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Record of Decision

Forest Plan Amendments for Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones

Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests
Lincoln, Sanders, Bonner, Boundary, and Pend Oreille Counties
Montana, Idaho, and Washington



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for
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USDA Forest Service
Northern Region
November 2011

I. Introduction

This programmatic record of decision (ROD) changes the land and resource management plans, also known as the forest plans, for the Kootenai (KNF), Lolo (LNF), and Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) by amending the objectives, standards, and guidelines that address grizzly bear management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones.

Planning for units of the National Forest System involves two levels of decision-making. The first level, often referred to as land and resource management planning (often referred to as forest planning), is the development or amendment of forest plans that provide management direction for resource programs, uses, and protection measures. Forest plans and associated amendments are intended to set out forest-wide direction and management area prescriptions or decisions with goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for future site-specific decisions. The plan amendment guides resource management decisions and aids the next level of site-specific planning.

The second level of planning involves the analysis and implementation of projects designed to achieve goals and objectives of the forest plan. This is commonly referred to as site-specific or project-level planning. It requires relatively detailed information on a wide variety of resources including the location, condition, and current uses of individual roads and trails, and the identification of when and where individual roads and trails will be open or closed to various types of use. This step is most often accomplished at the ranger district (local) level.

This amendment does not make site-specific access management decisions within the two recovery zones.

Site-specific decisions on individual roads and trails will be proposed through future project-level planning. These proposals will require public notification and input for identification of issues and concerns and development of alternative actions. This ROD does not directly authorize any specific action; rather, it identifies and selects a programmatic action that sets standards for implementation of site-specific proposals. Site-specific access related decisions made through previous NEPA analyses and with completed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) consultation will not be affected by this decision. The decision on these forest plan amendments will not require re-consultation on previous decisions for access or resource management projects. The standards set in this decision will apply to all future site-specific decisions regarding access management in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery zones (as described in the Analysis Area section of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS), pp. 39 and 40).

II. Background

The IPNF, KNF, and LNF forest plans were approved in 1987. Each of the plans provided similar, but slightly different management direction for grizzly bears, especially in relation to road management. The Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993a) identifies adequate effective habitat as the most important element in grizzly bear recovery. Effective habitat is a reflection of an area's ability to support grizzly bears based on the quality of the habitat and the type/amount of human disturbance imposed on it. Security habitat allows for sufficient space for grizzly bears to roam and effectively use available habitats. By definition, security habitat is an area or space outside or beyond the influence of high levels of human activity. Open roads, vegetation and fuel projects, and high-use recreational areas such as trails or campgrounds are examples of activities that reduce the amount of secure habitat that is available and may result in displacement of bears.

Controlling and directing motorized access is one of the most important tools in achieving habitat effectiveness and managing grizzly bear recovery (ibid). By controlling motorized access, certain objectives can be achieved including minimizing human interactions and potential grizzly bear mortality, reducing displacement from important habitats, and minimizing habituation to humans.

The Recovery Plan recognized that existing forest plans may not provide sufficient direction for the management of roads. It specifically recommended that the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) appoint a task force of biologists to develop a standardized process of addressing open and closed roads. In 1994, the IGBC issued a Task Force Report recommending the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee develop parameters for road densities and core area in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones using the best available biological information, and considering the social and economic impacts of those recommendations (IGBC 1994). The USFWS issued Amended Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statements on the KNF, LNF, and IPNFs' Forest Plans in 1995, 1996 and 2001, respectively, which included as a term and condition that the Forest Service adopt the IGBC recommendations, when developed. Additionally, in 1995 following an appeal of the Kootenai Forest Plan, the Chief of the Forest Service directed the Regional Forester to incorporate, through Forest Plan amendments or revisions, the IGBC Subcommittee recommendations in their entirety.

In response to the IGBC Subcommittee recommendations, an Access Management Task Group was formed in 1996, which developed a set of parameters based on best available science, public input, and social impacts. These recommendations utilized research performed by grizzly bear research scientists Wayne Wakkinen (Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)) and Wayne Kasworm (USFWS). The work of the Access Management Task Group culminated in the following recommendations:

1. Open motorized route density (OMRD) of greater than 1 mile per square mile on no more than 33 percent of a bear management unit (BMU);
2. Total motorized route density (TMRD) of greater than 2 miles per square mile on no more than 26 percent of a bear management unit;
3. Core area of at least 55 percent of the bear management unit;
4. Administrative use that would be restricted to an average of no more than one trip per day on gated roads; and
5. Road density calculations that would be determined by using the Moving Windows Analysis method.

These recommendations were presented to the IGBC Subcommittee in 1998 and Implementation Guidelines were then developed to guide how the Forests would implement the

recommendations. The subcommittee proposed implementation of the recommendations as interim guidelines to be in place for the next three years or until the Forest Plan revisions were completed. The subcommittee approved the Interim Access Management Rule Set (IGBC 1998b) in December of 1998 (IGBC 1998a). Implementation of the Interim Access Management Rule Set was then litigated by Alliance for the Wild Rockies in 1999. The lawsuit contended that the KNF and IPNF could not implement the Interim Access Management Rule Set without first amending their Forest Plans.

In 2001, the Forests settled the lawsuit with Alliance for the Wild Rockies by agreeing to amend their Forest Plans to address grizzly bear habitat management. The LNF, though not named in the lawsuit, was included in the planning process in order to make conforming amendments to its own Forest Plan and to provide consistent management direction throughout the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone. In compliance with the settlement agreement, the Forests released an FEIS in March 2002. On March 24, 2004, the Record of Decision was signed that amended the Forest Plans for the KNF, LNF, and IPNF.

The 2004 Record of Decision selected Alternative E for implementation. This alternative was modified to incorporate the terms and conditions identified in the Biological Opinion issued by the USFWS. The 2004 Record of Decision amended the objectives, standards, and guidelines in the three Forest Plans that addressed grizzly bear management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. At that time, the Forests began analyzing grizzly bear habitat using guidance provided by the Biological Opinion. This included analysis of OMRD, TMRD, core area, and linear open/total road densities for areas of grizzly bear occupancy adjacent to the recovery zones (BORZ polygons).

In November and December 2004, lawsuits were filed in the U.S. District Court of Montana against the Forest Service and the USFWS by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and The Lands Council, and another by the Cabinet Resource Group, Great Bear Foundation, Idaho Conservation League, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Selkirk Conservation Alliance. On August 28, 2006, the Montana District Court ruled in favor of the Forest Service and USFWS in the lawsuit brought by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies and The Lands Council. On December 13, 2006, the Court ruled in favor of the Forest Service and USFWS on most issues, but against them on one issue in the lawsuit brought by the Cabinet Resource Group, Great Bear Foundation, Idaho Conservation League, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Selkirk Conservation Alliance. As a result, the District Court ordered that the 2002 FEIS and 2004 Record of Decision be set aside as contrary to law and that the matter be remanded to the Forest Service for preparation of a new environmental analysis that complied with 40 CFR 1502.22 (a) and (b). Specifically, the court held that the analysis must: (1) acknowledge that study authors Wakkinen and Kasworm were uncertain whether the bears they studied had chosen optimal habitat or whether they simply chose the best habitat available, (2) must take into account the misgivings of the USFWS biologists over the 33/26/55 standards, (3) must consider the findings of other studies measuring habitat parameters in other ecosystems, and (4) must address the status of grizzly bear mortality in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.

On March 20, 2008, Forest Supervisors Paul Bradford (KNF), Ranotta McNair (IPNF), and Deborah Austin (LNF) issued a project initiation letter to the interdisciplinary team to prepare a draft supplemental environmental impact statement (DSEIS) that complied with the December 2006 District Court Order. A notice of intent (NOI) to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the Access Amendment was published in the *Federal Register* on May 13, 2008. A DSEIS was completed and made available for public review in May 2009. The

DSEIS included detailed analysis of Alternative D Modified, as well as updates to Alternative E.¹ Alternative D, as discussed in the 2002 FEIS, was developed in response to comments requesting additional grizzly bear habitat security beyond what was provided by the Interim Access Management Rule Set (IGBC 1998a). However, in the 2002 FEIS Alternative D was not considered in detail, whereas in the supplemental EIS it has been. The basis for the parameters for Alternative D comes from the 1989-1991 home range data of a single 20-year-old female grizzly bear; whereas the parameters for Alternative E Updated came from the 1989-1994 home range data of six grizzly bears. This decision considers Alternatives A, B, and C as presented in the 2002 FEIS and Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated as presented in the FSEIS.

Regardless of this litigation, the Forest Service has continued to improve grizzly bear habitat conditions. Since January 1999 when the Forest Service began working toward achieving the Wakkinen-Kasworm recommendations within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems, habitat conditions for grizzly bear have been steadily improving as existing road miles within the two recovery zones have been reduced. In 2002, the amount of total motorized routes (gated roads, open roads and open motorized trails) within the recovery zones for the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle NFs was about 3,877 miles (DSEIS, p. 120). In 2009 there were about 3,767 miles of total motorized routes, which is a reduction of about 110 miles (FSEIS, pp. 162 and 163). In 2009, the entire Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone had a total of 57 percent core area versus 56 percent core area in 2002. From 2002 to 2009 there has been an increase of approximately 17,773 acres in designated core area. In 2009, the portion of the Selkirk Recovery Zone affected by this proposal had a total of 60 percent core area versus 59 percent in 2002. From 2002 to 2009 there has been an increase of approximately of 3,635 acres in designated core area.

However, the three forests have been working since the late 1980s to create secure habitat for grizzly bears. If one considers agency efforts to comply with Forest Plan direction since that time, overall secure grizzly bear habitat on National Forest System lands (i.e. core area) has increased in the two recovery zones by about 390,000 acres (Selkirks = 74,150; Cabinet-Yaak = 315,850 acres) from the days of maximum road construction and use to conditions in 2009 (FSEIS Appendix C). This equates to more than an 11 and 18 percent increase in core area in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones, respectively, since implementation of habitat security measures began in the late 1980s.

III. Location

The Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones are two of six grizzly bear recovery zones identified in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1993) as areas with adequate space and suitable habitat to support self-sustaining populations of grizzly bears. Located in northwestern Montana, northern Idaho, northeastern Washington, and British Columbia, the two ecosystems encompass 4,560 square miles of habitat. Portions of the Kootenai, Idaho Panhandle, Lolo, and Colville national forests, and Kootenay Lakes Forest District (in British Columbia) are included in the recovery areas (see Figure 1).

This ROD addresses the amendment of the forest plans for the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. Those portions of the recovery zones located on these forests are displayed in Figures 2 and 3. The total area within the recovery zones on the three national forests, including state and private inholdings, is as follows: 1,189,000 acres within the KNF; 163,000 acres within the LNF, and 806,000 acres within the IPNF. The private and state land acreage was quantified, mapped, and analyzed together with national forest lands (including the Colville NF); however this decision only affects lands administered by the three national forests.

¹ Alternative E Updated includes adjustments to standards in eight Bear Management Units (FSEIS p. 12)

IV. Purpose and Need

The purpose and need for action is to amend the three Forest Plans to include a set of wheeled motorized vehicle access and security guidelines that meet the agency's responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears. More specifically, in 2002 there was a need to incorporate wheeled motorized vehicle access and security direction based on: (1) the 1994 IGBC Task Force Report, (2) the Amended Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statements on the KNF and LNF Land and Resource Management Plans, (3) the 1995 decision by the Chief of the Forest Service on the Appeal of the Kootenai Forest Plan, and (4) the stipulations of a 2001 Settlement Agreement in a lawsuit challenging implementation of the Interim Access Management Rule Set (IGBC 1998a) developed by the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee of the IGBC. Issuance of the 2002 FEIS fulfilled item 4 of the purpose and need. See the 2002 FEIS for further background regarding the specific directives related to this analysis and the background discussion above for an explanation of the purpose and need for this analysis that supplements the 2002 FEIS.

V. Description of the Decision

It is our decision to select Alternative E Updated as described within the FSEIS. Alternative E Updated includes the grizzly bear design elements from the FSEIS and also incorporates the terms and conditions of the USFWS biological opinion for these amendments (see Appendix B for a full listing of the design elements and BO terms and conditions).

Our selected alternative amends the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle forest plans to include new wheeled motorized access standards within the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones bear management units (BMUs) along with administrative use levels and timelines. Alternative E Updated removes the existing forest plan standards regarding linear open road density and habitat effectiveness and replaces these standards with limits on Open Motorized Road Density (OMRD), Total Motorized Road Density (TRMD), and core area.

Alternative E Updated also sets linear miles of open and total road standards for areas outside the recovery zones that are experiencing recurring use by grizzly bears, i.e. Bears Outside of Recovery Zones or BORZ. The intent of this direction is to reduce the potential for mortality and displacement of grizzly bears from areas of reoccurring use by grizzly bears outside of but adjacent to the recovery zones (see Figures 2 and 3).

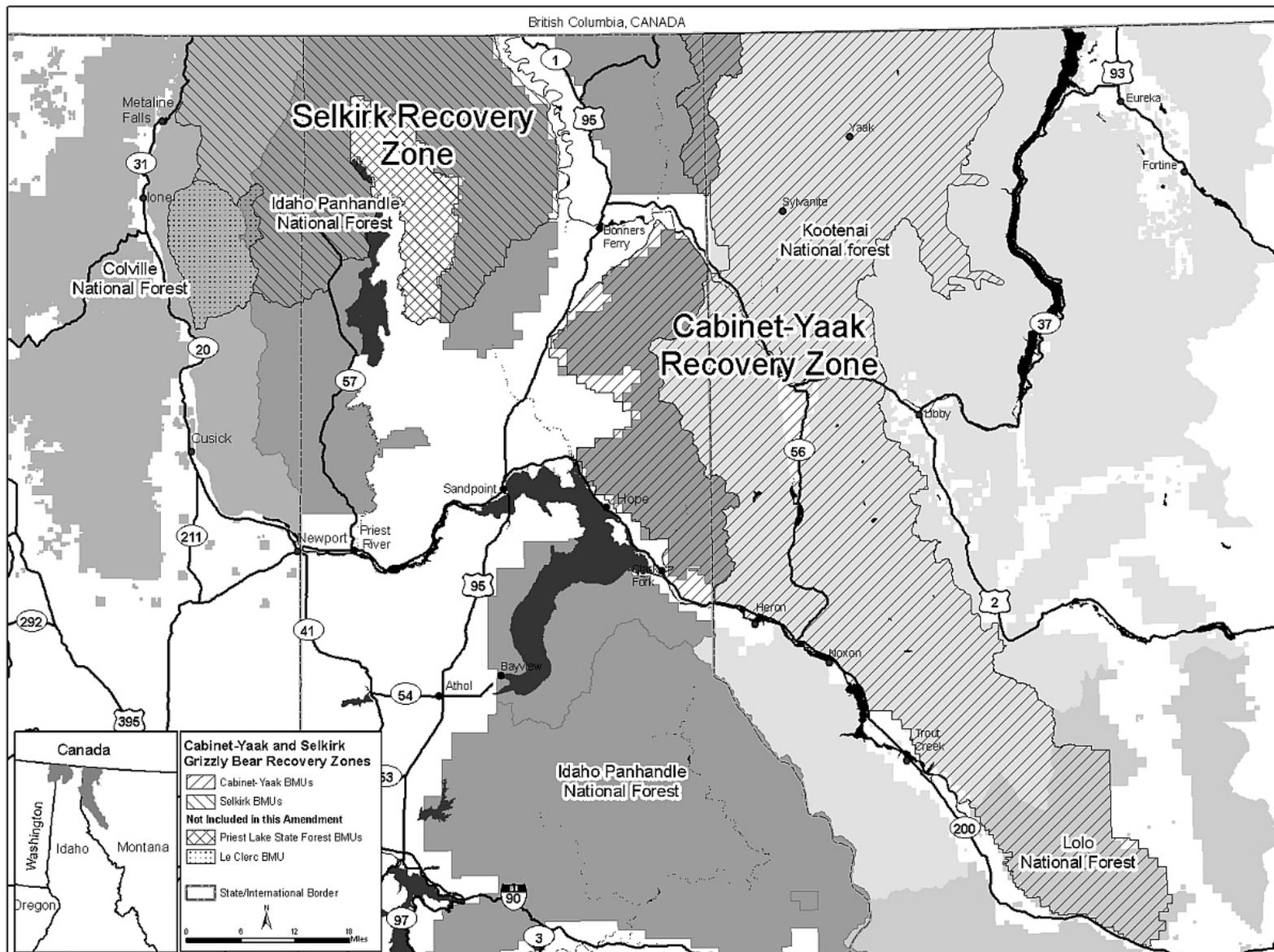


Figure 1. Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones

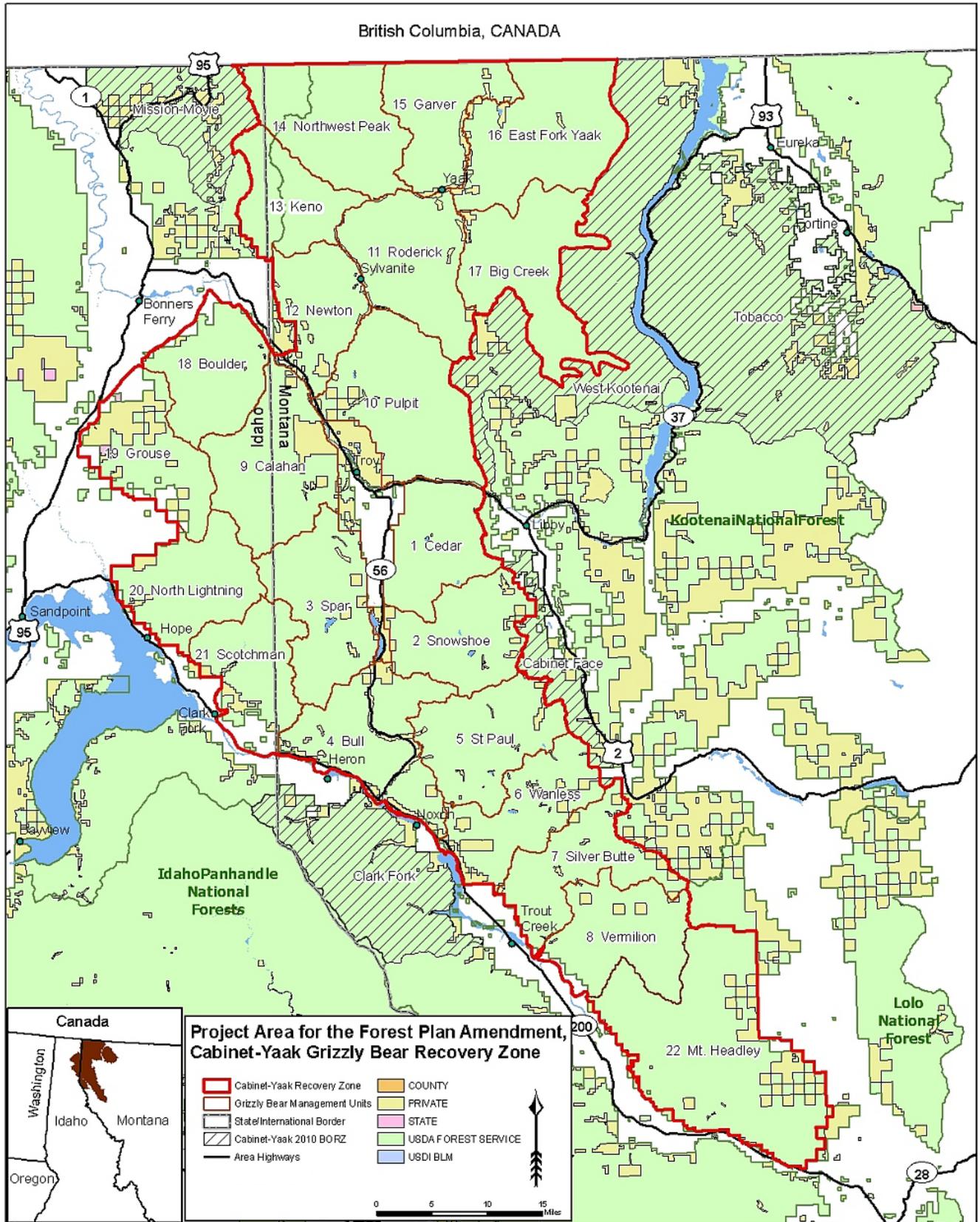


Figure 2. Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone and locations of grizzly bears outside recovery zones (BORZ)

