

Development Process Alternative E Updated

Introduction

Alternative E from the 2002 FEIS was developed to provide increased grizzly bear habitat security while allowing management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, and access to private in holdings. Standards were determined through consultation with USFWS and grizzly bear research scientists, and reflect the unique features of biological and social factors (e.g., highways, high quality habitat, residential developments, linkage zones, etc.) found within specific Bear Management Units (BMUs). On-the-ground conditions have changed since 2002 and new information regarding grizzly bear activity in relation to the active bear year has become available. Therefore Alt E was updated as shown below.

Alternative E Updated Description Summary

Alternative E has been updated in the Draft SEIS to 2006/2007 conditions that reflect changes occurring since the 2002 FEIS. Non-discretionary terms and conditions from the USFWS Biological Opinion (2004) have been incorporated (completely or modified due to changes in timing of compliance, based on estimated new Record Of Decision [ROD] signature date) as part of this Alternative E Updated. Administrative use levels have been adjusted based on a change in the active bear year dates (now 4/1 to 11/30 in the CYRZ).

Development Process

Alternative E was updated using the following information which constitutes changes from the 2002 FEIS:

- Adjustments were made to the proposed standard levels in six BMUs (BMU 3: Core Area increased to 59 percent, BMU 5: Core Area increased to 60 percent, BMU 10: Core Area increased to 52 percent, BMU 13: Core Area increased to 60 percent, BMU Blue-grass: OMRD changed to 31 percent, and BMU Myrtle: TMRD changed to 24 percent). This was done through consultation with the USFWS (see 2004 project record: V2 D59 P8). The changes were possible based on the ground conditions which reflected a higher current Core Area value than the 2002 FEIS.
- Road standards for occupied bear habitat outside the Recovery Zones (BORZ polygons) were added. This came directly from the USFWS 2004 Biological Opinion terms and conditions (2004 record: V2 D68 P168: pages 138-139).
- The proposed standard for TMRD in BMU 8 was changed from 20 to 21, based on analysis done to determine standards for Alternative D Modified because the original Alternative E proposed standard could not be met. This was due to the presence of several miles of road outside Forest Service jurisdiction.
- A modified timeline (due to new decision date for this Draft SEIS) to achieve proposed standards was incorporated. The modified timeline used the same number of years allowed to achieve standards under the original Alternative E, but extended the final dates based on the anticipated signature year of the ROD for the FEIS.
- A change in the Bear Year (based on research by Kasworm and Wakkinen documented in their annual progress reports and summarized by Johnson et.al. 2008) was incorporated.

Based on additional grizzly bear den entrance and exit dates from Kasworm's and Wakkinen's research the active grizzly bear year dates were changed from April 1 thru November 15 to April 1 thru November 30 in the Cabinet-Yaak recovery zone (CYRZ). The Selkirk Recovery Zone (SRZ) dates were not changed because the new den entrance and exist dates in the SRZ fell within the original active bear year dates (Johnson et.al. 2008).

- A change was made in the corresponding administrative use in the CYRZ using the updated active grizzly bear year dates. Kasworm and Wakkinen updated the allowable administrative use days in the CYRZ only (personal communication: e-mail from Kasworm to Wayne Johnson on 6/12/2008). The new use days would be: spring 18 trips, summer 23 trips, fall 19 trips, for a total of 60 trips. This is an increase of 3 total days.

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References

Johnson, Wayne (editor), B. Lyndaker, D. Wroblewski, W. Kasworm and W. Wakkinen. 2008. "Bear Year" Definition for the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem. USDA Forest Service unpublished report. Kootenai, Idaho Panhandle, and Lolo NF. Libby, MT. 2pp

Johnson, Wayne (editor), B. Lyndaker, T. Layser, and W. Wakkinen. 2008. "Bear Year" Definition for the Selkirk Ecosystem. USDA Forest Service unpublished report. Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle NF. Libby, MT. 2pp