X	X		
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> var. <i>americanum</i>	VIOPA2-2, VIOPA2-16	864.1 (in Dugout Gulch Botanical Area)	X	X		
	03DUG3A, 94S460B	U650017	X	X		
Northern Hills Ranger Dist.						
<i>Carex alopecoidea</i>	CAAL8-22	U710024		X		
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	950070B	U080045	X	X	X	
<i>Platanthera orbiculata</i>	01G040	CZ0418 U010076	X	X		
	PLOR4-18	U010071	X	X		
<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	SACA13-2	567.1F	X	X	X	
	SACA13-2	172.1A	X	X	X	
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> var. <i>americanum</i>	VIOPA2-4	U080156	X	X		
	980010	CZ4846	X	X		X
Mystic Ranger Dist.						
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i>	CYPA19-2	CZ1790	X	X	X	
Routes requiring design criteria to avoid impacts to Black Hills NF plant species of local concern						
Mystic Ranger Dist.						
<i>Gentiana affinis</i>	07M008A	CZ4927		X		
Hell Canyon Ranger Dist.						
<i>Gentiana affinis</i>	GEAF-4	HC9	X	X		
	07B040A	CZ3526	X	X		
	07B042	HC1	X	X		
Routes requiring design criteria to avoid impacts to M.A. 3.1 Botanical Areas						
Bearlodge Ranger Dist.						
Dugout Gulch Botanical Area		864.1C	X	X		
		864.1	X	X		
		864.1A	X			
Routes requiring design criteria to avoid impacts to fens						
Mystic Ranger Dist.						
South Fork Castle Creek fen		385.1A	X	X	X	
Newton Fork fen		304.1L	X	X	X	

If the severity of effect is determined to be moderate, some type of protective measure is required. In most cases, the preferred method will be to cap the site with a geotextile material and cover the fabric with a protective barrier most frequently composed of crushed rock, thereby eliminating the potential for effects to cultural resources.

If the severity of effect is determined to be major, more complex and potentially costly mitigation measures are required to prevent adverse effects to the resource. In most cases, the only viable option may be to reroute the road/trail around the resource.

If, during the implementation stages of this project, any cultural artifacts and/or features, skeletal remains, or other indicators of past human activities are encountered, all ground-disturbing activities must stop and a Forest Service archaeologist must be contacted. The archaeologist, in consultation with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer and Tribes, will determine the appropriate course of action.

Hydrology and Fisheries

Road/Trail Drainage within the Water Influence Zone

Provide adequate road and trail cross drainage to reduce erosion (guideline 9202e) by installing waterbars/rolling dips within the water influence zone using the following as a guide:

- One waterbar/rolling dip should be installed as close to the stream crossing as possible (on both sides) to redirect concentrated water off the trail and allow for filtration of concentrated water before entering the stream to disconnect the pollutant sources (sediment).
- The waterbars/rolling dips just before the stream crossing should be hardened with gravel to maintain function.
- If there is no opportunity to drain waterbars/rolling dips, small sediment basins should be used to maintain the above water bar/rolling dip spacing.

Table A-2. Spacing for waterbars

Road or trail grade (%)	Spacing between waterbars (feet)
2	250
5	135
10	80
15	60
20	45
<i>Source: SD State University et al. (2003)</i>	

Stream Crossings

- Design and construct all stream crossings and other instream structures to provide for passage of flow and sediment, withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of resident aquatic life (standard 1203). (No native material crossings, gravel or large gravel rocks should be used because these do not protect the stream bottom and banks. They allow sediment to be generated during the crossing of each vehicle.)
 - Perennial stream crossings on the following routes (Table A-3) should be armored or remediated as soon as practicable in this order of priority, if designated on the motor vehicle use map. Prioritization is based primarily on whether a stream crossing was on a user-created route or a proposed new route requiring construction versus an existing system route that was engineered, the level and type of use, degree of anticipated impact, and aquatic resource value.