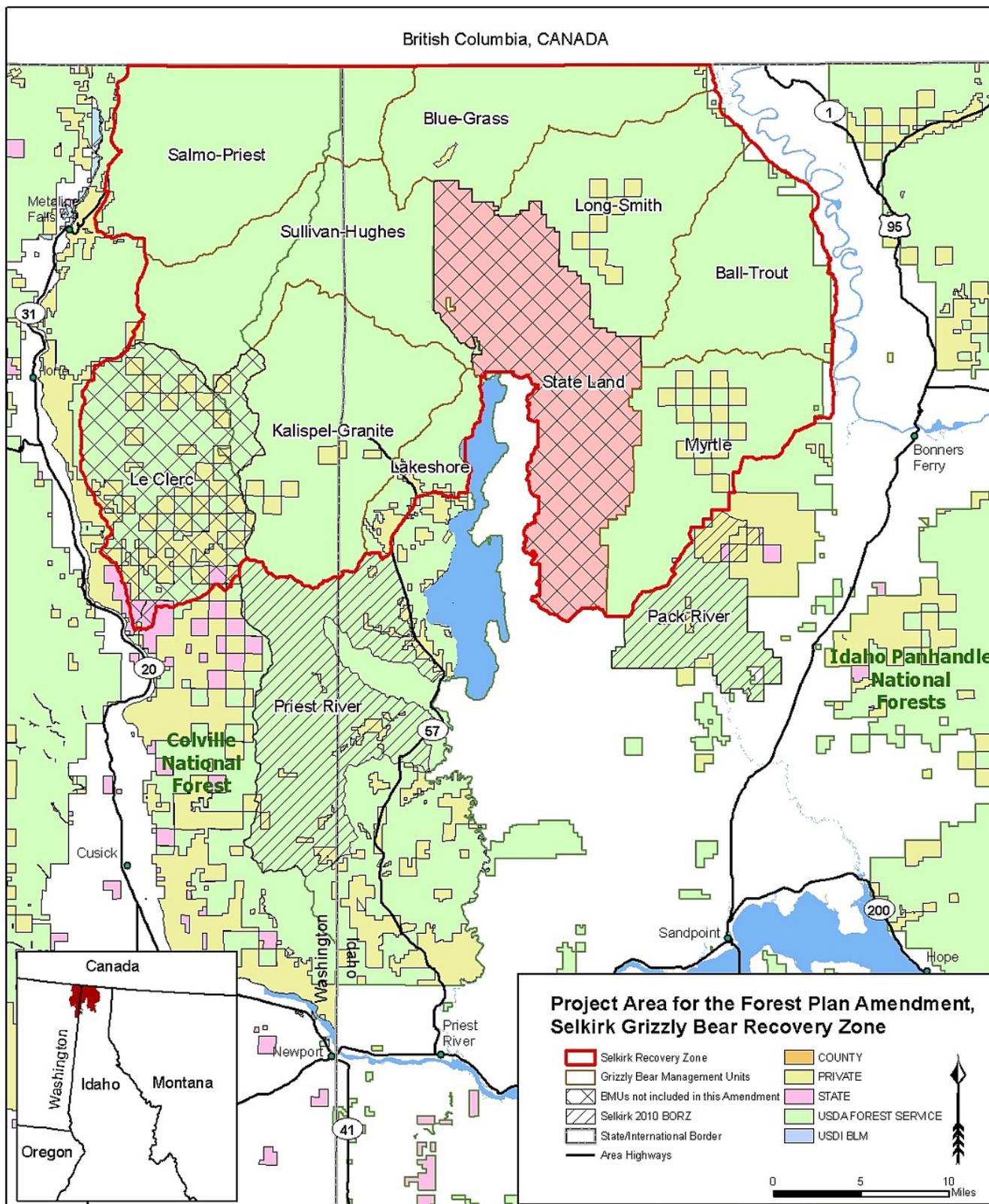


Figure 3. Selkirk Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone and locations of grizzly bears outside recovery zones (BORZ)

Features of the Selected Alternative

With the selected alternative, habitat security standards have been set individually for each BMU. These habitat security standards were determined through consultation with the USFWS and grizzly bear research scientists and reflect the unique biological factors (e.g., high quality habitat, sightings of family groups, human caused mortality, adjacency to BMUs having females with young, and tie to linkage areas), as well as other non-biological factors (highways, access to inholdings, access to popular recreation areas) in specific BMUs. Standards were set depending on the site-specific capability of each BMU. Constraints accounted and deducted for, as they were considered to affect an individual BMUs ability to achieve specific levels of core habitat and total and open motorized route densities included: 1) non-federal land, including corporate timber land, and private land contained within towns and municipalities; 2) public, county, and private roads; 3) some forest roads that function as “through” roads, and therefore, could not be closed without significantly increasing public travel distances between destination points, and popular recreational destinations; and 4) historically and culturally popular recreation destinations (e.g. campgrounds, concentrated fishing locations) with high human use. Figures 2 and 3 display the BMUs while Table 1 and Table 2 display features of the selected alternative.

For those BMUs that currently do not meet standards, implementing changes in habitat conditions to achieve the designated standard will be required for compliance with the USFWS biological opinion. Therefore, in BMUs not meeting OMRD, TMRD, or the core area standard, proposed actions affecting any of these parameters, must result in a post-project movement (improvement) toward the affected parameter’s standard (FSEIS, p. 17).

Research recommended levels² for OMRD, TMRD, and core area are:

- 1) OMRD greater than 1 mile/square mile must comprise 33 percent or less of the BMU;
- 2) TMRD greater than 2 miles /square mile must comprise 26 percent or less of the BMU and
- 3) Core area at least 55 percent of the BMU.

As noted above, each specific BMU has its own set of standards based on biological and non-biological factors. Of the 30 BMUs, fourteen of the BMUs had at least one of the habitat parameters set at a higher level than recommended, six were set at the recommended level and 10 were less than recommended for at least one habitat parameter. Of the ten less than recommended, habitat levels were set to the degree possible while still providing access to private lands and not affecting county roads, through roads or access to popular recreational destinations (see Table 2).

² The recommendations were based on an average of conditions used by grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk recovery zones. Five of six bears utilized habitat with core area values of less than or equal to 55. Three of six bears used habitat with TMRD values greater than or equal to 26 percent. Four of six bears used habitat with OMRD values of greater than or equal to 33 percent.

Table 1. Specific features of the selected alternative

Feature	Discussion
Linear Open Rd Density (KNF, LNF and IPNF)	No standard within BMUs (This means existing standards for grizzly bear will be removed for BMUs from the forest plans for the Kootenai and Lolo N.F. There is no existing standard for within BMUs to be removed from the forest plan for the Idaho Panhandle NF.)
Habitat Effectiveness (Security)	No standard (This means existing standards will be removed for grizzly bear from the forest plans for BMUs on the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle NF. There is no existing standard to be removed from the forest plan for the Lolo NF.)
Point Source Disturbance (a)	The analysis of point source disturbances will be required in site-specific project documents.
Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD) (b) (For all forests, unless specified)	OMRD in BMUs within all three Forests will be set at numeric standards established for each BMU as detailed in Table 2. In BMUs not meeting OMRD, actions affecting OMRD must result in a post-project movement toward the standard.
Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD) (c)	TMRD in BMUs within all three Forests will be set at numeric standards established for each BMU as detailed in Table 2. In BMUs not meeting TMRD, actions affecting TMRD must result in a post-project movement toward the standard.
Core Area (d)	Core area in BMUs within all three Forests will be set at numeric standards established for each BMU as detailed in Table 2. In BMUs not meeting core area standard, actions affecting core area must result in increased post-project core area. Other core area requirements will include consideration for seasonal needs, and core area fixed in place for 10 years minimum.
Administrative Use	60 and 57 round trips allowed per restricted road per year, divided by season within the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones, respectively. Trips within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone are to be apportioned as follows: ≤18 round trips in spring (April 1 through June15); ≤23 round trips in summer (June 16 through September 15); and ≤19 round trips in fall (September 16 through November 30). Trips within the Selkirk Recovery Zone are apportioned as follows: ≤19 round trips in spring (April 1 through June15); ≤23 round trips in summer (June 16 through September 15); and ≤15 round trips in fall (September 16 through November 15).
Public Use Period-30 day	Public Use Periods (30 days) will not be allowed on restricted roads in any of the three national forests.
Mapped areas of grizzly bear recurring use outside of the recovery zones (see Figures 2 and 3) (BORZ)	No increases in permanent linear miles of open road on NFS lands above the baseline conditions identified for the Priest, Pack River, Clark Fork, Cabinet Face, West Kootenai, Tobacco, and Mission-Moyie areas (see Figures 2 and 3). No net permanent increases in linear miles of total roads above the baseline conditions identified for the Priest, Pack River, Clark Fork, Cabinet Face, West Kootenai, Tobacco, and Mission-Moyie areas (see Figures 2 and 3).

- (a) Point Source Disturbance - Pertains to a disturbance originating from a single point rather than a linear feature such as a road. Examples include a drill rig, a campground, a garbage collection site, etc...
- (b) Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD) - Calculation made with the moving windows technique that includes open roads, other roads not meeting all restricted or obliterated criteria, and open motorized trails. The percent of the analysis area in relevant route density classes is calculated.

Note: Moving windows is a technique for measuring road densities on a landscape using a computerized Geographic Information System (GIS).
- (c) Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD) - Calculation made with the moving windows technique that includes open roads, restricted roads, roads not meeting all reclaimed criteria, and open motorized trails. The percent of the analysis area in relevant route density classes is calculated.
- (d) Core Area - An area of secure habitat within a BMU that contains no motorized travel routes or high use non-motorized trails during the non-denning season [non-denning season includes the dates 4/1-11/15 (SRZ) or 4/1-11/30 (CYRZ), inclusive] and is more than 0.3 miles (500 meters) from a drivable road. Core areas do not include any gated roads but may contain roads that are impassible due to vegetation or constructed barriers. Core areas strive to contain the full range of seasonal habitats that are available in the BMU.

Table 2. Alternative E Updated – BMU status and selected standards

BMU	BMU Priorities	OMRD ≥ 1 mi/mi ² (percent)		TMRD ≥ 2 mi/mi ² (percent)		Core Area (percent)		Percent NFS Land
		2009 Status	Selected Standard (max)	2009 Status	Selected Standard (max)	2009 Status	Selected Standard (min.)	
1-Cedar	2	14	15	10	15	83	80	99
2-Snowshoe	2	20	20	16	18	76	75	94
3-Spar	3	27	33	26	26	62	59	95
4-Bull	2	37	36	29	26	62	63	84
5-St. Paul	1	28	30	23	23	58	60	97
6-Wanless	1	29	34	34	32	53	55	85
7-Silver Butte-Fisher	2	32	26	23	23	62	63	92
8-Vermillion	3	33	32	24	21	55	55	93
9-Callahan	2	27	33	26	26	59	55	90
10-Pulpit	2	44	44	29	34	51	52	95
11-Roderick	1	28	28	28	26	54	55	96
12-Newton	1	42	45	29	31	58	55	92
13-Keno	1	34	33	25	26	59	59	99
14-NW Peaks	1	28	31	26	26	56	55	99
15-Garver	1	29	33	25	26	55	55	94
16-East Fork Yaak	1	29	33	27	26	54	55	96
17-Big Creek	2	30	33	16	26	58	55	99
22-Mt.Headley	3	38	33	37	35	51	55	89
18-Boulder	3	31	33	35	29	50	55	92
19-Grouse ^{a,b}	3	60	59	59	55	32	37	54
20-North Lightning	1	36	35	20	20	62	61	94
21-Scotchman	2	35	34	27	26	63	62	81
Blue-Grass	1	33	33	28	26	50	55	96
Long-Smith	1	21	25	14	15	73	67	92
Kalispell-Granite	1	31	33	28	26	49	55	96
Lakeshore	3	82	82	54	56	19	20	86
Salmo-Priest	2	30	33	24	26	66	64	99
Sullivan-Hughes	1	24	24	19	19	61	61	99
Myrtle	2	29	33	20	24	60	56	85
Ball-Trout	2	17	20	11	13	72	69	94

a - Less than or equal to 75 percent NFS lands;

b - Due to the high level of non-Federal lands within the Grouse BMU, existing conditions and standards are calculated assuming no contribution of secure habitat from private lands.

Management direction for the recovery zones prior to this decision (see Alternative B discussion, FEIS, pp. 2-9 to 2-11) provided for 30-day public use periods on one gated road system per year per BMU, if the BMU met prescribed security criteria (FEIS, p. 2-10). With this decision, the ability to provide new public use periods on restricted road systems within the recovery zones will no longer be available on the Kootenai, Lolo, or Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

However, as we have previously stated in this decision, site-specific access related decisions made through previous NEPA analyses and with completed USFWS consultation will not be affected by this programmatic decision. Such existing decisions were considered as part of the environmental baseline in this analysis. We expect this decision to provide for a greater level of habitat security and a greater resulting mitigation for mortality risk to grizzly bears.

Point Source Disturbance (PSD) pertains to a disturbance originating from a single point rather than a linear feature such as a road. Examples include a drill rig, a campground, or a garbage collection site. These disturbances have potential effects and must be mitigated or accounted for in accordance with our grizzly bear cumulative effects model. However, we do not believe this programmatic EIS is the place to address the specifics of PSD. There is no established protocol for addressing PSDs programmatically. Therefore, we believe PSDs are better addressed on a project-by-project basis through the use of our grizzly bear cumulative effects model and project level consultation. While they are disturbances to be considered in site-specific project analysis, they are not a road or trail access issue, and thus, not within the scope of our decision.

Because not all habitats are of equal value to grizzly bear, our decision provides for the future development of a habitat-based access management approach. While new techniques currently are becoming available for a habitat-based approach to access management, the techniques are not yet available for the two recovery zones. Our decision has considered recent scientific information and does not preclude the consideration, use and incorporation of new scientific findings/information in future site-specific decisions. Furthermore, if new and applicable scientific findings and/or information is identified our decision encourages its use for project level activities.

As displayed in Table 1, the selected alternative will also remove for each national forest within the recovery zones any existing forest plan standards regarding linear open road density and habitat effectiveness within recovery zones that are currently applicable to grizzly bear (see also FSEIS, Table 2, p. 17).

Alternative E Updated also provides for some flexibility once all the BMUs in each respective recovery zone meet all their standards. Alternative E Updated allows for increases in route densities and decreases in core area within individual bear management units where the standards have been exceeded (higher than necessary). This flexibility will be limited because any newly created core habitat in these BMUs must stay in place for 10 years (except for emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances consulted on with USFWS). In addition, any projects that propose to permanently reduce core areas by roads shall undergo section 7 formal consultation. This limited flexibility will allow us to address ecosystem restoration needs, including those that may be beneficial to bears.

We do not expect that the flexibility options will be implemented either at the full extent allowable in each bear management unit or widely applied across all of the units. The selected flexibility measures are designed to be and will be used with discretion. Any site-specific project involving road management occurring within the recovery zones that would propose to increase route densities or decrease core area in BMUs that currently exceed standards would be subject to public input, analysis, and consultation with USFWS prior to implementing any such proposal.

Management flexibility will also be provided through administrative use of 57 round trips within the Selkirk Recovery Zone and 60 round trips within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone per

restricted road per year, divided by season³. Such use will include motorized vehicle use in BMUs on restricted roads outside of core areas by agency employees, contractors, and permittees.

Implementation

We estimate that full implementation of the actions needed to reach the prescribed standards of the selected alternative will take eight years from the date of this decision. Thirty-three percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard within each ecosystem are estimated to meet all standards within three years of the amendment decision date; 66 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard within each ecosystem are estimated to meet all standards within 5 years of the amendment decision date, and 100 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard within each ecosystem are estimated to meet all standards within eight years of the amendment decision date. Appendix C details the implementation strategy for achieving the desired conditions of the selected alternative.

While we expect steady progress during this timeframe, actions beyond the control of the Forest Service could delay full implementation. Actions beyond our control include: administrative appeals or litigation of this decision or project-level decisions; budgets to support project-level decisions; or future priorities affecting the project-level decisions. However, since about 1987, we have made progress increasing grizzly bear security within the recovery zones. Secure grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands (i.e. core area) has increased in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones by approximately 390,000 acres (Selkirks=74,150; Cabinet-Yaak=315,865 acres) from the days of maximum road construction and use to conditions in 2009 (FSEIS, p. 11). When the selected standards in all of the BMUs are fully achieved (based on 2009 status) there will be a projected increase in core area of about 19,771 acres within the Cabinet/Yaak Recovery Zone and about 8,144 acres in the Selkirk Recovery Zone (FSEIS, p. 89). With implementation of the selected alternative, core area will be well distributed throughout each of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones (see FSEIS, Figures 8 and 9, pp. 80-81), will most often occur at levels at or higher than 55 percent in each BMU (see Table 2), and occur at levels cumulatively higher than 55 percent across the recovery zones (e.g., the KNF/Lolo and the IPNF) overall (see FSEIS, Table 28, p. 89).

The changes that will occur in OMRD, TMRD, and core area within the BMUs to reach full implementation are non-discretionary and necessary for the Forests to maintain compliance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Incidental Take Statement on these amendments. Once all BMUs in a respective recovery zone meet all their standards, then subsequent projects, within that recovery zone that propose to permanently reduce core area by roads shall undergo independent section 7 formal consultation with the USFWS. Reductions of core area within individual BMUs shall not reduce the percent core area below the minimum standards for the affected BMU without compensating with in-kind replacement concurrently or prior to incurring the losses. However, such proposals are opportunities, not requirements, and would receive a separate NEPA analysis at the time such actions may be proposed, including public comment. Any project that proposes to permanently reduce core will undergo independent section 7 consultation (as appropriate) and will be analyzed given the prevailing conditions and information at the time, including grizzly bear population and habitat indices (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-85).

³ The level of allowable administrative use was based on work in the Flathead National Forest, which found no measurable displacement when administrative use was less than one vehicle pass per day (one round trip every other day). This equates to 57 trips per year, distributed throughout the season. In reality, the level of administrative use is far lower than that as evidenced by annual reporting by the National Forests. Further, there are often seasonal restrictions in administrative use, further reducing the allowable use days.

This amendment will result in a new appendix to the forest plans for the Idaho Panhandle and Lolo National Forests. This amendment is an addendum to Appendix 8 of the forest plan for the Kootenai National Forest (see Appendix A of this ROD).

All three national forests have begun the revision of their respective forest plans. Presently, completion of the revision of the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle forest plans is expected in 2012, while the Lolo N.F. forest plan revision is expected a few years later. The revised forest plans are expected to include the management direction adopted in this amendment.

A. Monitoring/Reporting Requirements

In addition to all existing forest plan monitoring requirements, each of the three national forests shall:

- 1) Meet annually with USFWS to discuss progress made towards achieving established standards for each BMU.
- 2) By April 15 each year, the Forests shall submit annual reports to the Service that detail the progress made toward achieving and maintaining the standards for Percent Core Area, OMRD, and TMRD within the Recovery Zones.
- 3) The Forests shall coordinate with state and federal agency biologists to collect credible grizzly bear observations that occur outside of the Recovery Zone boundaries (i.e., BORZ) and add this information to the 6th-order HUC database for inclusion into the annual report.
- 4) The annual report shall provide an ongoing list detailing the locations, dates, duration, and circumstances for invoking the allowance for entering core area for the purposes of road decommissioning or stabilizations.
- 5) To ensure the effective implementation of the open road density parameter (OMRD), at least 30 percent of closure devices (gates and barriers) will be monitored annually within the respective ecosystems. Monitoring techniques may include visual checks as well as road counters.

Individual ranger districts will maintain records of administrative use on restricted roads within the recovery area, to insure compliance with existing guidelines. Project-level decisions will consider the need for additional monitoring of site-specific activities within BMUs. Application of additional monitoring will be a future decision at the project-level and is beyond the scope of this amendment.

B. Biological Opinion Terms and Conditions

This decision incorporates the terms and conditions of the USFWS biological opinion for grizzly bear and bull trout. For grizzly bear, the design elements of our selected alternative include measures to minimize the effects of some implementation (such as the timeline and gateways for achieving standards; and the sideboards for stabilizing roads within core area). These design elements include many of the reasonable and prudent measures and terms and conditions previously required by the 2004 biological opinion (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2004). Thus, the 2011 USFWS biological opinion did not repeat those features as reasonable and prudent measures or terms and conditions. Because no reasonable and prudent measures were provided for grizzly bear, with the exception of the reporting requirements (see Section A, above), no terms and conditions were necessary. A complete description of

the FSEIS design elements and biological opinion terms and conditions are included as Appendix B of this document.

VI. Rationale for the Decision

We considered five alternatives in detail in making our decision. These alternatives were presented in the FEIS and FSEIS. However, for reasons noted in the ROD issued in 2004, we again have determined not to select Alternatives A, B, or C. In summary, Alternatives A and B do not utilize the most current research; under both alternatives human-caused grizzly bear mortality has continued to occur. Alternative C, in contrast, would conserve bears at the lowest level considered to have a reasonable potential for success. Nothing in our analysis between the 2004 ROD and this decision indicates a need to reconsider these findings. Therefore, the following discussion will focus on our selected alternative (Alternative E Updated) and Alternative D Modified.

Our decision to select Alternative E Updated is based upon the following factors

- Responsiveness to the stated purpose and need.
- Consideration of the Court decision
- Responsiveness to public comment and issues.

The IPNF, KNF and Lolo Forest Plans all include goals to contribute to the recovery of species listed under the ESA. As noted above, the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993a) identifies providing adequate effective habitat as the most important element in grizzly bear recovery. Controlling and directing motorized access is one of the most important tools in achieving habitat effectiveness and managing grizzly bear recovery (ibid). By controlling motorized access, certain objectives can be achieved including minimizing human interactions and potential grizzly bear mortality, reducing displacement from important habitats, and minimizing habituation to humans. However, the Recovery Plan also recognizes the need to integrate the biological, social, valuational and institutional forces toward a common effort involving grizzly bear conservation. A management system that achieves this will have the highest chance of success. Therefore, our decision considers the biological and social elements related to grizzly bear recovery.

A. Purpose and Need/Response to Issue Regarding Increased Security Habitat for Grizzly Bears

The following discusses how our decision is responsive to the purpose and need and the issue identified in the FEIS (page 2-2) stating that the proposed action may not sufficiently restrict motorized access. Part of the purpose and need was the need to incorporate wheeled motorized vehicle access and security direction into the forest plans. In addition, our decision considers the factors the Court found deficient in the original decision made in 2004.

1. Biological

The ESA requires the USFWS and Forest Service, respectively, to base the biological opinion and subsequent agency action on the use of best scientific and commercially available data [16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)]. The IGBC directed that information on OMRD, TMRD and core area be incorporated into the management of grizzly bears and that each grizzly bear ecosystem develop ecosystem-specific guidelines using local data where possible [Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Taskforce Report on Grizzly Bear/Motorized Access Management (Revised), p. 5].

Consideration of findings from studies. The best available scientific information regarding access management in grizzly bear habitat is considered to include two sources. One of these is the research from the South Fork of the Flathead River regarding how road access affects grizzly bears (Mace and Manley 1993, Mace and Waller 1997). This research resulted in development of OMRD, TMRD and core area as management measures for ensuring grizzly bear habitat security. The second source is research from local bear populations that applies the South Fork technology to the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997). The Wakkinen and Kasworm report was peer reviewed by nine biologists, whose comments were incorporated in the final report. Wayne Kasworm, grizzly bear researcher with the USFWS and Wayne Wakkinen, grizzly bear researcher with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game have over 45 years of experience monitoring grizzly bear populations in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems.

Some comments questioned the science that was used in the Wakkinen and Kasworm study (1997). Specifically, comments were received concerning the standards derived from the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm study as not being based on best available science. Commenters claimed the study's deficiencies included the small sample size; two of the six bears in the study being killed shortly after completion of the study; and the uncertainty of whether the bears studied had chosen optimal habitat or whether they simply chose the best available habitat. Comments also claimed the Forest Service failed to consider the interaction between the findings of the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm study and recent population trend information for grizzly bear within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone. Some commenters believed that more stringent standards should be utilized to conserve grizzly bear within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.

Consideration of the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study. For the FSEIS (see FSEIS pp. 45-50 and FSEIS Appendix C), a detailed look at Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997), a review of other applicable grizzly bear management scientific studies, and a review of other applicable science was completed (Allen et al 2011). The review addresses commenters concerns over the adequacy of the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study to serve as the basis for setting motorized access standards within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones for the purpose of contributing to grizzly bear recovery. The review considered the potential shortcomings of the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study, as well as the other applicable science. In addition, the review considered whether the studied bears had chosen optimal habitat or whether they simply chose the best habitat available (ibid).

The Forest Service review of the habitat security conditions available to the six study bears south of the international border showed they did indeed have several large areas of core habitat available to them outside of their home ranges. The composite home ranges of the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk study bears in the U.S. reflected about 28.8 and 41.8 percent core habitat, respectively, versus 39.6 and 41.5 percent core habitat available throughout the respective recovery zones (only in the U.S). These results indicate that bears were selecting habitats with the same—if not more—roads than found within the entire ecosystem. This demonstrates that the core area results from the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) research effort are a reflection of bears actively choosing these areas and not an indication that they had a lack of opportunity to select home ranges with fewer roads (ibid). This evaluation lends additional support to our use of the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study results in developing access parameters for grizzly bears in these two ecosystems.

Consideration of Other Recommendations. The IGBC recommended that in individual BMUs with more than 75 percent federal ownership, the Forests are to: 1) attain 55 percent core habitat; 2) have less than 33 percent of each bear management unit with open motorized route densities exceeding 1 mi/mi²; and 3) have less than 26 percent of each bear management unit with total motorized route densities exceeding 2 mi/mi². These parameters were based on the best available science of the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm study. However, with current land ownership constraints, and public, county, and private roads, achieving these recommendations in all bear management units is not pragmatically possible. The IGBC also directed the recovery zones to develop recommended parameters for road densities and core area using the best biological information and considering the social and economic impacts (FEIS, 1-4).

Both the selected alternative and Alternative D Modified include standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area. The selected alternative and Alternative D Modified include OMRD, TMRD, and core area standards set individually for each BMU based on site-specific capability.

Alternative D Modified was considered in detail in both the draft and final supplemental EIS. This alternative was developed to respond to arguments over the litigation of the 2002 FEIS and 2004 Record of Decision that the Forest Service failed to explain why Alternative D could not have been modified to reflect its feasibility on a BMU-by-BMU basis – similar to that of Alternative E. Alternative D Modified focused exclusively on the biological needs of the grizzly bear and was designed to provide OMRD, TMRD, and core area standards by individual bear management unit (BMU) that achieve higher security parameters for bears (where possible), than recommended by the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study. The basis for these parameters came from the 1989-1990 home range data of a single 20-year-old female grizzly bear. The conditions for OMRD (less than or equal to 17 percent), TMRD (less than or equal to 14 percent), and core area (greater than or equal to 72 percent) were set for each BMU when possible to achieve within Forest Service jurisdiction.

Consideration of Mortality Factors. Kasworm et al. (2009) calculated a minimum population estimate of 47 bears for the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone from 2000 to 2008 with a 78 percent probability of a downward population trend. This included a minimum of 18 individuals in the Cabinet Mountains and 29 individuals the Yaak portion of the recovery zone.

The USFWS estimated that there were approximately 46 bears in the Selkirk Recovery Zone in 1999 by extrapolating previous research (Weilgus et al. 1994) completed on the British Columbia portion of the recovery zone (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1999). Proctor et al. (2007) estimated a population of 58 bears for the entire South Selkirk Grizzly Bear Population Unit⁴. Wakkinen and Kasworm (2004) estimated that the Selkirk Recovery Zone grizzly bear population has a 67 percent probability that it is increasing. Wakkinen et al. 2009 states that grizzly bears appear to be increasing in the Selkirk Recovery Zone both in numbers and distribution based on an increase of sightings of bears, and changes in the distribution of credible sightings (e.g., documented grizzly bear use in areas not previously documented).

⁴ The Grizzly Bear Population Unit is larger (=1,571 square miles) than the 752 square mile study area used to sample bears. Proctor et al. (2007) did not include a population estimate for the original study area, but Wakkinen (2010) reported an abundance of 33 individuals for this 2005 research north of B.C. Highway 3.

Security is an important element of grizzly bear habitat, helping to minimize human-caused bear mortalities. Grizzly bear mortality is an important factor limiting the growth of bear populations in both recovery areas (USFWS 1993). Historically, of the 97 bears known to have died due to human causes in both ecosystems since 1982, at least 73 percent of these occurred near (<500 meters) open roads (FSEIS, p. 55). Therefore, the management of roads is an important tool available to balance the security needs of grizzly bears with the activities of humans (USFWS 1993).

We considered the level of mitigation for grizzly bear mortality risk to be an important factor in making our decision. The greater level of security provided by an alternative, the greater the resulting mitigation for mortality risk. The selected alternative, along with Alternative D Modified were found to provide a high level of mitigation for grizzly bear mortality risk (FSEIS, p. 94). While Alternative D Modified would provide for the greatest amount of core area for grizzly bears (about 1.53 million acres), the selected alternative would also provide a high amount of core area at either full implementation or at standard (about 1.27 and 1.25 million acres, respectively), providing for a high level of mitigation from mortality risk (FSEIS, p. 94). By comparison, the 2002 environmental baseline for these amendments contained about 1.23 million acres of core area; FEIS Alternative C proposed 1.18 million acres⁵ of core area; and core area available in the late 1980s totaled at a minimum about 862,000 acres⁶ in the recovery zones.

The FSEIS provided an in-depth review of grizzly bear mortalities in and around the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones from 1982-2011 (FSEIS, pp. 54-61). Much of the recent grizzly bear mortality is associated with conflicts arising from attractants on private lands rather than conflicts on public lands (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-77). The mortality data indicated that grizzly bear habitat conditions, as related to roads, have improved in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones since the application of wheeled motorized vehicle access strategies began in 1987. Both within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones, there has been a decreasing trend in mortalities occurring over time on NFS lands since beginning implementation of the IGBC guidelines in 1999. Within the Cabinet-Yaak, as the overall population increased over the last two decades (i.e. from estimated 15 in 1993 to 47 bears in 2008) the average number of bears that died due to human causes has remained about the same but the percentage of human-caused mortality occurring on NFS lands has dramatically decreased within each time period. This decline in grizzly bear mortality rates on public land and increase on private lands is noteworthy. Disproportionately more bears are killed on private land than public land. The Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem is 90 percent public land yet human-caused mortality on public land is only about 14 percent of the trend mortality. The Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem is about 10 percent private yet human-caused mortality on private lands in the U.S. accounted for 23 percent of trend mortality. Mortality on private lands in the U.S. has become the largest source of human-caused mortality in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-78).

Within the Selkirk Recovery Zone, there is also an apparent decreasing trend in mortalities occurring on NFS lands within-and-around this recovery zone over time. This is true both in terms of the average number of bears killed per year by time period, and the percentage of human-caused mortality within each time period. Conversely, there was a corresponding increase in both of these parameters on non-NFS lands, including

⁵ 2,158,000 acres within the recovery zones (FEIS p. 1-2) multiplied by approximately 55% core.

⁶ NFS lands only, including the LeClerc BMU.

Canada. Since 1999, about 72 percent and 88 percent of the known human-caused grizzly bear mortality has occurred on non-NFS lands in the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk ecosystems, respectively (FSEIS, pp. 56 and 57).

It is important to note that bear mortality is a function of numerous variables besides the amount and juxtaposition of motorized access alone. Some of these variables include the type and seasonality of hunting seasons, the availability of “unnatural” foods (i.e. human provided--e.g. garbage, agricultural products such as orchards/grain/livestock, or big game carcasses), and the amount and juxtaposition of private property and associated development. For instance, Schwartz et al. (2010) found that survival of grizzly bears was best explained by the amount of human development and ungulate hunting that occurred within the home ranges of bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Therefore, implementing wheeled motorized vehicle access management standards, even if more restrictive, would not completely remove grizzly bear mortality risk due to the presence of other risk factors such as big game hunting, sanitation and agricultural food attractants, and human attitudes toward the grizzly bear. Mace et al. (1996) summarized this situation when he stated that “access management through road use restrictions on multiple-use lands will be of limited mitigative value if habituation and mortality levels are not minimized on or adjacent to private lands”.

Mitigation for grizzly bear displacement potential was also an important consideration in our decision. The greater the level of security provided by an alternative, the greater the mitigation for potential displacement of grizzly bears from preferred habitat. Both Alternative D Modified and the selected alternative were rated “high” for their level of mitigation for grizzly bear displacement potential (FSEIS, p. 94).

The values for the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone, in Tables 6, 7, and 8 include the Grouse BMU. The Grouse BMU is comprised of only 54 percent NFS lands. Inclusion of this BMU in the calculations for the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone contributes high values for OMRD and TMRD as well as low core area values. This skews the averages for OMRD, TMRD, and core area within the recovery zone. Without the Grouse BMU included in the calculations for the recovery zone, the averages for OMRD, TMRD, and core area for the selected alternative improve by one to two percent for each of these parameters at standard (OMRD=32 percent; TMRD=26 percent; core area=58 percent). In all cases, the resultant values are better than or equal to the best science recommended levels for OMRD, TMRD, and core area (FSEIS, p. 91).

The biological opinion for these amendments (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, pp. 81 and 82) found that after all BMUs have reached standards (i.e. 2019), adverse effects on grizzly bears could occur over the short-term through any permanent loss of core area from existing conditions within any individual BMU currently exceeding (being better than) the research benchmarks. Adult female grizzly bears that have established habitat use patterns within a core area may experience significant displacement from an area if a road(s) were built or upgraded, and used. The Fish and Wildlife Service expects that adult females impacted by new roads in core would likely find alternate suitable habitat over time, and adjust their habitat use patterns accordingly. As we have previously stated, any project that proposes to permanently reduce core area would receive a separate NEPA analysis at the time such actions may be proposed, including public comment and undergo independent section 7 consultation (as appropriate). Thus, any incidental take that may result from any future reductions in core area has not been exempted here by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

2. Valuational

We understand some people are opposed to grizzly bear recovery because of perceived adverse effects on lifestyles and the economy. Arguments have been made that restricting the public's use of the national forests can have a backlash effect, resulting in people intentionally killing bears. As public lands managers, we face a difficult decision in trying to balance the need for resource management standards against potential consequences of illegal activities. In considering whether to set higher standards for total or open road densities and percent core habitat, we were concerned with the increased risk of the malicious killing of grizzly bears (known as social jeopardy). Social jeopardy has not been scientifically studied to quantify a cause and effect risk but we believe a true risk exists. In the time that the forests have been implementing their respective forest plan direction for road closures, human-caused bear mortality has occurred in both the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones (FSEIS, p. 55). At least fifteen bear deaths are listed as malicious or are under investigation. Deaths as recent as 2010 and 2011 occurred in Idaho and Montana and are under investigation. We know a segment of our local communities are frustrated and angry with road closures. A small number of people vent their displeasure by shooting signs and taking out gates. As evidenced by the human-caused bear mortalities, some will shoot bears. We believe the loss of bears by malicious intent is a high probability if substantially higher road standards were to be implemented. This is especially true if those roads access popular recreational sites such as fishing access and campgrounds.

While Alternative D Modified would provide for increased levels of habitat security (an increase of about 280,000 acres over current levels) for grizzly bears and other threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, it does not consider the social, valuational, and institutional forces (Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan 1993; IGBC 1994 and 1998b). The Recovery Plan states "that the future of the grizzly bear will depend on integrating, as Kellert (1986) states: 'the socioeconomic and utilitarian values of the general [local] population into the establishment and management of preservation programs... A management system that seeks to integrate all biological, social, valuational, and institutional forces toward a common effort involving grizzly bear conservation will have the highest chance of success.'"

The selected alternative was developed to provide increased grizzly bear habitat security while allowing some management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, and access to private inholdings. It integrates the biological, social, valuational, and institutional forces by considering the IGBC recommendations, inherent capabilities of each bear management unit (including important habitat features), private lands and roads, and important recreation areas (FSEIS, p. 25). It considered factors such as whether or not there was a history of mortality or sanitation related problems associated with important and heavily used recreation sites. It also considered other ongoing efforts, such as efforts to address the attitudes and concerns of the local public. Alternative D Modified would result in reducing the access to up to 22 developed recreation sites. Based on the analysis, Alternative D Modified could result in the closure of six campgrounds, three boat ramps, and three day use areas on the KNF. On the IPNF one campground, one cabin rental, and several day use areas could be affected. On the LNF two campgrounds and a lookout rental could be affected in order to meet the standards under Alternative D. No grizzly bear mortalities have been associated with these sites in the past.

Comments we received on the DSEIS requested that the Forest Service consider how Alternative D Modified could be achieved with lesser impacts to recreation and timber management than those displayed in the DSEIS. An alternative that would modify Alternative D Modified to be less restrictive was initially considered, but after further review it was determined that the alternative was not meaningfully different from other alternatives already considered and therefore, was not given detailed study. Changing Alternative D Modified to consider historically and culturally popular recreation destinations (e.g., campgrounds, concentrated fishing locations, trailheads, etc.) with high human use and road thoroughfares, and provide some flexibility would essentially result in Alternative E Updated (FSEIS, p. 35).

Alternative E Updated best integrates the needs of the grizzly bear with social and economic considerations; therefore, it should have a higher likelihood of social tolerance.

With the selected alternative, core areas will meet researchers' recommended level of 55 percent in 13 BMUs and exceed it in 14 BMUs (see Table 2). TMRD would meet the recommendation of 26 percent in 13 BMUs and be better in 10 BMUs. OMRD would meet the recommendation of 33 percent in 12 BMUs and be better in 10 BMUs. Our rationale for selecting appropriate standards for individual BMUs is summarized in Table 4 (for more detailed discussion see Kaiser 2003). We recognize that the selected alternative provides habitat security at levels that do not meet the research recommendation in 8, 7 and 3 BMUs, respectively, for OMRD, TMRD, and core area (see Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). However, when considered across both recovery zones, the level of security provided is higher than in either existing forest plan direction or current practices. Current core area for the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone is at 57 percent (see Table 5), while the Selkirk Recovery Zone (portion considered with this decision) is at 60 percent. In eight years, upon full implementation of the amendment, core area percent within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone will be 58 percent and within the Selkirk Recovery Zone it will be 61 percent. Even if the maximum amount of flexibility available were to be implemented, core area across the recovery zones would still exceed baseline (2002) and current conditions (2009) (see Table 7). It is important to note that some allowed changes (i.e. increases in road densities or decreases in core area in BMUs that are currently better than standards), though allowed to occur by the standards, might not occur due to other resource concerns (FSEIS, p. 90). In contrast, proposed changes needed to bring deficient BMUs up to standard will be mandatory (FEIS, p. 3-16; FSEIS, p. 18). These standards were not found by the USFWS to result in jeopardy determination for the grizzly bear (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-75).