Table A-3. Priority of armoring or remediation for perennial stream crossings

Route	Stream crossing	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Ranger District
CZ-4895	Rapid Creek		x		Mystic
CZ-3050	South Fork Castle Cr.	x	x	x	Mystic
CZ-3462	Heely Creek	x	x	x	Mystic
CZ-3464	Heely Creek	x	x	x	Mystic
CZ-0886	Heely Creek	x	x		Mystic
MY84	Heely Creek	x	x	x	Mystic
U230014	Tributary – Ditch Cr.	x	x	x	Mystic
CZ-4927	Castle Creek		x		Mystic
U120146	Gimlet Creek	x	x		Northern Hills
CZ-4846	Gimlet Creek	x	x		Northern Hills
MY3	Gimlet Creek	x	x	x	Northern Hills
MY66	Spring Creek	x			Mystic
MY50	Horse Creek	x			Mystic

- Design options for mitigation. (The goal is to protect the stream bottom and banks to prevent sediment from entering the stream or being mobilized when vehicles cross and to prevent widening of the stream.)
 - Bridge
 - Cattle guard (bridge)
 - Arch/half round culvert (width is at least bankfull width)
 - Concrete rails/mats (buried so top of rails/mats is at the stream bed elevation)
 - Culvert (diameter or width is at least bankfull width and buried so stream substrate is in the bottom of the culvert)
 - Other material may be used as it becomes available as long as it meets the goal to prevent sediment and stream widening
- Generally, the road/trail grade to the crossing will be less than 5 percent.
- Minimize fill in floodplains to facilitate crossings to allow flood flows to pass with minimal interruption.
- Perennial stream crossings on the following routes should be monitored annually for the first 3 years if designated on the motor vehicle use map to determine if unacceptable resource damage is occurring to streambanks and riparian vegetation. If so, the streambanks should be mitigated at a designated crossing location per the options identified above.

Table A-4. Perennial stream crossings to be monitored

Route	Stream crossing	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Ranger District
CZ-4829	Elk Creek	x	x		Northern Hills
CZ-4859	Jim Creek	x	x		Northern Hills
CZ-4878	Prairie Creek		x		Mystic
CZ-4889	Tributary – Spring Creek		x		Mystic
CZ-4889	Victoria Creek	x	x	x	Mystic
CZ-4895	Prairie Creek		x		Mystic
CZ-4910	Estes Creek	x	x		Northern Hills
CZ-4927	Slate Creek		x		Mystic
CZ-4928	Newton Fork Creek		x		Mystic
U270093	Tepee Gulch	x	x		Mystic

Closing Roads

- When possible and circumstances permit, road/stream crossings on perennial and intermittent streams on closed roads will have the crossing rehabilitated by restoring the natural shape (**including stream width**) to allow natural flows at all stages by pulling culverts and by removing any fill placed in the floodplain.

Fish Spawning Protection

- The following design criteria should apply for instream construction activities to install, repair or remove road/trail crossings on perennial streams to meet the Region 2 Watershed Conservation Practices Management Measure 3; Design Criteria (c) to keep heavy equipment out of streams during fish spawning, incubation, and emergence periods.
 - In all South Dakota streams classified as cold water streams, when water flow is present, the discharge of dredged or fill material shall not take place between October 15 and April 1.
 - In Wyoming, the period and timing of in-water construction should be adjusted as necessary to avoid conflicts with brown or brook trout spawning from September 15 through November 30.

Wet Areas/Wetland Areas

- Areas not connected to streams that are wet and have riparian/wetland vegetation will be avoided and runoff from the roads/trail will not be drained into these areas.
- Avoid creating elevated roads or trails through wetlands, to avoid disrupting the flow of water through the wetland.

Trailheads

- Do not locate new trailheads or expand existing trailheads in the WIZ (a minimum 100-foot buffer from waterbodies).

Game Retrieval and Road Egress

- Prohibit land vehicles from entering perennial streams where resource damage would occur except to cross at specified points (guideline 9107).
- Vehicular traffic, except for snowmobiles, will be restricted to roads and trails in riparian areas (guideline 9108).
- Walk-in fisheries are closed to motorized travel (guideline 9109).

Dispersed Camping

- Discourage dispersed camping within a minimum of 100 feet from lakes and streams unless exceptions are justified by terrain (guideline 5301).