Table 3. Comparison of numerical effects indicators between the alternatives considered (based upon 2000-2002 status)

Effects Indicator	Alternatives		
	A*	D Modified	Selected Alternative***
Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone (22 BMUs)			
# BMUs meeting $\leq 33\%$ OMRD	13	20	15
# BMUs meeting $\leq 26\%$ TMRD	8	21	16
# BMUs meeting $\geq 55\%$ Core	13	21	20
# BMUs meeting 33%-26%-55% (all three)	6	20	13
Average OMRD (all BMUs) (%)	N/A	21	33
Average OMRD change per BMU (%)	N/A	-11	+1
Average TMRD (all BMUs) (%)	27*	16	28
Average TMRD change per BMU (%)	0*	-9	-1
Average Core (all BMUs) (%)	58*	71	58/57
Net Core change for Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone (acres)	0*	+245,638	+37,538/ +23,749
Allowable administrative use per road	121 trips KNF 15 days IPNF 14 days LNF	60 trips	60 trips
Selkirk Recovery Zone (7 BMUs in Alts A, B, C; 8 BMUs in Alternative D Modified and Selected Alternative)			
# BMUs meeting $\leq 33\%$ OMRD	N/A	7	7
# BMUs meeting $\leq 26\%$ TMRD	N/A	8	7
# BMUs meeting $\geq 55\%$ Core	N/A	8	7
# BMUs meeting 33%-26%-55% (all three)	N/A	7	7
Average OMRD (all BMUs) (%)	N/A	22	31
Average OMRD change per BMU (%)	N/A	-10	-2
Average TMRD (all BMUs) (%)	N/A	15	23
Average TMRD change per BMU (%)	N/A	-9	<-1
Average Core (all BMUs) (%)	N/A	71	61/59
Net Core change for Selkirk Recovery Zone (acres)	N/A	+58,592	+11,779/+1,586
Allowable administrative use per road	15 days IPNF	57 trips	57 trips
<p>* Alt A is inconsistent with IGBC direction in that it does not establish numerical OMRD, TMRD, or core requirements.</p> <p>**KNF and LNF only (N/A on IPNF). LeClerc BMU not included (<75% federal and mostly on Colville NF).</p> <p>*** For the selected alternative the double values for average core percent and net acres of core change represent values at full implementation and at the assigned standard, respectively</p> <p>N/A – Not applicable: The IPNF Forest Plan or Biological Opinion does not contain a requirement for these standards.</p> <p>Bold underlined = best for bears</p> <p>Bold = second best. Where there is a tie for best, no second best is identified.</p>			

Table 4. Selected alternative determination for BMU specific standards

BMU	OMRD Standard	TMRD Standard	Core Area Standard	Rationale for Selected Standard(s)
1-Cedar	15	15	80	Standards are better (higher) than average research levels because the BMU is 99% federal ownership with a fairly high percentage of designated wilderness and designated roadless habitat. This BMU is the northern most BMU in the Cabinet Mountains, which links to BMU 10 in the Yaak portion of the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem.
2- Snowshoe	20	18	75	Standards are better (higher) than average research levels because the BMU is 94% federal ownership with a fairly high percentage of designated wilderness and designated roadless habitat. There were sixteen grizzly bear sightings during the period 1990-2000 in this BMU.
3- Spar	33	26	59	Core area can be maintained at a higher level than the research recommended level. OMRD and TMRD do not vary from research values. The southern portion of the BMU is a linkage zone between Idaho and the East Cabinets. There were two bear sightings between 1990-2000 in this BMU (no female with young). There are five developed recreation sites within this BMU – Bad Medicine and Spar Lake Campgrounds, Ross Creek Picnic Area, Bad Medicine Day Use Site, and Bad Medicine Boating Site. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
4- Bull	36	26	63	The standard for OMRD is within the range of values shown in the research. OMRD is affected by state highways located on two sides of the BMU. Core is better than the average research level because much of the BMU is currently proposed wilderness, inventoried roadless, or wilderness. Eleven grizzly bear sightings occurred from 1990-2000 in this BMU, including three sightings of females with young. There are four developed recreation sites located within this BMU – Bull River Boat Ramp, Bull River Day Use Area, Bull River Campground, and Big Eddy Picnic Area. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
5- St. Paul	30	23	60	This BMU has a high percentage of designated wilderness and designated roadless habitat and is capable of achieving levels above and beyond the research average core level, and below the average OMRD and TMRD levels. This strategy provides some management flexibility while still providing a high level of habitat security. There were eighteen grizzly bear sightings from 1990-2000. One of these included a female with young. The Howard Lake Campground and Bull River Guard Station are located within this BMU. The selected standards would provide for continued public access to these sites.
6- Wanless	34	32	55	Much of the private land in the eastern half of the BMU is owned by Plum Creek Timber Company (PCTC). In addition, several roads in the eastern half of the BMU are currently under County jurisdiction. The selected standards are within the range of values shown in the research. There were twenty-five sightings of grizzly bear from 1990-2000 in this BMU, including five sightings of females with young. There is one developed recreation site located in this BMU – Lake Creek Campground. Access to this campground would be maintained under the proposed standards for this BMU.
7- Silver Butte-Fisher	26	23	63	Standards are better (higher) than average research levels because this BMU is 92% federal ownership and currently has a large designated roadless area adjacent to the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness. There were four grizzly bear sightings from 1990-2000, including one female with young. The Sylvan Lake Campground is located in this BMU. The selected standards for this BMU would maintain public access to this campground.
8- Vermillion	32	21	55	The proposed standards for OMRD and TMRD are better than the research recommendation. Regenerating harvest units that produce huckleberries are well distributed throughout the BMU. There were four grizzly bear sightings from 1990-2000, including one sighting of a female with young. Sightings and telemetry indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most portions of the BMU. Willow Creek Campground is located in this BMU. The selected standards would maintain public access to this campground.

Table 4. Selected alternative determination for BMU specific standards

9- Callahan	33	26	55	The selected security levels do not deviate from the 33-26-55 parameters. The northern portion of the BMU is a linkage zone between the Yaak River drainage, across the Kootenai and into BMU 9. There were three grizzly bear sightings from 1990-2000 in this BMU. Sightings and telemetry are limited, but indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most portions of the BMU.
10- Pulpit	44	34	52	The selected standards are within the range of values shown in the research. Core area, OMRD & TMRD are at the levels that can be maintained without closing access to private land and recreational facilities. The southern portion of the BMU is a linkage zone from the BMUs to the north of the Kootenai River to the BMUs in the Cabinet Mountains, south of the river. There were twelve of sightings of grizzly bear from 1990-2000 in this BMU. Sightings and telemetry are limited, but indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most areas of the BMU except the southerly most portions. The BMU is extensively used by the community of Troy and the surrounding area for a variety of recreational and social traditions There are seven developed recreation sites located within this BMU – Big Horn Boat Ramp, Surprise Gulch Shooting Range, Yaak Mountain Lookout, Yaak River Group Picnic Area, Yaak River Campground, Kilbrennan Lake Campground, and Kilbrennan Lake Boat Site. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
11- Roderick	28	26	55	The selected standard for OMRD is better than the research recommendation. TMRD and core do not vary from research recommendations. There were ninety-four sightings of grizzly bear in this BMU from 1990-2000, including fourteen sightings of females with young. Sightings and telemetry indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most portions of the BMU.
12- Newton	45	31	55	There are major Forest Service arterial access roads that would need to be closed during the non-denning period to meet the research recommendations for OMRD and TMRD. The proposed standards are within the range of values shown in the research. The southern portion of the BMU, at the junction of Highway 2 and Highway 508, is a linkage zone to the south across the Kootenai River into BMU 9. There were eight sightings of grizzly bear from 1990-2000 in this BMU. Sightings and telemetry are limited, but indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most areas of the BMU except the southerly most portions. Two developed recreation sites are located in this BMU. Public access to the Yaak Falls and Red Top campgrounds would be maintained with the selected standards.
13- Keno	33	26	59	OMRD and TMRD do not vary from research values. On-the-ground conditions show that core can be maintained at a higher level than the research recommended. The BMU is a linkage zone between Idaho and BMUs 11 & 14. There were seven sightings of grizzly bear from 1990-2000 in this BMU. One of these sightings was of a female with young. Sightings and telemetry indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most portions of the BMU. There are two developed recreation sites within this BMU – Mt. Baldy Buckhorn Ridge Lookout and the Keno Creek Trailhead. The selected standards would allow for continued public access to these recreation sites.
14- NW Peaks	31	26	55	TMRD and core do not deviate from research recommended levels. OMRD can be maintained at a higher (better) level than the research recommended level. The BMU is a linkage zone between Idaho and BMUs 11 and 15. There were twenty-seven sightings of grizzly bear from 1990-2000 in this BMU, including five of females with young. There are two developed recreation sites located in this BMU – Whitetail Campground and Garver Mountain Lookout. The selected access standards would provide for continued public access to these recreation sites.
15- Garver	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the research recommended levels. There were twenty-three sightings of grizzly bear from 1990-2000, including eleven of females with young during this period. Sightings and telemetry indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most portions of the BMU. This BMU has two developed recreation sites - Pete Creek Campground and Upper Ford Guard Lookout. The selected standards would allow for continued public access to these recreation sites.
16- East Fork Yaak	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the research recommended levels. There were thirty-seven sightings of grizzly bear from 1990-2000 in this BMU, including three sightings of females with young. Sightings and telemetry indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most portions of the BMU. There is one developed recreation site

Table 4. Selected alternative determination for BMU specific standards

				located within this BMU – Caribou Campground. The selected standards would allow for continued public access to this recreation site.
17- Big Creek	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from research recommended levels. BMU 17 is not directly part of a linkage zone, but it is the closest BMU in the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem to the linkage zone to the NCDE through the Stryker area. There were thirty-nine sightings of grizzly bear which occurred in this BMU from 1990-2000. One of these sightings included a female with young. Sightings and telemetry indicate bear use has occurred in all seasons and most portions of the BMU. The Big Creek Baldy Lookout is located in this BMU. The selected standards for this BMU would maintain public access to this recreation site.
18-Boulder	33	29	55	Sets a higher TMRD because of numerous roads accessing private lands in NW corner of this BMU. There are a few private residences in NW portion of BMU, and numerous residential and agricultural developments just outside northern and northwestern boundary of this BMU. In the Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) this BMU was listed as a priority (3) BMU. The BMU is part of a linkage zone and borders Highway 200 on the Idaho side, although it is across the Kootenai River from the highway. The Black Mountain Lookout Cabin is a recreation site located within this BMU. The selected standards for this BMU maintain public access to this recreation site.
19-Grouse	59	55	37	This BMU is unique in that almost half of it resides in non-federal ownerships. Because of numerous private in holdings and the associated ownership pattern standards for OMRD and TMRD are set higher and core is set lower. There are numerous private inholdings, many with residences or other structures within or immediately adjacent to BMU boundaries in the Twentymile, Trail, Grouse, Gold, and Rapid Lightning Creek drainages. There are also two small communities (Naples and Elmira) within 1 mile of the BMU western boundary. The selected habitat parameters set at a level that is achievable given the private inholdings. There is a relatively small amount of high quality seasonal foraging habitat in this BMU. In the Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) this BMU was listed as a priority (3) BMU. This BMU is part of a linkage zone and is adjacent to the McArthur Lake Wildlife Corridor, which represents a point where the Selkirk Mountains and Cabinet Mountains are in closest proximity to one another. Developed recreation sites located in this BMU include the Lunch Peak Lookout site and Grouse Falls Trailhead. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
20-N. Lightning	35	20	61	Sets a higher OMRD due to configuration of arterial roads; however, the standard is within the range of values shown in the research. The value for OMRD is primarily due to two major public routes (North Lightning and Trestle Creek Roads) and the configuration and topography of the BMU, which requires a winding road course across the BMU. TMRD is better than the research value. Higher core value results from Bee Top roadless area and other areas between major drainages. This BMU has large blocks of core habitat that grizzly bears would most likely utilize during home range movements while minimizing potential encounters with humans. The lower TMRD value results from the Lightning Creek Restoration Project. Spring habitat is restricted to private lands and the bottoms of Trestle and Trout Creek drainages. The higher elevation habitat contributes high quality forage (huckleberries, as well as other preferred species) resulting from older harvest areas and fires. The Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) listed this as a priority (1) BMU. There are numerous private inholdings, many with residences or other structures within or immediately adjacent to this BMU's westerly boundary. There is also the community of Hope, which lies on the southwest boundary of the BMU. There are three developed recreation sites within this BMU, including Huckleberry Campground, the Moose Lake Trailhead, and the Lunch Peak Trailhead. The selected standards for this BMU would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
21- Scotchman	34	26	62	OMRD is not as good as research average level due to high densities on private ownership; however the standard is within the range of values shown in the research. Most of the roads in this BMU are located in the southern quarter of the BMU and are associated with non-federal lands. Higher core value results from roadless area and TMRD does not deviate from research value. This BMU has large blocks of core area that are connected to core area in adjacent BMUs to the east. In the Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) this BMU was listed as a priority (2)

Table 4. Selected alternative determination for BMU specific standards

				BMU based on sightings of family groups, credible sightings, human-caused mortalities, and adjacent BMUs having females with young. Porcupine Lake Campground is located within this BMU. The selected standards for this BMU would maintain public access to this recreation site.
22-Mt.Headley	33	35	55	A higher TMRD was set because the amount and pattern of private ownership. There is high quality habitat occurring in a large undisturbed area in the center of the BMU (Cube Iron/Silcox proposed wilderness and roadless areas north to Benson and Lone Tree peaks). This BMU is a major portion of the Cabinet-Yaak to Bitterroot Linkage Zone (identified by Servheen 2001). This bear unit is the closest point to the Bitterroot ecosystem and there are some large roadless land areas immediately south of the bear unit. This bear unit is likely occupied, but this was not confirmed and no female observations had been confirmed by 2000. Public access to the Fishtrap Creek and Fishtrap Lake Campgrounds, and the Cougar Mountain Lookout rental recreation sites would be maintained under the selected standards for this BMU.
Blue-Grass	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the 33-26-55 parameters. This BMU contains a variety of seasonal foraging habitats, as well as important denning habitat. In the Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) this BMU was listed as a priority (1) BMU. There is a private inholding near the middle of the BMU. Access to this inholding must be granted through the United States.
Long-Smith	25	15	67	This BMU is better than research average values for core area and road densities due to high quality habitat, low road densities, and an elevated level of habitat effectiveness. The western side of this BMU contains high elevation habitat that was affected by the Trapper Peak fire and now provides high quality forage in the form of berry fields. In the Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) this BMU was listed as a priority (1) BMU based on sightings of family groups, credible sightings, human-caused mortalities, and adjacent BMUs having females with young. Two developed recreation sites are located in this BMU - West Fork Cabin and Shorty Peak Lookout. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
Kalispell-Granite	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the 33-26-55 parameters. High quality spring habitats are more common within this bear management unit than are generally found within most other BMUs. Quality denning habitat also exists in this BMU. This BMU is considered as occupied and also occupied by female bears. The majority of the grizzly bear occurrences occur within the spring season with the late, summer/fall season being the next highest period of use. Grizzly bear use is normally documented each year within this BMU. There are no private residential lands, thus no private residential development in this BMU. Four developed recreation sites are located in this BMU, including Stagger Inn Campground, Granite Falls Trailhead, Boulder Meadows Horse Camp, and the Road 302 Snowmobile Trailhead. The selected standards for this BMU would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
Lakeshore	82	56	20	Achieving the research average values was not considered feasible due to the small size of the BMU and its close proximity to developed residential areas. The proposed standards maintain existing conditions. High quality spring habitats are more common within this BMU than are generally found within most other BMU's. This was the rationale for adding this BMU along with the Kalispell-Granite BMU to the recovery area in 1994. Spring habitat is generally well distributed. The majority of the grizzly bear occurrences occur within the spring season. This BMU has a high potential for human-bear interactions. Private residential properties that exist and also which may be added in the future will likely continue to encroach on spring range. Distillery Bay, Bottle Bay, and Beaver Creek Campgrounds are located in this BMU. The Navigation Trailhead is also located within the Lakeshore BMU. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
Salmo-Priest	33	26	64	Level of core habitat is better than the average research values because of the proportion of designated wilderness within the BMU. OMRD and TMRD do not deviate from research values. High quality spring habitat is less common within this BMU largely as a result of topography and elevation. Quality summer habitat is abundant throughout the BMU. Denning habitat is also abundant. This BMU is considered occupied, including with female bears.

Table 4. Selected alternative determination for BMU specific standards

Sullivan-Hughes	24	19	61	The levels of core habitat would exceed the 55 percent level based on the proportion of designated wilderness, which is located within the BMU and also because of the low percentage of core habitat, which would be managed for within the Lakeshore BMU. Summer berry fields are generally associated with past timber management areas, open canopied timber stands and numerous smaller scale older burns. Quality denning habitat is located in this BMU. This BMU is considered occupied, including by female bears. There are three developed recreation sites located in this BMU. Plowboy, Geisinger, and Navigation Campgrounds are located in this BMU. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
Myrtle	33	24	56	Selected standards reflect ownership patterns and lower total motorized road densities. The large Sundance Burn occupies about a third of the Myrtle BMU. It provides huckleberries as well as other preferred species such as mountain ash. The burn has high quality forage, and is increasing in available cover as vegetation grows. Approximately 1/3 of the BMU is part of the Myrtle Creek Game Preserve, where no hunting is allowed. In the Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) this BMU was listed as a priority (2) BMU. In the past, there have been numerous unconfirmed sightings of family groups. While not immediately adjacent, this BMU is part of a linkage zone and represents the easternmost portion of the Selkirk Recovery Zone, and as such is closest to the McArthur Lake Wildlife Corridor. Roman Nose Trailhead and Campground and Harrison Lake Trailhead are located in this BMU. The selected standards would maintain public access to these recreation sites.
Ball-Trout	20	13	69	This BMU is better than the average research values for core and road densities due to high quality habitat, low road densities, and an elevated level of habitat effectiveness. The Ball Trout BMU has a large proportion of unroaded habitat, with several popular trails. Management designs have limited the number of users in this backcountry area to a level deemed to be compatible with bear recovery. In the Final Interim Road Management Strategy (1998) this BMU was listed as a priority (2) BMU. Upper Trout Creek Trailhead is located within this BMU. The selected standards for this BMU would maintain public access to this site.

Note: Gray shading Denotes a deviation from the recommended standard(s) of less than or equal to 33% OMRD, less than or equal to 26% TMRD, or greater than or equal to 55% Core Area

Table 5. Rating of alternatives by non-numerical effects indicators

Effects Indicator	Alternative		
	A	D Modified	Selected Alternative
Contributes to achieving Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan objectives and consistent with IGBC Access Direction	Partial	Partial	<u>Yes</u>
Consistent with ESA Section 7(a)(1) requirement to conserve listed species	Partial	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Consistent with ESA Section 7(a)(2) requirement to avoid jeopardizing continued existence of listed species	No	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Utilizes best available scientific information	Partial	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Level of mitigation for grizzly bear mortality risk	Medium	<u>High</u>	<u>High</u>
Level of mitigation for grizzly bear displacement potential	Medium	<u>High</u>	<u>High</u>
Provides for future development of habitat-based access management approach	No	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>

Alternatives that are **best** for grizzly bears under each criterion are identified with bold underlined letters.

Table 6. Summary of the number of acres and percent core area from 2002 (i.e., environmental baseline) to 2009 current conditions and the two phases of the Selected Alternative

Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone	Core Area Habitat (Total Acres/Percent of Recovery Zone)			
	Environmental Baseline 2002 ¹	Current Conditions 2009	Selected Alternative at Full Implementation (≤8 years)	Selected Alternative At Standard
Selkirk	303,817 (59%)	307,452 (60%)	315,596 (61%)	305,403 (59%)
Cabinet-Yaak	924,444 (56%)	942,217 (57%)	961,982 (58%)	948,193 (58%)

¹2002 represents the ESA Section 7 consultation baseline per the 2004 Biological Opinion on motorized access (USFWS 2004).

Table 7. Summary of changes in acres of core area from 2002 (i.e. environmental baseline) to various identifiable time periods including the 2009 current conditions and two phases of the Selected Alternative

Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone	Changes in Core Area Habitat (Total Acres) for Identifiable Time Periods				
	2002 to 2009	2002 to 2019 Full Implementation	2009 to 2019 Full Implementation	2002 to 'At Standard'	2009 to 'At Standard'
Selkirk	3,635	11,779	8,144	1,586	-2,049
Cabinet-Yaak	17,773	37,538	19,771	23,749	5,981
Combined	21,408	49,317	27,915	25,335	3,932

Table 8. Summary of changes in percent OMRD and TMRD from 2002 (i.e. environmental baseline) to 2009 current conditions and the two phases of the Selected Alternative

Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone	Access Parameter (Percent)				
	Motorized Access Parameter	Environmental Baseline 2002 ¹	Current Conditions 2009	Selected Alternative Full Implementation (≤8 years)	Selected Alternative At Standard
Selkirks	OMRD	28	29	≤31	31
	TMRD	23	22	≤23	23
Cabinet-Yaak	OMRD	33	33	≤33	33
	TMRD	29	28	≤28	28

¹2002 represents the ESA Section 7 consultation baseline per the 2004 Biological Opinion on motorized access (USFWS 2004).

3. Social-structural

We recognize that other steps can be taken to help reduce grizzly bear mortalities. These include hunter certification programs, sanitation, law enforcement, and education. These efforts are ongoing agency actions separate from this specific decision. While the Forest Service and other agencies currently are pursuing actions to address these elements (FSEIS, pp. 6 to 9), they are beyond the scope of this decision, which pertains to the access management element. The following summarizes these other ongoing agency actions:

Hunter certification: Some of human-caused mortality that occurs on NFS lands is tied to legal state big game hunting seasons when hunters frequent areas within the recovery zones. Seventeen percent (12 total) of all human-caused mortality involved hunting-season associated deaths where grizzlies were killed in “secure” habitat (i.e., more than 0.31 miles from an open road). To address this, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks instituted a voluntary bear identification course for hunters in 2001 and made it mandatory in 2002 to assist with reducing grizzly bear mortality within the state. The state wildlife management agencies for Idaho and Washington have recently agreed to a request to institute similar programs in their respective states (FSEIS, p. 6).

Sanitation: Attraction of grizzly bears to improperly stored food and garbage is identified by the Recovery Plan as one of the principal causes of grizzly bear mortality (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1993). In many cases, management removals of grizzly bears are the result of bears becoming habituated to unnatural food sources such as human food or garbage. The FSEIS, pages 6 and 7, summarizes the sanitation measures that have taken place on the three forests. In 2011, the three forests are implementing mandatory food storage orders for those portions of the forests included within the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems

Law enforcement: An active law enforcement program can be a deterrent against illegal grizzly bear mortality. The Forest Service actively cooperates with State and Federal law enforcement officials concerning any illegal killings of grizzly bears. Most grizzly bear poachings occur during legal hunting seasons for other species (Knick and Kasworm 1989). In the Selkirk and Cabinet/Yaak ecosystems, humans have been responsible for the death of at least 97 grizzly bears since 1982, the majority of which occurred during big-game hunting seasons. Enforcement patrols and in-field educational efforts are therefore a high priority during these periods.

In Northern Idaho, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game administers the Grizzly Bear Enforcement and Education Program, the goal of which is to reduce human-caused mortalities of grizzly bears in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems in Idaho. Under this program, extensive field patrols are conducted throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

Education: Public education is an important element of any program designed to reduce grizzly bear mortalities. Through education, people can learn to live in a way that is more compatible with the needs and behaviors of bears. Education programs can reduce bear mortalities in instances of self-defense and habituation to unnatural foods. The Forest Service and cooperating agencies maintain a regular program of public information and education within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones – see FSEIS, page 8 and 9.

4. Institutional

Based on the preceding discussion, we have concluded that, of the alternatives considered, in both the FEIS and FSEIS, our selected alternative best provides for an overall improvement in the habitat security needs of the grizzly bear while considering social, valuational, and institutional needs emphasized by the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan and IGBC. In summary:

- Alternative D Modified partially contributes to Recovery Plan objectives, is fully consistent with ESA, utilizes best available scientific information, and provides the highest levels of mitigation for grizzly bear mortality and displacement risk. However, as we have previously stated, Alternative D Modified does not consider the social, valuational, and institutional forces per the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan; therefore, we believe it has a lower chance of achieving the purpose and need for action than does the selected alternative.
- Alternative E fully contributes to Recovery Plan objectives, is fully consistent with ESA, utilizes best available scientific information, provides a high level of design for preventing displacement, disturbance and mortality on NFS lands, and incorporates the consideration of social, valuational, and institutional needs. It also incorporates some flexibility in order to provide for public and administrative access, economics, and access to private inholdings.

We have also considered whether or not the selected alternative meets the direction for Management Situation 1. Management Situations were mapped areas within the Recovery Zones to aid in the recovery of the species (Recovery Plan, p. 23). Management Situation 1 contains grizzly population centers. Management direction for these areas states that management decisions will favor the needs of the grizzly bear when grizzly bear habitat and other land use values compete. Land uses which can affect grizzly bear and/or their habitat will be made compatible with grizzly bear needs or such uses will be disallowed or eliminated. The IGBC provided guidelines which are to be applied to Management Situation 1. The following summarizes how those guidelines apply to this action.

- 1) *Maintain close contact with research.* The analysis provided in the FSEIS is based on the best available research at this time (see earlier discussion regarding the biological needs of the bear).
- 2) *Complete a biological assessment.* Our biological assessment (BA) concluded that during the time period of eight years from our decision or prior to all BMUs meeting standards, the existing environmental baseline condition may affect, and is likely to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat. While human use of roads may contribute to disturbance and displacement of grizzly bears, research has shown that bears can co-exist and survive with a certain level of roads (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997) without apparent adverse effects. Once the selected access management standards are achieved, disturbance and displacement is not expected to be at levels that result in adverse effects to bears as evidenced by the available research and consultation with USFWS (Biological Assessment, p. 61). Therefore, we are confident that implementation of the selected alternative will contribute to the conservation and recovery of grizzly bears within the recovery zones.
- 3) *Use a cumulative effects analysis process.* The analysis presented in the FSEIS and BA considers the potential cumulative effects of the management direction on grizzly bears.

- 4) *Initiate consultation with the USFWS, as necessary.* Because of the potential effects to grizzly bear resulting from the environmental baseline condition during the eight years from this decision, we requested formal consultation with USFWS. The action that was consulted on with the USFWS was the continued implementation of each forest plan as modified by this amendment. For grizzly bear, the USFWS considered the action area to be the affected BMUs managed entirely or in part by the Forests, within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones, and associated BORZ - adjacent areas on the Forests identified as having recurring use by grizzly bears outside of these recovery zones. The USFWS concluded that these amendments would not jeopardize the continued existence of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear population (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-80). The selected alternative may cause localized and short- or long- term adverse effects, but would result in overall ecosystem-wide improvements, and reductions of incidental take as a result of high road densities, which will benefit the grizzly bear populations. (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-85).
- 5) *With full awareness of the Biological Opinion, recommend project or land use modification which will provide compatibility between grizzly bears and other land uses.* The Recovery Plan identified concerns with the management of roads and provided recommendations for road management in grizzly habitat (Recovery Plan appendix B). It specifically recommended that open road density in all MS1 and MS2 areas be standardized using best available data, and that this standardized approach could take into account ancillary needs for security such as road use, trail use, and the availability and extent of security areas. The management direction incorporated into the selected alternative meets this recommendation. It incorporates a standardized analysis process, identifies habitat parameters (standards) for ORMD, TMRD and core (security), utilizes a moving windows analysis, and considers these standards in comparison to where grizzly bears are reproducing and where there are mortality risks. In addition, many of the roads that access primary recreation areas are in Management Situation 3 habitat, where grizzly habitat maintenance and improvement are not management considerations.

In addition, the selected alternative provides management direction for areas of recurring use by grizzly bears (BORZ). These lands are located adjacent to but outside of the recovery area. The BORZ lands do not overlap any of the management situation areas; therefore the management situation guidelines do not apply to them. However, the additional management direction for the BORZ will provide additional protections for the grizzly bear.

B. Response to Other Issues

1. Public Access for Recreation and Social Issues

Recreational use within all BMUs of the recovery zones has been well established and is an integral part of the management and use of the land. Opportunities provided range from semi-primitive non-motorized to motorized summer and winter travel on a well developed transportation system; from remote backpack and horse camping to developed campgrounds with tables, toilets, and other amenities; from a feeling of remoteness and solitude to one associated with the presence of other users.

Of the types of recreation opportunities considered in our analysis, motorized, dispersed recreational activities (both summer and winter) will be most affected by our decision.

However, for winter recreation there are often fewer restrictions because the potential impacts to grizzly bear are less when they are in their dens.

Opportunities for motorized recreation: Full implementation of the selected alternative is expected to result in a decrease in the amount of open road available for public use within the recovery zones (see Table 9). Based upon the 2011 FSEIS (pp. 172 and 176), Alternative D Modified would provide for the greatest reduction in the amount of open road available for public use. We estimate that implementation of the selected alternative’s standards will result in changing about 34 to 102 miles of road open year round to either gated or barriered status during the active bear season in order to bring deficient BMUs into compliance with the selected standards (see Table 10). The majority of changes in road status necessary to meet the standards will come from conversion of gated roads to barriered roads. Approximately 74 to 222 miles of roads with existing seasonal restrictions will need to be barriered to achieve the standard.

Table 9. Projected road mileage by alternative for all Forests¹

Road Status	Existing Road Miles (2009) ²	Alternative D Modified ²	Selected Alternative ²
Open Roads	2,882	1,711	2,780
Gated Roads	1,539	943	1,371
Barriered Roads	1,173	2,940	1,443

¹ The estimated “maximum change” was used.

² Mileages shown are from the 2011 FSEIS.

Table 10. Estimated miles of road status change by alternative for all Forests

Road Status	Alternative D Modified ¹	Selected Alternative ¹
From Open to Gated (miles)	282-403	18-54
From Open to Barriered (miles)	598-768	16-48
From Gated to Barriered (miles)	665-999	74-222
Total	1,545-2,170	108-324

¹ Mileages shown are from the 2011 FSEIS.

Our selected alternative potentially provides for the ability to open a limited amount of road that is gated or barriered for public wheeled motorized travel. We reviewed each BMU and quantified the approximate extent of options for each recovery zone (FSEIS, pp. 173-174). Table 11 displays the approximate range of flexibility disclosed in the FSEIS for the selected alternative. As previously stated we do not expect that the flexibility options will be implemented either at the full extent allowable in each bear management unit or widely applied across all of the units, because resource management issues may limit or eliminate this flexibility (FSEIS, p. 175).

Table 11. Future options for adjustments to motorized access – selected alternative

Possible Road Access Options	Miles by Recovery Zone	
	Cabinet-Yaak	Selkirk
Gated to Open	72-216	14-42
Barriered to Open	6-18	18-54
Barriered to Gated	12-36	0

Opportunities for access to developed recreation sites: Within the analysis area, for the KNF, LNF, and IPNF, overnight camping at five developed campgrounds was used to show a trend in use between 1990 and 2000. The five sites were Rexford Bench, Yaak River, Bull River, Dorr Skeels, and Sam Owen. These five sites were selected because they were within or near the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones and reliable use records existed. Overnight use at the five developed sites increased 52 percent in the decade between 1990 and 2000. These same five sites showed a 23 percent increase in the six years between 2000 and 2006. Future increase at these five sites is expected to be less than what has been realized over the past two decades as three of the sites – Rexford Bench, Dorr Skeels, and Sam Owen – are reaching capacity between July 1 and Labor Day, especially during the weekends. However, all three Forests usually have capacity at other developed campgrounds to meet overnight use, provided all campgrounds continue to be operated and maintained (FSEIS, p. 208).

Our decision is not expected to affect use of developed sites within the analysis area (FSEIS, p. 215). These sites are generally located along major travel routes, most of which are paved, and access to and use of these developed sites will be maintained. Similarly, access to non-motorized recreational opportunities within the analysis area should only be minimally affected as the scope of our decision only addresses motorized access within the recovery zones (FSEIS, p. 216). In contrast, achieving the standards contained in Alternative D Modified could result in the closure of six campgrounds, three boat ramps, and three day use areas on the KNF; one campground, one cabin rental, and several use areas on the IPNF; and two campgrounds and a lookout rental on the LNF, even though no grizzly bear mortalities have been associated with these sites in the past.

The selected alternative will require there be no increases in permanent linear miles of open road and no net permanent increases in linear miles of total roads on an additional 725,000 acres of National Forest System lands outside of but adjacent to the recovery zones (BORZ) (see Figures 2 and 3). Linear miles of open road in a given area will not be able to go above the defined baseline conditions displayed in Table 16 of Appendix B. Therefore, any additional roads that are opened, constructed, or reconstructed in these areas will need to be effectively closed to public motorized access.

In summary, full implementation of the selected alternative is expected to result in a decrease in the amount of open road available for public use within the recovery zones; however, the reduction will be substantially less than under Alternative D Modified (see Table 10). While some flexibility is provided, our selected alternative will provide for an increase of core habitat for grizzly bear across the recovery zones (see Table 3). Therefore, we believe that the selected alternative will continue to provide for a level of public motorized use within the recovery areas, while meeting our responsibilities to the grizzly bear under the Endangered Species Act.

2. Administrative Access

During the analysis process, the public expressed concerns about reductions in access affecting management of vegetation (timber) on National Forest System lands. Restrictions on motorized access can limit administrative access and can change the ways in which we respond to fire, windthrow, and insect and disease outbreaks and infestation.

In each respective forest plan, timber management goals, objectives, and standards were identified along with an upper limit for timber harvest, or allowable sale quantity (ASQ). On each national forest, since the forest plans were initially approved, the ASQ has never

been reached. The number of acres annually treated with timber harvest has shown much variability in recent years, but the trend has been slightly downward. The volume harvested has declined more rapidly over the same period, because of changes in management direction and silvicultural regimes, from primarily regeneration harvest early in the period to primarily intermediate and salvage harvest in more recent years (FSEIS, p. 194).

The selected alternative will limit our ability as resource managers to respond to fire, windthrow, insects and disease, and to provide timber or other commodities. Approximately 990,500 acres of suitable timberland is located within the recovery zones. The FSEIS disclosed that the selected alternative could potentially reduce access to about 100,000 acres of these lands, when compared to the existing condition (FSEIS, p. 204). This amounts to about 3 percent of the total suitable timber base on the three national forests (FEIS, p. 3-96).

Alternative D Modified exceeds the selected alternative in the amount of reduction in access to suitable timberlands (440,000 and 100,000 acres, respectively) by converting between 1,263 and 1,757 miles of either open or gated road to barriered status (FSEIS, p. 204). In contrast, the selected alternative will restrict management activities within the analysis area by converting between 90 to 270 miles of either open or gated road to barriered status. Alternative A (no change) provides the least amount of change in access to suitable timber acres (FEIS, p. 3-104) and therefore, would be more favorable from a timber management perspective. However, this alternative was found to be only partially consistent or not consistent with IGBC guidance for access management (FEIS, p. 3-159).

Our decision will limit access to some of these timber stands with stand-tending needs. While there are about 230,000 acres with potential stand-tending needs, the selected alternative will retain access to approximately 224,000 of these acres (FSEIS, p. 204). The effects of limiting access to an estimated 6,000 acres of timber stands potentially in need of tending sometime in the future are expected to result in growth and yield reductions, a potential loss of investment, and higher fuel loadings on the affected acres. Although core area requirements of the selected alternative provide some management flexibility, in the short term, newly created core must stay in place for 10 years. This requirement will restrict management activities in some BMUs. BMUs requiring large increases in core area with this alternative are Vermillion, Boulder, Grouse, Blue Grass, and Kalispell-Granite. The overall net change in acres of core area from 2009 to full implementation will be an increase of 19,771 acres within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and an increase of 8,144 acres in the Selkirk Recovery Zone (FSEIS, p.89).

The selected alternative also sets standards for linear miles of open and total roads on areas adjacent to but outside of the recovery zones where grizzly bears have recurring use. These standards will apply to the BORZ, which encompasses an additional 725,000 acres of National Forest System lands (see Figures 2 and 3). We do not expect implementation of these standards to limit our ability to conduct vegetation management activities within these grizzly bear recurring use areas; therefore, they do not combine cumulatively with the access management standards for the recovery zones in limiting our ability to access the suitable timber base. While no increase in linear miles of open will be permitted, this requirement can be addressed by effectively closing any newly created, opened or reconstructed road to motorized public use. Similarly, increases in linear miles of total road will not be permitted. Addressing this standard will require reclaiming or making hydrologically neutral any new construction upon completion of

project activities or reclaiming or making hydrologically neutral an equal amount of existing road (see Table 16, Appendix B).

While our decision is expected to reduce needed access for timber management purposes, we determined that these changes and restrictions to access are necessary for meeting our responsibilities for protecting the grizzly bear under the ESA. The selected alternative is consistent with the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan and IGBC direction for access management (FSEIS, pp. 91-92). While access for needed timber management will be constrained, these changes are not expected to result in irreversible or irretrievable commitments of this resource (FSEIS, p. 265).

3. Local Economic Conditions

Rural areas surrounding national forests often depend on forest resources for much of their social and economic well-being. The majority of the analysis area encompasses parts of four counties in two states and on two national forests: Boundary and Bonner counties in Idaho, and Lincoln and Sanders counties in Montana (FSEIS, p. 223, Figure 14). These counties make up the zone of influence for our decision.

The analysis area's economy is heavily dependent upon natural resources of the national forests. The counties are heavily forested, ranging from 80 percent (Bonner County) to 95 percent (Lincoln County) as forestland. Timber harvest has been an important land use for all four counties (FSEIS, p. 226).

Additionally, outdoor social activities within the analysis area contribute to defining the culture and quality of life for many local residents and include hunting, fishing, huckleberry picking, and firewood cutting. The area has a wide array of wildlife and fish species. Hunting has had a large influence on settlement of the area and remains a major activity for local residents and visitors to the area (FSEIS, p.226).

The selected alternative is expected to have a lower negative impact than Alternative D Modified (see following table). Of the alternatives, because it would close the most roads, Alternative D Modified has the potential for the largest negative impact on the social environment and area economy (FSEIS, p. 240), thereby causing the largest reduction in employment and income in the local communities surrounding the recovery zones (FSEIS, p. 240).

The selected alternative will result in 16 to 48 miles of currently open roads being barriered and an additional 18 to 54 miles of open roads being gated. Full implementation of this alternative will leave less road open to public use, but more than would be available for use under Alternative D Modified (see Table 9).

Erecting barriers on currently gated roads that are open and drivable during a portion of the year will displace some individuals to other areas of the national forests for hunting, fishing, huckleberry picking, or firewood gathering. As a result, these users could be displaced into a smaller area, increasing competition for the uses mentioned above. This may make it more difficult for some people to obtain their firewood or huckleberries or have a high quality, successful hunting experience. Either they will not be able to obtain the quantity or quality of products they have in the past or they may have to walk further from an open road to obtain these products. We recognize that this is likely to generate a feeling that an aspect of their quality of life has been diminished. We expect this effect to be similar in nature to the effects of a slowly increasing population where new inhabitants would also participate in these outdoor activities. While existing uses could be affected,

the amount of open road within the analysis area will decline by only about three to four percent, with implementation of the selected alternative (see Table 9 and Table 10). Overall, only about 11 percent of the existing amount of open and gated road within the analysis area will be converted to barriered roads (see Table 9 and Table 10). Therefore, we do not expect the level of potential effect to be significant.