Range and Weeds

- Any road closures that install impassable physical barriers, such as large rocks or earthen berms that could restrict administrative access, should be done on a site-specific basis with interdisciplinary input.
- Any new road or trail that crosses a fence would have gates or cattle guards installed (consider self-closing gates on trails).
- Roads and trails that experience increase volume of use due to changes from travel management or use patterns will need to be looked at for installation of appropriate sized

cattle guards on roads or trails, or possibly self-closing gates on trails. This would be needed where changes or increased use allowed unscheduled or unplanned livestock movement through existing fences. *(On roads and trails where changes in or increased volume of public motorized travel cause unscheduled or unplanned livestock movement through existing fences, consider installation of appropriate sized cattle guards on roads or trails, or possibly self-closing gates.)*

Wildlife

- The Powerline Trailhead (Alternatives B, C, and D) would be closed seasonally or otherwise designed with barricades placed at the proposed trailhead or otherwise designed to continue to limit parking to one or two vehicles with trailers, before being added to the MVUM, to be consistent with Forest Plan standard 3111.
- The following routes or a portion of these routes would be closed seasonally from April 1 to August 15 to protect nesting goshawks, for the alternatives indicated (Table B-5, next page).

Table B-5. Routes closed seasonally (April 1–August 15) to protect nesting goshawks

Route number	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative B modified
Bearlodge Ranger District				
832.1		X		
830.1B	X			X
U680017	X			X
U680015	X	X		X
U680078		X		
863.3G		X		
U720011		X		
805.3O		X		
875.2B		X		
875.2A		X		
875.2F		X		
806.2A	X	X		X
875.1C	X	X		X
875.1A	X	X		X
U710120	X	X		X
875.2D		X		
875.2F		X		
806.2E	X	X		X
806.2F		X		
806.2B		X		X
806.2G		X		
Northern Hills Ranger District				
733.3E	X	X		X
733.3D	X	X		X
733.3A	X	X		X
733.3C	X	X		X
CZ-3569	X			
U120121	X	X		
U120124	X	X		
U120148	X	X		
U130161	X	X		
Mystic Ranger District				
CZ-4887		X		X
159.1B	X	X	X	
CZ-4878		X		X
389.1K	X	X		X
423	X	X	X	
304.1H	X	X	X	
304.1F	X	X	X	

Appendix B: Forest Plan Changes for Forest Management

Alternative B as Modified changes the existing forest plan direction in the following ways:

Goal 4, Objective 416:

Existing Language: Maintain and construct trails as displayed in the following table:

Nonmotorized trails (1996)	293 miles
Motorized trails (1996)	14 miles
Nonmotorized trail construction	204 miles
Motorized trail construction, or conversion from road to motorized trail	15 miles (per decade)
Total Forest trail system	526 miles (total miles at end of decade)
Reconstruction	100 miles (per decade)

New Language: Maintain and construct trails as displayed in the following table:

Nonmotorized trails (1996)	293 miles
Motorized trails (2009)	36 miles
Nonmotorized trail construction	204 miles
Motorized trail construction, improvement, or conversion from road to motorized trail	700 miles (per decade)
Total Forest trail system	1,250 miles (total miles at end of decade)
Construction/improvement	800 miles (per decade)

Goal 4, Objective 421:

Existing Language: Provide the following road system [Roads, by the end of the first decade]:

Suitable for public use	4,700 miles
Passenger car	1,200 miles
High clearance vehicles	3,500 miles
Roads closed to vehicles	500 miles
TOTAL	5,200 miles

It was determined that the existing values are still appropriate and will accommodate the decision. No change is needed.

Goal 4, Objective 422:

Existing Language: Provide the following off-road travel opportunities:

Category	% of Forest
All motorized travel allowed yearlong	59.1
Seasonal restrictions apply	22.8
Seasonal restrictions-no off-road	3.2
Backcountry motorized recreation on designated trails	1.0
Only OHV travel prohibited	11.4
Motorized travel prohibited except snowmobiles	1.2
All motorized travel prohibited	1.3

New Language:

Provide the following off-road travel opportunities:

<u>Category</u>	<u>% of Forest</u>
Off-road motorized travel allowed yearlong or seasonally (motorized game retrieval and dispersed camping)	24 (dispersed camping overlaps but is not a subset of game retrieval area)
Motorized travel prohibited except snowmobiles	1.2
All motorized travel prohibited	75

Forestwide Standards and Guidelines

Forestwide Guideline 5301:

Existing Language: “Discourage dispersed camping within a minimum of 100 feet from lakes and streams unless exceptions are justified by terrain.”

New Language: “Discourage dispersed camping within a minimum of 100 feet from lakes and streams unless exceptions are justified by terrain. Motorized dispersed camping is allowed only as shown on the MVUM.”