With respect to the area economy, existing access to the suitable timberland base will potentially be reduced on approximately 100,000 acres (FSEIS, p. 204). The largest reductions occur in Vermillion, Boulder, Grouse, Mt. Headley, Blue Grass, and the Kalispell-Granite BMUs. The selected alternative will set road densities and core areas individually for each BMU within the analysis area. The selected alternative provides a lower reduction in TMRD than Alternative D Modified. Our decision also sets administrative use at 57 and 60 round trips per year on each restricted road system in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones, respectively. Therefore, because of the reduced allowance and the decrease in TMRD, our decision has a lower potential for reducing future timber harvest than Alternative D Modified (FSEIS, p. 242).

While our decision provides for flexibility by allowing BMUs with levels of OMRD, TMRD, or core area that are better than their respective standard to accommodate some reductions in habitat security, as previously noted, other resource management issues may limit this flexibility. Therefore, implementation of these options is uncertain and public comment, project-level analysis and consultation with USFWS will be required prior to any decision affecting habitat security.

The selected alternative also sets standards for linear miles of open and total roads on areas adjacent to but outside of the recovery zones. The socio-economic effect of implementing these standards in combination with the access management standards for the recovery zones will not be significant. As we have previously stated, existing levels and opportunities for motorized access and use will be maintained and implementation of these standards is not expected to limit our ability to conduct vegetation management activities within the grizzly bear recurring use areas outside of the recovery zones. While opportunities for a permanent increase in motorized route density will not be possible, there are opportunities to accommodate public needs. On roads created, opened, or reconstructed to facilitate management activities, motorized use by the public will only be permitted following completion of all mechanized harvest and post-harvest slash activities requiring use of the road, to allow motorized public use during the bear summer season prior to the fall bear hunt (i.e., June 16 - August 31). This will allow for such activities as personal use firewood gathering. There will be no restrictions on non-motorized uses occurring within these areas.

Because of the availability of alternative areas on and near the national forests, we expect recreation levels to remain at current levels. The reduction in access to the suitable timberland base will potentially result in reduced timber harvest levels. While we do expect a temporary increase in jobs and income associated with the increase in road reclamation work over the next eight years, this work is not expected to offset the decline in timber related employment and income (FSEIS, p. 241). Therefore, of the alternatives, our decision will have a smaller negative impact on the area economy than Alternative D Modified (see Table 12).

Table 12. Qualitative assessment of effect on the social and economic environment by alternative

Level of Effect on	Alternative D Modified	Selected Alternative
Social Environment	Very High	Moderate
Area Economy – Recreation Jobs and Income	Recreation jobs and income would be reduced	No Change
Area Economy –Timber Jobs and Income	Timber related jobs and income would be reduced	Decrease
Area Economy –Road Reclamation Jobs and Income	Highest temporary increase in jobs and income	Temporary Increase
Area Economy –Payments to Counties	No Effect	No Effect

4. Access to Private Inholdings

By law (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act), the Forest Service must provide for adequate access to private land inholdings within the national forests. We acknowledged early in this project that the Forest Service has a legal obligation to provide access to private inholdings. In determining the effects of the habitat security standards, we modeled scenarios that did not change existing access to private lands. If future needs for access to private inholdings require motorized access, the area surrounding the access route would no longer qualify as security habitat. If this causes the affected BMU to not meet security standards, core habitat designation and route density adjustments will be necessary elsewhere on Federal lands within the BMU (FSEIS p. 99).

VII. Other Alternatives Considered

A. Alternatives Not Given Detailed Study in the FEIS and/or FSEIS

1. Alternative F – Maintain Current Levels of Access

This alternative was designed to respond to comments requesting the Forest Service maintain the existing levels of closed and open roads on the landscape, as well as responding to public comment asking for no additional road closures. The design of this alternative would be to “freeze” the current status as reported at the end of Bear Year 2000. Upon examination of the existing status of security parameters in the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak BMUs, we determined that the present status did not fully meet any particular desired biological or social condition. The “freezing” of the present status would not provide an option that more fully resolved any of the biological or social concerns identified as significant issues. The Interdisciplinary Team fully considered this alternative but found it did not warrant detailed study because it would not meet the purpose and need for action (FEIS, pp. 2-18 and 4-186).

2. Alternative G – Maximum Access

We developed this alternative in response to public comment requesting as much access as possible for recreation and economic activities in the three national forests. The design of this alternative would require all currently gated roads to be opened.

This alternative did not meet important elements of the purpose and need for action and was not given detailed study. The overall purpose as previously stated in this ROD is to “amend forest plans to include a set of motorized access and security guidelines to meet our responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act to conserve and contribute to

recovery of grizzly bears”. Eliminating the existing gates on all restricted roads would not likely conserve and contribute to the recovery of grizzly bears within the recovery zones.

Other than access management and habitat improvement, the Forest Service has limited capabilities to affect changes that contribute to grizzly bear recovery. Without the ability to manage road access, other mitigation for grizzly bear security would need to be implemented, such as firearms restrictions or changes to hunting seasons. However, these options are outside the jurisdiction of the Forest Service and beyond the scope of this analysis.

This alternative was not given further detailed study in this analysis, as it did not meet the purpose and need for action and would require actions beyond the jurisdiction of the Forest Service to conserve and contribute to the recovery of grizzly bears in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.

3. Alternative H – Mix of Alternatives E Updated and D Modified

Comments we received on the DSEIS requested that the Forest Service consider how Alternative D Modified could be achieved with lesser impacts to recreation and timber management than those displayed in the DSEIS. An alternative that would modify Alternative D Modified to be less restrictive was initially considered, but after further review it was determined that the alternative was not meaningfully different from other alternatives already considered and therefore, was not given detailed study. Changing Alternative D Modified to consider historically and culturally popular recreation destinations (e.g., campgrounds, concentrated fishing locations, trailheads, etc.) with high human use and road thoroughfares, and provide some flexibility would essentially result in Alternative E Updated.

Both Alternative D Modified and E Updated would have similar consequences for grizzly bear by contributing toward conservation of the species in accordance with Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act (FSEIS, p. 92). Under Alternative E Updated, once core, OMRD, and TMRD in a BMU reach the benchmark densities reported in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997), disturbance and displacement is not expected to be at levels that result in adverse effects to bears as evidenced by the available research and consultation with USFWS (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-79). As a result, an alternative that provides a different mix of Alternatives D Modified and E Updated would not be significantly distinguishable in its effect from either Alternative D Modified or Alternative E Updated, so it was not given detailed study.

4. Alternative I – Reverse designation of the recovery zones

This alternative would amend the respective forest plans to reverse the designation of the grizzly bear recovery zones. It was not given detailed consideration because it is beyond the scope of this analysis and would not respond to the identified purpose and need for action. The purpose and need for this proposal is to amend the three forest plans to include a set of wheeled motorized vehicle access and security guidelines that meet the agency’s responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, p. 1-4). Designation of the recovery zones is done under the authority of the USFWS.

B. Alternatives Given Detailed Study in the FEIS and/or the FSEIS

1. Alternative A – No Action

The No Action Alternative is defined as the direction and implementation of the forest plans, as amended and under the terms and conditions of their respective biological opinions, prior to December 1, 1998, the date the Interim Access Rule went into effect. The goals and objectives of the forest plans and other directives that were in place at that time would remain unchanged under this alternative.

Page 2-6 and Table 2-1 of the FEIS (p. 2-8) display the features of this alternative by BMU with respect to the major habitat security components for grizzly bear.

The No Action Alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and provides a baseline against which to compare the amount and rate of change of all other alternatives. At the same time, it does provide a certain level of responsiveness to some of the unresolved issues identified by the proposed action. This alternative displays the effects of a more conservative approach to access management than our Proposed Action (Alternative B). In doing so, it provides a different course of action that is responsive to the issues of public access, administrative access, economics, and access to private inholdings.

We did not select this alternative for implementation because it did not address the purpose and need for action as well as the selected alternative. This alternative would not implement standards for OMRD, TMRD, or core area within the BMUs; therefore, it was not consistent with IGBC direction (FEIS, p. 3-18). We considered the likelihood to be high that the USFWS would find this alternative to jeopardize the continued existence of grizzly bears under ESA (FEIS, p. 3-20).

2. Alternative B

Alternative B was presented as the proposed action in the FEIS and incorporated all the protective measures of Alternative A plus it would implement the Interim Access Rule Set issued by the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) on December 1, 1998. The Interim Access Rule Set provides a goal of achieving core habitat on a minimum of 55 percent of the area within each Priority 1 BMU (see Table 2 for a listing of BMU priority). This alternative stopped short of setting standards but did provide specific direction for several habitat security parameters. The levels of linear open road density and habitat effectiveness prescribed in the forest plans and biological opinions are to be met. Existing levels of OMRD and TMRD would not be increased. Other parameters such as levels of administrative use and public use are included to provide management flexibility in meeting local social and economic needs. Table 2-2 of the FEIS (p. 2-11) displays the features of this alternative by BMU with respect to the major habitat security components for grizzly bears.

While this alternative establishes goals for core in Priority 1 BMUs and allows no increases in OMRD or TMRD, no numerical standards are established for these measures. Additionally, no standard for core is established in priority 2 and 3 ranked BMUs. Therefore, while this alternative meets the purpose and need for action better than Alternative A, we did not select it for implementation because, unlike the selected alternative, it is not fully consistent with IGBC and Recovery Plan direction for grizzly bear because no numerical standards would be established for these measures (FEIS, p. 3-18).

3. Alternative C

In this alternative, numeric standards for OMRD (less than or equal to 33%), TMRD (less than or equal to 26%), and core area (greater than or equal to 55%) would be established for all BMUs with greater than 75 percent federal lands. This alternative was developed in response to concerns that the Proposed Action lacked sufficient habitat security for grizzly bears. It was designed to incorporate the OMRD, TMRD, and core area levels recommended in 1997 by the Selkirk/Cabinet–Yaak Access Task Group, as well as in a recent USFWS biological opinion on the forest plan for the Idaho Panhandle NFs. These recommendations represent average security values documented through the latest available science and results of grizzly bear research and monitoring within the recovery zone.

Alternative C would not allow for an increase in route densities or decrease in core habitat until all BMUs in the recovery zone meet the standard for these parameters. This alternative would also remove the existing forest plan standards regarding linear open road density and habitat effectiveness. Table 2-3 of the FEIS displays the Year 2000 status as well as the maintained levels of these parameters in Alternative C.

We did not select this alternative because it did not address the purpose and need for this project or some of the key issues as well as the selected alternative. While Alternative C is fully consistent with IGBC and Recovery Plan direction, the selected alternative will set security standards, overall across the recovery zones at a higher level of security than Alternative C (FEIS, p. 3-19; FSEIS, pp. 92). Therefore, we expect that the selected alternative will go farther towards insuring the continued existence of the grizzly bear in the recovery areas than would Alternative C (FEIS, p. 3-20; FSEIS pp. 93).

Alternative C also did not respond to the key issues of public access and economic conditions as well as the selected alternative. To meet prescribed security standards, Alternative C would convert the second greatest amount of open road to barriered or gated status and the second greatest amount of gated road to barriered status (see Table 3-26 of the FEIS). As a result, there would be a greater effect from this alternative to motorized recreation opportunities and the area economy (FEIS, pp. 3-101 to 3-102; 3-116 to 3-118; and 3-144 to 3-146) without providing for an accompanying enhancement in the achievement of the project's purpose and need.

4. Alternative E

Alternative E was updated (Alternative E Updated) from the FEIS to the FSEIS and is the preferred alternative and the alternative that we have selected for implementation. The rationale for its selection has been disclosed in this ROD.

5. Alternative D Modified

Alternative D Modified focused on the biological needs of the grizzly bear and was designed to provide OMRD, TMRD, and core area standards by individual bear management unit that achieve the highest security parameters for bears (where possible), as identified in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997). The basis for these parameters came from the 1989-1991 home range data of a single 20-year-old female grizzly bear. The conditions for OMRD (less than or equal to 17 percent), TMRD (less than or equal to 14 percent), and core area (greater than or equal to 72 percent) were set for each BMU when possible to achieve within Forest Service jurisdiction.

Like Alternative D Modified, the selected alternative contributes toward grizzly bear conservation and avoids jeopardizing the continued existence of the species within the recovery zones in accordance with ESA Sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) (FSEIS, pp. 92-93). Both alternatives also utilized the best available scientific information and provide high levels of security for grizzly bear (FSEIS, pp. 93-94).

While Alternative D Modified would provide for a higher level of grizzly bear habitat security than the selected alternative (FSEIS, p. 92), it was found to not respond as well to the purpose and need for action or Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan and IGBC direction as did our selected alternative. Specifically, Alternative D Modified did not consider social, valuational, and institutional forces (Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan 1993; IGBC 1994 and 1998b). The Recovery Plan states “that the future of the grizzly bear will depend on integrating, as Kellert (1986) states: “the socioeconomic and utilization values of the general [local] population into the establishment and management of preservation programs... A management system that seeks to integrate all biological, social, valuational, and institutional forces toward a common effort involving grizzly bear conservation will have the highest chance of success.”

In contrast, our selected alternative incorporates IGBC direction for OMRD, TMRD, and core area, and goes beyond research recommended levels for these measures in many BMUs, although not to the higher levels possible as in Alternative D Modified. The selected alternative also incorporates direction from IGBC (1994 and 1998b) and the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (1993) to integrate all biological, social, valuational, and institutional forces toward a common effort involving grizzly bear conservation. Based upon the design of the selected alternative, we conclude that the selected alternative best provides for an overall improvement in the habitat security needs of the grizzly bear while considering the social, valuational, and institutional needs necessary for having the highest chance of success of grizzly bear conservation within the recovery zones.

C. Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Previously in this ROD, we have described the selected alternative and given our rationale for choosing Alternative E Updated. Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA also specifies that the alternative or alternatives that are considered to be environmentally preferable be identified (40 CFR Part 1505.2b). The environmentally preferable alternative is not necessarily the alternative that will be implemented, but is ordinarily the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological, physical and cultural environment. The alternative that best meets this definition is the selected alternative (Alternative E Updated). As previously discussed in this ROD, we have selected Alternative E Updated to implement because it best responds to the project’s biological emphasis of conserving and contributing to the recovery of grizzly bears while at the same time addressing the social, valuational, and institutional forces involved in grizzly bear conservation.

VIII. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Forest Service activities and decisions must comply with many laws. In this section we consider each of the major laws involved in this programmatic level decision.

A. National Forest Management Act

1. NFMA Significance of the Amendment

The purpose of this amendment is to incorporate management direction into plans for the conservation and recovery of grizzly bear.

On December 18, 2009 the Department of Agriculture issued a final rule reinstating the National Forest System Land and Resource Management Planning rule of November 9, 2000, as amended (2000 rule) (74 FR 242 [67059-67075]). The 2000 rule states: Projects implementing land management plans must comply with the transition provisions of 36 CFR §219.35, but not any other provisions of the planning rule. As stated in the Reinstatement of the 2000 Rule Appendix B to 219.35:

“During the transition period, responsible officials may use the provisions of the 1982 rule to prepare plan amendments and revisions.”

“Projects implementing land management plans and plan amendments, as appropriate, must be developed considering the best available science in accordance with §219.35(a).”

This proposal was initiated on May 17, 1999, which is before the transition period; therefore, it is being completed under the requirements of the 1982 regulations.

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) provides that forest plans may be amended in any manner, but if the management direction results in a significant change in the plan, the same procedure as that required for development and approval of a plan shall be followed. The 1982 regulations at 36 CFR 219.10(f) requires the agency to determine whether or not a proposed amendment will result in a significant change in the plan. If the change resulting from the amendment is determined not to be significant for the purposes of the planning process, then the agency may implement the amendment following appropriate public notification and satisfactory completion of NEPA procedures.

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 1920, section 1926.5 (January 31, 2006) identifies factors to consider in determining whether an amendment is significant or non-significant for those plans using planning regulations in effect before November 9, 2000.

Changes to the land management plan that are not significant can result from:

1. Actions that do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.
2. Adjustments of management area boundaries or management prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis.
3. Minor changes in standards and guidelines.
4. Opportunities for additional projects or activities.

Examples of significant changes include:

1. Changes that would significantly alter the long-term relationship between levels of multiple-use goods and services originally projected.
2. Changes that may have an important effect on the entire land management plan or affect land and resources throughout a large portion of the planning area during the planning period.

The selected alternative will result in a change in the respective forest plans similar to examples of non-significant changes #1 and #3. The effects of this decision are not similar to either example of significant plan changes. These findings are discussed in further detail below.

Changes in standards are minor

The selected alternative amends existing standards for grizzly bear management within our respective forest plans. The amended standards are consistent with goal(s) in our forest plans and other legal requirements to provide for habitat needs for threatened and endangered species. The changes in access management direction are applicable only to the 30 BMUs for which standards are displayed in Table 2 of this ROD and those areas of identified grizzly bear occupancy outside of the recovery zones. The changes in access management direction will remain in effect until each forest plan is revised (expected to be within 3-4 years). Thus, the change and effects are short-term regarding application to future decisions throughout the planning area under the existing forest plans; thereby supporting a determination that the changes do not constitute a significant amendment of the existing forest plans.

The KNF, LNF, and IPNF are currently in the forest plan revision process. The revised forest plans will include standards to protect grizzly bear. It is expected that the specific provisions of this amendment will be carried forward into the revised forest plans.

The management direction provided by these amendments will work to accomplish an element of the multiple-use desired future condition currently described in our forest plans by providing direction for access management within the grizzly bear recovery zones, consistent with Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan objectives and IGBC access direction (FSEIS pp. 91-92). The amendments will also provide additional tools to help us, as land managers, achieve the desired future conditions described in our existing forest plans. The desired future conditions and land allocations of the three forest plans will not change. As we have discussed in the following section, the long-term levels of goods and services projected in current plans are not substantially changed by the proposed management direction over the next three to four years. This information supports our determination that the proposed changes do not constitute a significant amendment of the forest plans.

Changes would not significantly alter the long-term relationship between levels of multiple-use goods and services originally projected

Changes would not have an important effect on the entire land management plan or affect land and resources throughout a large portion of the planning area during the planning period.

The planning area is about 6.8 million acres across the three national forests. The amendment is applicable to the 1,189,000 acres within the Kootenai, 163,000 acres within the Lolo, and 806,000 acres within the Idaho Panhandle National Forests that comprise the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones (FEIS, p. 1-2). Our selected alternative also provides standards for approximately an additional 725,000 acres of NFS lands, adjacent to but outside of the designated recovery zones (FSEIS, pp. 22-23). Therefore, the area addressed by this amendment on the three Forests is about 42 percent of their combined land base. Thus, the size of the area projected to be affected during this

time period (four years or less) is not small when compared to the total in the planning area.

The respective forest plans display the outputs and services that were projected during their planning horizon. Of the categories of outputs listed, the greatest concern relates to timber production. Implementation of the selected alternative could preclude roaded access on up to 100,000 acres of suitable timberland across the national forests. This amounts to about 2.5 percent of the respective national forest's total suitable timber base (final EIS, p. 3-96; FSEIS p. 204). Considering the small area involved, relative to the three forests' total planning area (6.8 million acres) and total suitable timber base, and the fact that some level of commercial timber production will still occur from the recovery zones, no precise change in timber-related outputs can be projected.

Potential impacts to recreational outputs/objectives are also a concern. As previously discussed, this management direction would apply only to proposed or new projects following adoption of this amendment. Site-specific access related decisions made through previous NEPA analyses and with completed USFWS consultation will not be affected by this programmatic decision. The amendments are not expected to have an effect on non-motorized or motorized developed forms of recreation (FSEIS, pp. 215-216). Motorized dispersed recreation will be most affected by these amendments. Though three to nine percent of the total motorized mileage under Forest Service jurisdiction within the recovery zones will eventually no longer be available to motorized uses, only 16 to 48 miles of currently open road will be barriered with our decision. Of the miles of road to be barriered, a large portion is currently non-drivable due to brush, down trees, or other obstacles (FEIS, pp. 3-145 and 3-146). Therefore, we do not expect an appreciable change in motorized access opportunities as a result of this amendment. Opportunities also exist to reopen barriered or gated roads to motorized access when habitat security standards have been met in each recovery zone.

Implementation of these amendments will help achieve existing goals contained in our respective forest plans for the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered wildlife species. The amendments are designed to provide for increases in the amount of habitat and security for grizzly bear. However, improved habitat and security for other threatened and endangered wildlife species, including woodland caribou (Idaho Panhandle National Forests), and Canada lynx is also expected to be provided (Biological Assessment, pp. 70 and 81).

The amendments will also contribute positively to existing forest plan objectives for maintaining and improving fish habitat capacities across the three national forests. Implementation of these amendments within the recovery zones will provide opportunities to address watershed concerns, thereby providing a benefit to aquatic systems (FSEIS, p. 192).

The management direction provided by these amendments does not significantly alter the long-term relationships between the levels of goods and services projected by the forest plans, thereby supporting our determination that the proposed changes do not constitute a significant amendment of the forest plans.

Finding: On the basis of the information and analysis contained in the FSEIS and all other information available as summarized above, it is our determination that adoption of the management direction reflected in our decision does not result in a significant amendment to the existing forest plans. Though the area covered by these amendments

amounts to almost one-half of the combined land base of the forests; goals, objectives, and associated outputs will not be substantially altered from existing levels.

This decision is programmatic and does not supersede any direction currently in the forest plans that protects air quality, water quality, cultural resources, farm lands (prime or unique), floodplains, wetlands, Native American religious concerns, environmental justice, hazardous or solid wastes, water quality, wild and scenic rivers, migratory birds, and wilderness.

2. Forest Plan Consistency

The amendment will not change the basic purpose and need of the respective forest plans, nor will it change the goals and objectives originally established in the forest plans. The changes to the forest-wide standards and management area prescriptions are consistent with the direction found in the respective forest plans. The intent of the amendment is to provide direction for implementing site-specific projects on the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. We find that this amendment is consistent with our respective forest plans goals and objectives.

B. Endangered Species Act

The purposes of ESA are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved and to provide for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species. Section 7(a)(1) of the Act requires federal agencies to carry out programs for the conservation of listed species. In addition, ESA requires federal agencies to insure that any agency action does not jeopardize the continued existence of the species [ESA Section 7(a)(2)]. ESA also requires the USFWS and Forest Service, respectively, to base the biological opinion and subsequent agency action on the use of best scientific and commercially available data [16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)].

As we have previously discussed, our decision is consistent with the goals of contributing to the conservation and recovery of grizzly bear within the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones. The best available scientific information regarding access management in grizzly bear habitat has also been considered in this analysis (see FSEIS, pp. 45-50).

In accordance with Section 7(c) of the Act, USFWS identified the listed and proposed threatened or endangered species that may be present on the three forests. A biological assessment was prepared and concurrence from USFWS was documented regarding threatened and endangered species (Biological Assessment, p.25). The USFWS concurred with our determination that the amendments may effect - not likely to adversely affect the endangered woodland caribou, threatened Canada lynx or its critical habitat.

A biological opinion for grizzly bear and bull trout was issued to the Forest's following review of the project (October 18, 2011).

- 1) *Grizzly Bear* - The design elements of the selected alternative include many of the reasonable and prudent measures and terms and conditions previously required by the 2004 biological opinion (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2004). Thus, the 2011 biological opinion did not repeat those features as reasonable and prudent measures or terms and conditions. The conclusions of the biological opinion are based on the design elements being implemented as part of the selected alternative. The selected alternative is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of grizzly bears in the Selkirk and

Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery zones, and therefore is not likely to jeopardize grizzly bears (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. A-80).

- 2) *Bull Trout* – The USFWS was unable to anticipate all possible circumstances related to the implementation of activities necessary to meet the standards; therefore, they were unable to issue an all-encompassing incidental take statement or a comprehensive list of reasonable and prudent measures. While the USFWS determined that the level of anticipated take associated with the activities necessary to meet road density standards are not likely to jeopardize the Columbia River Interim Recovery Unit, they did not authorize incidental take of bull trout for any specific actions carried out by the forests to meet the road density standards. Incidental take, if any, will be authorized at the site-specific action level (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011, p. B-65).

This amendment incorporates appropriate elements of the biological opinion as either modification to existing standards, additions to standards, or additions to the respective forest plan monitoring requirements (see sections V(A) and V(B) and Appendix B). Therefore, we have determined that this amendment is in full compliance with the requirements of ESA.

C. Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Executive Order #13186 (January 10, 2001): “Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds” was issued by President Bill Clinton in furtherance of the purposes of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Acts, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. This order requires including effects of federal actions on migratory birds as part of the environmental analysis process. On December 8, 2008, the Forest Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFWS to complement the Executive Order (USDA Forest Service 2008).

We find that the selected alternative complies with this Executive Order. This amendment is access driven and roads contribute to fragmentation of habitat and potential habitat loss from associated activities using the roads (i.e. firewood cutting, timber sales). Consequently, natural processes will continue to influence vegetative patterns, creating a mosaic of habitat conditions and age classes that are expected to provide a diversity of habitat values for forest birds. This programmatic decision supports access management that reduces the risk of habitat loss. Site-specific analysis will be done at the project scale where effects will be detailed.

D. Clean Water Act and State Water Quality Standards

Full implementation of this amendment is expected to maintain or improve water quality and satisfy all state (Idaho, Montana, and Washington) water quality requirements. We base this finding on the analysis, existing standards and guidelines contained in the respective forest plans, and the application of best management practices (BMPs) specifically designed to protect water quality.

During implementation of this amendment at the project level, road decommissioning activities, as well as restricting motorized access to roads, could result in sediment that would reach some stream systems during the short-term, but BMPs and use of stream buffers are expected to reduce the effects to a minimal level (FSEIS, pp. 188-189).

The forest plans for the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests were amended by INFS in 1995 and contain standards and guidelines for road management. Application of

these measures are expected to provide for identifying areas of concern and appropriate treatments as individual projects are developed in order to protect water quality. Our decision will not affect the current direction for protecting aquatic resources as provided in the respective forest plans.

E. Clean Air Act

Access management activities proposed with this decision are not anticipated to degrade air quality or violate state law. Future site-specific management activities that implement this decision would be required to comply with applicable air quality standards.

F. National Historic Preservation Act

The selected alternative is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). In accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, forest plans require integration of cultural resource management into the overall multiple resource management effort. In addition, national forests must work closely with the appropriate scientific community and American Indian Tribes concerning cultural resources. Heritage inventories will be completed prior to any ground disturbing activities associated with project level decisions.

The guidelines of the forest plans and of other jurisdictions were recognized in the development of the selected alternative. In addition, the laws and policies that govern cultural resource protection on Federal lands are coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) of Montana and Idaho, who serve in an advisory capacity. The policies of the Forest Service and SHPO are consistent.

G. Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, requires that federal agencies make achieving environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of their program, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

Social issues associated with this decision were analyzed in Chapter 3, *Social and Economic Effects*, of the FSEIS. The analysis area's economy is heavily dependent upon natural resources of the national forests. Timber harvest has been an important land use for all four counties (FSEIS, p. 226). The reduction in access to the suitable timberland base posed by these amendments will potentially result in reduced timber harvest levels. However, we do not expect the effects on timber harvest levels to be measurable during the time that these amendments to our current forest plans will remain in effect. The specific provisions of this amendment would be carried forward into the revised Forest Plans and addressed during the revision process. The revised Forest Plans may accept or modify the standards adopted in this amendment.

Based on the analysis presented, we conclude that the risk of disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations from implementation of our decision is very low. Consultation with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Kalispel Tribe, and the Coeur d' Alene Tribe has been initiated and is ongoing. The selected alternative is among those alternatives with the lowest risk of adverse environmental effects from land management activities on wildlife and fish habitat and subsistence resources. Site-specific implementation of the selected alternative is expected to maintain or improve big game and fish habitat, thereby improving hunting and fishing opportunities.

Based upon the analysis, we find our decision will not adversely affect human health or minority and low-income populations. There has been ample opportunity for participation in the analysis process and the implementation of this project will not subject anyone to discrimination because of his or her race, color, or national origin.

H. Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR §294)

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule, if in effect in Montana, and the Idaho Roadless FEIS and Rule [36 CFR 294, Subpart C (2008c and 2008d)], both constrain future road construction, reconstruction, and timber cutting, sale, and removal more than the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests existing forest plans. Neither Roadless Rule affects current wheeled motorized vehicle use on roads and trails where such use is already authorized, but they may cumulatively constrain the ability to expand wheeled motorized vehicle access. These amendments do not conflict with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Idaho Roadless Rule. The purpose of the amendments is to include in the respective forest plans a set of motorized access and security guidelines to meet our responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears. As a result, the amendments will provide direction for gating or barriering existing roads, which should enhance and preserve existing roadless characteristics. In addition, this amendment is not inconsistent with the Idaho Roadless Rule because it does not preclude road construction in areas where it may be allowed under the rule, but does set sideboards or conditions for road construction, when and if it occurs. Therefore, any activities proposed in inventoried roadless areas will comply with the management direction for grizzly bears provided in these amendments.

I. Travel Management Rule (36 CFR §212, 251, 261, and 295)

The 2005 Travel Management Rule (USDA Forest Service 2005) governs motor vehicle use on national forests and grasslands. Under the final rule, each national forest or ranger district will designate those roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use by class of vehicle and, if appropriate, by time of year. As designation is completed on a national forest or ranger district, motor vehicle use off the designated system will be prohibited. Designated routes and areas will be identified on a motor vehicle use map. Motor vehicle use outside of designated routes and areas will be provided for fire, military, emergency, and law enforcement purposes, and for use under Forest Service permit. Valid existing rights are honored. The rule also maintains the status quo for snowmobile use, as determined in individual forest plans. The selected alternative would not conflict with, nor prevent achieving, the requirements of the 2005 Travel Management Rule. Travel management decisions are made under separate travel planning processes and are ongoing.

36 CFR §212.55 directs that the designation of areas and trails for motorized use be based upon in part the minimization of conflicts among the various uses of the lands. It is the purpose of this subpart to provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands. The selected alternative will include in the respective forest plans a set of motorized access and security guidelines to meet our responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears. As a result, the amendment will only provide for gating or barriering existing roads and trails. The selected alternative does not identify roads, trails or areas for changes in motorized access; rather it provides standards and guidance to minimize effects to grizzly bear that would be considered in subsequent site-specific project analyses. In addition, the FSEIS explains that

subsequent site-specific decisions regarding motorized access on existing roads or trails would meet the NEPA requirements for project-level environmental analysis and public involvement of all interested publics, such that conflicts among the various uses of the land are minimized based on the minimization criteria of the Executive Order.

J. Wetlands and Floodplains (Executive Orders 11988 and 11990)

The selected alternative is a programmatic action and does not authorize site-specific activities. We have determined the selected alternative will not have adverse impacts on wetlands and floodplains and will comply with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990.

K. Invasive Species (Executive Order 13112)

Executive Order 13112 directs federal agencies not to authorize any activities that would increase the spread of invasive species. These forest plan amendments are a programmatic action and do not authorize site-specific activities. We have determined these amendments comply with Executive Order 13112.

IX. Implementation

These amendments will become effective seven calendar days following publication of the legal notice of this decision in the newspapers of record identified in the following section (*Review and Appeal Opportunities*).

X. Review and Appeal Opportunities

As stated in the Reinstatement of the 2000 Rule Appendix A to 219.35: During the transition period, the option to proceed under the 1982 regulations or under the provisions of this subpart specifically includes the option to select either the objection procedures of this subpart or the optional appeal procedures published at 54 FR 3357 (January 23, 1989), as amended at 54 FR 13807 (April 5, 1989); 54 FR 34509 (August 21, 1989); 55 FR 7895 (March 6, 1990); 56 FR 4918 (February 6, 1991); 56 FR 46550 (September 13, 1991); and 58 FR 58915 (November 4, 1993). We have selected the optional appeal procedures as noted above. A written Appeal must be submitted within 45 days following publication of the notice of this decision in the following newspapers: 1) *Coeur d'Alene Press*, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; 2) *Daily Inter Lake*, Kalispell, Montana; and 3) *Missoulian*, Missoula Montana. Send appeals to:

USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
Attn: Appeals Deciding Officer
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

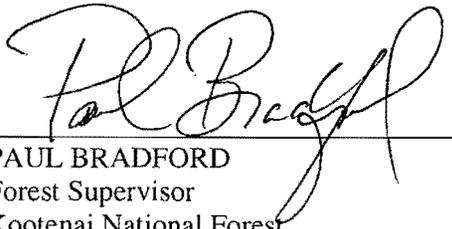
It is the responsibility of those who appeal a decision to provide sufficient written evidence and rationale to show why our decision should be changed or reversed. Appeals must meet the content requirements of the optional appeal procedures which state:

- The document is a Notice of Appeal filed pursuant to the optional appeal procedures;
- List the name, address, and telephone number of the appellant;
- Identify the decision about which the requester objects;
- Identify the document in which the decision is contained by title and subject, date of the decision, and name and title of the Responsible Official(s);
- Identify specifically that portion of the decision or decision document to which the requester objects;

- State the reasons for objecting, including issues of fact, law, regulation, or policy, and, if applicable, specifically how the decision violates law, regulation, or policy; and,
- Identify the specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks.

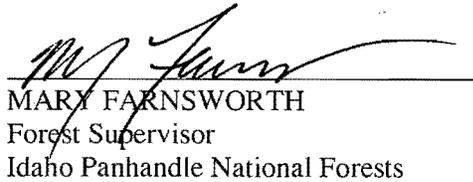
Electronic appeals must be submitted to: FS-appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. The subject line should contain the name of the project being appealed. There are two acceptable formats for electronically filed appeals: MS Word and rich text format (.rtf).

For additional information concerning this decision, please contact: Karl Dekome, 3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815. Additionally, the Final Supplemental EIS and this Record of Decision are available on the Forest Service website at: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/project_content.php?project=24882.



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11/9/2011
Date



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11/9/11
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XII. Appendix A – Forest Plan Amendments

CHANGES TO FOREST PLANS FOR THE IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FORESTS (IPNF), LOLO NATIONAL FOREST (LNF) AND KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST (KNF)

The following tables display how the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Lolo National Forest and Kootenai National Forest Forest Plans are amended by the decision to implement Alternative E Updated, as displayed in the FSEIS and ROD for Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Bear Recovery Areas. Unless noted, changes are identified as only being applicable to lands within the Recovery Zones. Where specifically identified, changes are applicable to identified lands (see Figures 2 and 3 in the ROD) outside of the Recovery Zones.

Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) - Changes to Forest Plan

The first column of this table displays standards, goals and objectives identified in the 1987 IPNFs Forest Plan. The second column of this table displays attributes of the Interim Rule Set which was utilized from January of 1999 (when it was issued by the Cabinet-Yaak/Selkirk Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee) until the settlement agreement with litigants on March 22, 2001 (FSEIS page 10). This column also displays current implementation direction from the 1987 Forest Plan and 2000 Biological Opinion. The final column displays habitat security standards identified in the selected alternative.

Information in the table and footnotes to the table identify changes within and outside of the Recovery Zones resulting from this amendment to the IPNF Forest Plan. See ROD section V for additional information related to this amendment.

Table 13. IPNFs Changes to the Forest Plan

IPNF Forest Plan 1987	12/1/98 Interim Rule Set & 2001 Forest Plan Biological Opinion (BO)	FEIS & ROD Selected Alternative E Updated
Goals & objectives pgs: II-1, II-6 MA(1): 2,3,7,9,10,11 Forest Plan App. U & V	No change to current Implementation Direction Identified in the IPNF Forest Plan included in -Appendix U & V 2001 Forest Plan Biological Opinion	Habitat Security Standards for Individual BMUs
Standards pgs: II-27 Habitat Effectiveness: Strive for at least 70 sq miles Security habitat per/ BMU. IGBC Guides (App U) Use CEM* to analyze effect (App V)	No change No change No change	No Habitat Effectiveness standard No change No change

Table 13. IPNFs Changes to the Forest Plan

IPNF Forest Plan 1987	12/1/98 Interim Rule Set & 2001 Forest Plan Biological Opinion (BO)	FEIS & ROD Selected Alternative E Updated
<p>Core Area</p> <p>Not identified in Forest Plan. Forest Plan identified “displacement area.”</p>	<p>Interim Rule Set:</p> <p>> or = to 70% HE per BMU</p> <p>2001 Forest Plan BO</p> <p>For BMUs that contain at least 75% federal ownership, by 3/31/04, BMUs will contain 52% core habitat; by 3/31/07 BMUs will contain 55% core habitat. Until all BMU’s achieve 55% core, all actions must result in improvement in core and no decrease in core in BMU’s over 55%.</p>	<p>Numeric standard specific to each BMU. Consider seasonal needs; core fixed in place for 10 years minimum. In BMUs not meeting specific standard, projects affecting core must result in increased post-project core (1).</p>
<p>Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD)</p> <p>No standard identified in Forest Plan</p>	<p>Interim Rule set:</p> <p>No net increase on Forest lands within recovery area.</p> <p>2001 Forest Plan BO</p> <p>For BMUs containing at least 75% federal ownership, by 3/31/04, no more than 30% of each BMU can exceed 2 mi/sq mi; by 3/31/07, no more than 26% of each BMU can exceed 2 mi/sq mi.</p>	<p>Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, p. 31). In BMUs not meeting their specific standard, projects affecting TMRD must result in post-project movement toward the standard.</p>
<p>Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD)</p> <p>No standard identified in Forest Plan</p>	<p>Interim Rule Set</p> <p>No net increase on Forest lands within recovery area.</p> <p>2001 Forest Plan BO</p> <p>For BMUs containing at least 75% federal ownership, by 3/31/04, no more than 36% of each BMU can exceed 1 mi/sq mi; by 3/31/07 no more than 33% of ea BMU can exceed 1 mi/sq mi</p>	<p>Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, p. 31). In BMUs not meeting specific standard, projects affecting OMRD must result in post-project movement toward the standard.</p>
<p>Administrative Use not identified in Forest Plan. Guidance from USFWS was to use 15 days per road per bear year and up to 15 days of equipment use on one road per bear year.</p>	<p>Interim Rule Set</p> <p>115 round trips divided by season. A 30 day consecutive use period on one Priority 1 road that meets 55% core & in three Priority 2 BMU’s that meet 70% security</p>	<p>Cabinet-Yaak: 60 round trips, divided by season Selkirk: 57 roundtrips, divided by season</p>
<p>Habitat Based Access Mgmt</p> <p>Forest Plan objective pg.11-6: Grizzly bear mgmt will emphasize maintenance of adequate security in conjunction with providing the seasonal vegetative habitat components</p>	<p>Interim Rule Set</p> <p>Explore habitat based access management approach.</p> <p>2001 Forest Plan</p> <p>Provide USFWS with the necessary information to allow completion of RSF* analysis by 1/31/02</p>	<p>Participate in workgroup to pursue habitat analysis</p>
<p>Grizzly Bear Use Outside Recovery Zones</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>The ROD incorporates design elements pertaining to linear open and total miles of road (2).</p>

TABLE NOTES

*App.= Forest Plan Appendix

CEM= Unified Cumulative Effects Model (1990)

HE= Habitat Effectiveness

RSF= Resource Selection Factor

BMU= Bear Management Unit

MA= Management Area

MA2 = Consists of lands designated for timber production within identified grizzly bear habitat. .