Forestwide Standard 9101:

Existing Language: “Designated and newly constructed Forest Development Roads are open all year to appropriate motorized vehicle use, unless a documented decision shows one or more of the following:”

New Language: “Any new road will be closed to public use unless the project decision approving its construction specifically designates it as open to public use, and until it is so designated on the MVUM.”

Forestwide Standard 9102:

Existing Language: “With regard to management of motorized travel, management areas are designated as allowed, restricted, or prohibited for road, off-road and snow travel. The need for modifying motorized travel opportunities within management areas may be identified during project planning and will be accomplished through project decisions. Existing travel orders will continue in effect as part of the Revised Forest Plan unless changed by management area direction. Motorized off-highway vehicle travel opportunities and restrictions, both those listed in the table below and any modified through project decisions, will be displayed on the Forest Visitor Map or contained in a Forest Travel Order. Implementation of Forest Travel Orders on the ground shall be in compliance with the Forest Access Management Guide.”

New Language: “With regard to management of motorized travel, management areas are designated as allowed, restricted, or prohibited for road, off-road, and snow travel. The need for modifying motorized travel opportunities within management areas may be identified during project planning and will be accomplished through project decisions. Existing travel orders will continue in effect as part of the Revised Forest Plan unless changed by management area direction. Motorized off-highway vehicle travel opportunities and restrictions, both those listed in the table below and any modified through project decisions, will be displayed on the MVUM

or contained in a Forest Travel Order. Implementation of Forest Travel Orders on the ground shall be in compliance with the Forest Access Management Guide.”

Forestwide Guideline 9103:

Existing Language: “Management of motorized vehicle travel is summarized in the following table.” [See table in Plan, p. II-77]

New Language: “Management of motorized vehicle travel is summarized in the following table. Motorized off-road travel is allowed only for purposes of game retrieval and dispersed camping, as shown on the MVUM (except for specific exceptions specified in the Travel Rule).”

Forestwide Standard 9302:

Existing Language: “The need to modify existing allowable trail uses or to identify use types of new Forest Development Trails will be accomplished through project planning and project decisions. Trail use opportunities, both those listed in the table below, and any added or modified through project decisions will be displayed on the Forest Visitor Map or contained in the Forest Travel Orders.”

New Language: “The need to modify existing allowable trail uses or to identify use types of new Forest Development Trails will be accomplished through project planning and project decisions. Trail use opportunities, both those listed in the table below, and any added or modified through project decisions will be displayed on the MVUM or contained in the Forest Travel Orders.”

Management Area Guidelines:

3.31-9102 – **Existing Language:** “Off-road motorized travel is allowed on trails only.”

New Language: “Off-road motorized travel is allowed on designated trails only.”

3.7-9103 – **Existing Language:** “Off-road motorized travel is prohibited.”

New Language: “Off-road motorized travel is allowed only where designated.”

5.1-9101 – **Existing Language:** “Off-road motorized travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Off-road motorized travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

5.1-9102 – **Existing Language:** “Motorized road travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Motorized road travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

5.1A-9101 – **Existing Language:** “Off-road motorized travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Off-road motorized travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

5.1A-9102 – **Existing Language:** “Motorized road travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Motorized road travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

5.3A-9101 – **Existing Language:** “Off-road motorized travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Off-road motorized travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

5.3A-9102 – **Existing Language:** “Motorized road travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Motorized road travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

5.4-9101 – **Existing Language:** “Off-road motorized travel is prohibited from December 15 through May 15.”

New Language: “Off-road motorized travel is allowed where designated by a project decision, but is prohibited from December 15 through May 15.”

5.4-9102 – **Existing Language:** “Motorized road travel may be restricted.”

New Language: “Motorized road travel is allowed where designated.”

5.6-9101 – **Existing Language:** “Off-road motorized travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Off-road motorized travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

5.6-9102 – **Existing Language:** “Motorized road travel is allowed unless restricted by a project decision.”

New Language: “Motorized road travel is allowed where designated by a project decision.”

Appendix C: Record of Decision Map Packet

Whole Forest View Map

Map 1 of 3, South Dakota – South

Map 2 of 3, South Dakota – North

Map 3 of 3, South Dakota – Wyoming