MA3 = Consists of lands designated for timber production within identified grizzly bear habitat and big game winter range.

MA7 = Consists of lands designated for caribou management within identified caribou habitat.

MA9 = Consists of acres of non-forest lands, lands not capable of producing industrial products, lands physically unsuited for timber production, and lands capable of timber production but isolated by the above type lands or nonpublic ownership. These lands are characterized steep slopes, thin soils and surface rock or rock outcrops.

MA10 = Consists of a cross section of National Forest lands that have high value for semi-primitive recreation. These areas are in blocks of 2,500 acres or more and are part of the roadless resource of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, with areas scattered throughout the forest. The areas range from dense forest to brush fields to open rocky ridge tops.

MA11 = Consists of existing and proposed wilderness areas on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. This area includes the IPNF's portions of the existing (9,440 acres) and proposed (17,600 acres) Salmo-Priest Wilderness, proposed (23,900 acres) Scotchman Peaks, proposed Mallard-Larkins (78,500 acres) area and all of the proposed Selkirk Crest (26,700 acres) area.

- (1) BMUs must remain at or above the core standard. Therefore, potential losses to existing core must be compensated with in-kind replacement concurrently or prior to incurring the losses. See ROD Appendix B, section I (B) (3).
- (2) See ROD Appendix B, sections II (A) and (B) for linear road mile standards applicable to areas outside of the Recovery Zones.

Lolo National Forest (LNF) - Changes to Forest Plan

The first column of this table displays standards, goals and objectives identified in the 1986 LNF Forest Plan. The second column of this table displays standards, goals and objectives identified in the LNF Grizzly Bear Management Strategy, which became effective in 1994. The third column displays attributes of the Interim Rule Set, which was utilized from January of 1999 (when it was issued by the Cabinet-Yaak/Selkirk Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee), until the settlement agreement with litigants on March 22, 2001 (FSEIS page 10). The final column displays habitat security standards identified in the selected alternative. The habitat security standards identified in the Lolo Forest Plan are amended as a result of the Access Amendment Decision.

Information in the table and footnotes to the table identify changes within and outside of the Recovery Zones resulting from this amendment to the LNF Forest Plan. See ROD section V for additional information related to this amendment.

Table 14. LNF Changes to the Forest Plan

Lolo Forest Plan 1986	Lolo NF Grizzly Bear Management Strategy 1994	12/1/98 Interim Rule Set	FEIS & ROD Selected Alternative E Updated
Goals and Standards (1) MA20 and 20a (2)	Meets requirements of Forest Plan (pp II-13-14, #24)	Current Implementation Direction- According to Policy Identified in Forest Supervisor Letter (2/28/96) and 5/24/96 BO	Habitat Security Standards for Individual BMUs
Linear Open Road Density Minimize road density, no permanent roads in key grizzly habitat, maintain roadside cover	≤1 mi/sq. mi by BMAA*, ≤0.75 mi/sq mi. on “high value” BMAAs	≤1 mi/sq. mi. by BMAA plus grizzly bear management strategy	No standard
Percent cover No standard identified in Forest Plan	≥ 75% per BMAA	No change	No change (Lolo Strategy stays in place)
Displacement Area No standard identified in Forest Plan.	Required for each BMAA with an ongoing major activity	Replace displacement area with core. See “core area” in this table.	See “core area” in this table
Opening Size is not a Forest Plan standard.	≤40 acres, can be larger if there are no permanent roads within ½ mile of the unit	No change	Existing implementation continues (see column 2)
Activity Scheduling No standard identified in Forest Plan	Major activity cannot occur more than 3 out of 10 years in a BMAA	No change	See core area below

Table 14. LNF Changes to the Forest Plan

Lolo Forest Plan 1986	Lolo NF Grizzly Bear Management Strategy 1994	12/1/98 Interim Rule Set	FEIS & ROD Selected Alternative E Updated
Core Area No standard identified in Forest Plan.	No standard	No net loss of core on federal ownership in all BMUs. Criteria to replace lost existing core: 1) work to achieve 55% in Priority 1 BMUs, 2) consider seasonal needs, 3) flexibility to make major changes.	Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, p. 31). Consider seasonal needs, core fixed in place for minimum of 10 years. In BMUs not meeting their specific standard, projects affecting core must result in increased post-project core (3).
TMRD No Forest Plan standard identified	No standard	No net increase on Forest lands within recovery area	Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, pg. 31). In BMUs not meeting specific standard, projects affecting TMRD must result in post-project movement toward the standard.
OMRD No Forest Plan standard identified	No standard	No net increase on Forest lands within recovery area	Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, p. 31). In BMUs not meeting specific standard, projects affecting OMRD must result in post-project movement toward the standard.
Administrative Use Seasonal Closures on all roads in spring habitat	<14 days or road is considered open	115 round trips divided by season	60 round trips, divided by season
Grizzly Bear Use Outside Recovery Zones	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	ROD incorporates design elements pertaining to linear open and total miles of road (4).

(1) All Threatened and Endangered Species occurring on the Lolo including the grizzly bear... will be managed for recovery to non-threatened status (Lolo Forest Plan p. II-13).

- (2) MA= Management Area
 MA 20=Grizzly bear habitat suitable for timber harvest
 MA 20a=Grizzly bear habitat unsuitable for timber harvest
 *BMAA= Bear Management Analysis Areas
 BMU= Bear Management Unit

(3) BMUs must remain at or above the core standard. Therefore, potential losses to existing core must be compensated with in-kind replacement concurrently or prior to incurring the losses. See ROD Appendix B, section I (B) (3).

(4) See ROD Appendix B, sections II (A) and (B) for linear road mile standards applicable to areas outside of the Recovery Zones.

Kootenai National Forest (KNF) - Changes to Forest Plan

Table 15. KNF Changes to the Forest Plan

KNF Forest Plan 1987	12/1/98 Interim Rule Set	FEIS & ROD Selected Alternative E
Kootenai Forest Plan 1987 Forest-wide goals MA 14 (1) and Forest Plan Appendix 8	Current Implementation Direction: According to Policy Identified in the 1987 Kootenai Forest Plan Appendix 8, pages 6-9 (2) Plus Biological Opinions (3)	Habitat Security Standards for Individual BMUs
Forest Plan MA 14 Linear Open Road Density standard is ≤ 0.75 mi/sq. mi. by BMU* and BAA* (Forest Plan pg. III-60 and Forest Plan Appendix 8 pg. 12)	≤ 0.75 mi/sq. mi. by BMU and BAA	No standard
Habitat Effectiveness is not a Forest Plan Standard but a measurement to assure compliance with ESA (Forest Plan Goal pg. II-1 #5) Goal is $>70\%$ sq. mi. per BMU	$> 70\%$ per BMU	Used to measure impacts of point source disturbance No HE standard
Displacement area is a Forest Plan standard (Forest Plan pg. III-59 and Appendix 8 pg.10). Definition not provided in Forest Plan.	Replace displacement area with core. See “core area” in this table.	See “core area” in this table.
Core Area Not identified in Forest Plan. Forest Plan identified “displacement area.” See row above in this table.	No net loss of core on federal ownership in all BMUs. Criteria to replace lost existing core: 1) work to achieve 55% in Priority 1 BMUs, 2) consider seasonal needs, 3) flexibility to make major changes.	Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, pg. 31). Consider seasonal needs, core fixed in place for minimum of 10 years. In BMUs not meeting specific standard, projects affecting core must result in increased post-project core (4) (5).
Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD) not identified in Forest Plan	No net increase on Forest lands within recovery area	Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, pg. 31). In BMUs not meeting specific standard, projects affecting TMRD must result in post-project movement toward the standard.
Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD) not identified in Forest Plan	No net increase on Forest lands within recovery area	Numeric standard specific to each BMU (FSEIS Table 6, pg. 31). In BMUs not meeting specific standard, projects affecting OMRD must result in post-project movement toward the standard.

Table 15. KNF Changes to the Forest Plan

KNF Forest Plan 1987	12/1/98 Interim Rule Set	FEIS & ROD Selected Alternative E
Administrative Use not identified in Forest Plan. Followed Biological Opinion terms which identified 121 trips.	115 round trips divided by season	57 round trips, divided by season
Movement Corridor is a Forest Plan standard (Forest Plan pg. III-59, Appendix 8 p.10) Standard is to maintain at least 600' corridor between harvest units	No Change	No change as a result of Alternative E Updated
Timing Constraint is a Forest Plan standard (Appendix 8 pg. 10)	No Change	No Change as a result of Alternative E Updated
Grizzly Bear Use Outside Recovery Zones	Not Applicable	The ROD incorporates design elements pertaining to linear open road densities (6)

- (1) MA 14= Management Area 14. This MA occurs in the Cabinet Yaak grizzly bear ecosystem and in the Whitefish range. The goal of this MA is to maintain or enhance grizzly bear habitat, reduce grizzly/human conflicts, assist in the recovery of the grizzly bear, realize a programmed level of timber production, and provide for the maintenance or enhancement of other wildlife, especially big game.
- (2) In all situations, strive to develop a grizzly management program which maintains and enhances identified grizzly bear habitat, incorporates relevant research and management information into all applicable activities, and supports the conservation and recovery of the species (Forest Plan Appendix 8 page 8-6).
- At least annually, the Kootenai will confer with the Fish and Wildlife Service on any changes that are needed in standards and guidelines (Forest Plan Appendix 8 page 8-7).
 - Keep abreast of current research activities and data relating to grizzly bears and their habitat. Ensure that current, applicable data is incorporated in management activities (Forest Plan Appendix 8 page 8-8).
 - Modify standards and guidelines as needed and with the cooperation of the Fish and Wildlife Service (Forest Plan Appendix 8 page 8-9).
- (3) USFWS amended their biological opinion for the 1987 Forest Plan. See the project record for biological opinions providing clarification.
*BMU= Bear Management Unit
*BAA- Bear Analysis Area
- (4) BMUs must remain at or above the core standard. Therefore, potential losses to existing core must be compensated with in-kind replacement concurrently or prior to incurring the losses. See ROD Appendix B, section I (B) (3).
- (5) Applies to BMUs not meeting standards for core habitat. Term and Condition 1.D applies to those BMUs exceeding the standards for core habitat.
- (6) See ROD Appendix B, sections II (A) and (B) for linear road mile standards applicable to areas outside of the Recovery Zones.

XIII. Appendix B – Design Elements

The design elements of the selected alternative for the Kootenai, Idaho Panhandle, and Lolo National Forests Land and Resource Management Plans Amendment for Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones are included below.

Design Elements

- I. The following access management standards would apply to individual BMUs within the Selkirk Recovery Zone on the IPNFs and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone on the KNF, IPNFs and portion of the LNF:
 - A. The OMRD, TMRD, and percent core standards displayed in Table 2 (see page 11) would be established for the BMUs in the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk grizzly bear ecosystems.
 - B. Parameters for establishing and managing core habitat in all BMUs:
 1. In accordance with IGBC (1998) and Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem Subcommittee (1998) direction, core areas shall be established for the purpose of providing secure habitat for grizzly bears.
 - a. Core areas include high quality habitat within a BMU that contains no motorized travel routes or high use trails.
 - b. Core areas do not include any gated or restricted roads but may contain roads that are impassable due to re-growth of vegetation, effective barriers other than gates, or placement of logging or forest debris so as to no longer function as a motorized route.
 - c. When possible, core areas would be delineated by identifying and aggregating the full range of seasonal habitats that are available in the BMU.
 - d. The IGBC anticipated that minimum core area size might be determined for each recovery zone. For the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones, no scientifically based minimum effective size polygon for core area has been determined (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997), though minimum block sizes of 2-8 mi² were suggested. Therefore, discounting small or narrow blocks of core area is not prudent at this time. Individual project analyses would disclose the percent and size of core areas in each BMU.
 - e. Once route closures to create core areas are established and effective, these core areas should remain in place for at least 10 years. Therefore, except for emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances requiring independent section 7 consultation, newly created core area shall not be entered for at least 10 years after creation.
 - f. Roads that are closed, decommissioned, or barriered in the future to create core area would be put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for at least 10 years. Until such closed roads are placed in the above-described condition, they would not be considered as contributing to core area.
 2. Entering core area blocks for road decommissioning or stabilization activities:
 - a. Without further section 7 consultation on grizzly bears, the Forest Service may affect underlying core area (i.e., any core habitat that is affected by the subject road and its

buffer) within a BMU once per 10-year time frame, and not to exceed one bear year for the sole purpose of completing road decommissioning/stabilization activities on existing closed or barriered roads in core area habitat.

- b. Subsequent needs to re-enter individual core areas within a BMU more frequently than once per decade for the purposes of road decommissioning shall be handled on a case-by-case basis through standard section 7 consultation procedures. The effects of additional entries would be analyzed pursuant to such project level consultation. Pending the outcome of each analysis, additional measures to minimize potential effects to grizzly bears may be required.
3. Routine forest management may be proposed in a core area block after 10-years of core area benefit. However, BMUs must remain at or above the core standard. Therefore, potential losses to existing core must be compensated with in-kind replacement concurrently or prior to incurring the losses. Such in-kind replacement of core would be established within the affected BMU in accordance with the direction in Part I.B.1., above. For exceptions, see specialized circumstances outlined in Part I.D. concerning BMUs that exceed standards. Following management, core areas must subsequently be managed undisturbed for 10 years.

C. Parameters for BMUs currently not meeting core area, OMRD, and/or TMRD standards:

1. These BMUs are anticipated to be brought up to standards in the following manner: 33 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard within each ecosystem are estimated to meet all standards within three years of the amendment decision date; 66 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard within each ecosystem are estimated to meet all standards within 5 years of the amendment decision date, and 100 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard within each ecosystem are estimated to meet all standards within eight years of the amendment decision date.

D. For those BMUs currently meeting or exceeding (being better than) the standards for core area:

1. Except as provided above for road stabilization projects, no reductions in core habitat without in-kind replacements would be proposed until all BMUs administered by the IPNF, KNF and LNF in the respective ecosystems are up to standard [Table 2 (page 11); which does not include the LeClerc BMU or the Idaho State Lands BMU in the Selkirk recovery zone].
2. Once all BMUs meet all standards then subsequent projects that propose to permanently reduce core area by roads shall undergo independent section 7 formal consultation.
3. Reductions of core area within individual BMUs shall not reduce the percent core area below the minimum standards for the affected BMU without compensating with in-kind replacement concurrently or prior to incurring the losses (see Part I.B.3.).

E. Road use associated with completing administrative activities:

1. In the Selkirk ecosystem (aka Selkirk recovery zone):
 - a. Administrative use shall not exceed 57 vehicle round trips per active bear year per road, apportioned as follows: ≤19 round trips in spring (April 1 through June 15); ≤23 round trips in summer (June 16 through September 15); and ≤15 round trips in fall (September 16 through November 15).

- b. If the number of trips exceeds 57 trips per active bear year in the Selkirk ecosystem, then that road would be considered "open" for analysis and reporting purposes. Likewise, if the number of trips exceeds the allowable ecosystem-specific seasonal (spring, summer, and fall) vehicle round trips per road, then that road would be considered "open" for analysis and reporting purposes.
 2. In the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem (aka Cabinet-Yaak recovery zone):
 - a. Administrative use shall not exceed 60 vehicle round trips per active bear year per road, apportioned as follows: ≤ 18 round trips in spring (April 1 through June 15); ≤ 23 round trips in summer (June 16 through September 15); and ≤ 19 round trips in fall (September 16 through November 30).
 - b. If the number of trips exceeds 60 trips per active bear year in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, then that road would be considered "open" for analysis and reporting purposes. Likewise, if the number of trips exceeds the allowable ecosystem-specific seasonal (spring, summer, and fall) vehicle round trips per road, then that road would be considered "open" for analysis and reporting purposes.
- II. The following access management applies to seven grizzly bear recurring use areas (i.e., BORZ areas) located outside of the Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone (KNF and IPNFs) and Selkirk Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone (IPNFs):
 - A. The Forests shall ensure no increases in permanent linear miles of open road on National Forest System lands in any individual BORZ, above the baseline conditions identified in Table 4, except in cases where the Forest Service lacks discretion to prevent road building across National Forest System lands due to legal or other obligations (examples include, but are not limited to, ANILCA claims, identification of RS2477 thoroughfares). Potential increases in linear miles of open roads must be compensated for with in-kind reductions in linear miles of open road concurrently with, or prior to, project implementation within the same BORZ.

Temporary increases in linear miles of open roads are acceptable under the following conditions:

 1. Roads that are closed to public motorized use or roads created or reconstructed to facilitate land management activities that are otherwise closed to public use may be "opened" to the public immediately following completion of all mechanized harvest and post-harvest slash activities requiring use of the road, to allow motorized public use during the bear summer season prior to the fall bear hunt (i.e., June 16 - August 31) for activities such as personal firewood collection. This public access would only be provided in cases where the mechanized harvest and/or post-harvest slash activities occurred during the same active bear year.
 - B. The Forest shall ensure no net permanent increases in linear miles of total roads in any individual BORZ area above the baseline conditions identified in Table 16, except in cases where the Forest Service lacks discretion to prevent road building across National Forest System lands due to legal or other obligations (examples include, but are not limited to, ANILCA claims, identification of RS2477 thoroughfares, etc.). Otherwise, potential increases in linear miles of total roads must be compensated for with in-kind reductions in linear total road miles concurrently with, or prior to, new road construction or reconstruction of currently bermed or barriered roads.

Temporary increases (not off-set) in linear miles of total roads are acceptable under the following conditions:

1. Temporary increases in linear miles of total roads are acceptable under the following conditions:
 - a. Newly constructed roads would be effectively gated and would be restricted with a CFR closure clarifying they are not open for public use.
 - b. These roads shall be closed immediately upon completion of activities requiring use of the road, except as described in Part II. A.1., above. Roads must be closed with a berm, guardrail or other measure that effectively prevents motorized access, and put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for at least 10 years.
 - c. Upon completion of a land management project, linear miles of total roads would be returned to or below the baseline levels contained in Table 16.
- C. Timber harvest activities that would occur within multiple watersheds shall be scheduled such that disturbance of grizzly bears resulting from road use is minimized. The appropriate scale for scheduling harvest activities would be determined pursuant to project level consultation.

III. To ensure the effective implementation of the open road density parameter, at least 30 percent of closure devices (gates and barriers) would be monitored annually within the respective ecosystems. Monitoring techniques may include visual checks as well as road counters.

Table 16. Habitat conditions for bears outside recovery zone (BORZ) occupancy areas

BORZ Name	Grizzly Bear Ecosystem	Total Size (Acres)	NFS¹ Lands (Acres)	Total Linear Miles of Roads on NFS Lands	Total Linear Miles of Open Roads on NFS Lands
Priest	Selkirk	80,733	75,793	316.4	314.4
Pack River	Selkirk	33,869	28,097	41.9	37.9
Mission-Moyie	Cabinet-Yaak	71,545	58,472	200.3	167.3
Clark Fork	Cabinet-Yaak	101,899	100,421	256.1	176.9
Cabinet Face	Cabinet-Yaak	28,052	27,093	164.1	128
West Kootenai	Cabinet-Yaak	173,122	169,705	615.3	315.9
Tobacco	Cabinet-Yaak	287,240	266,947	1,123.9	867

¹ National Forest System lands

USFWS Biological Opinion Grizzly Bear Related Reporting Requirements

1. By April 15 each year, the Forests shall submit annual reports to the Service that detail the progress made toward achieving and maintaining the standards for Percent Core Area, OMRD, and TMRD within the Recovery Zones.
2. The Forests shall coordinate with State and federal agency biologists to collect credible grizzly bear observations that occur outside of the Recovery Zone boundaries and add this information to the 6th-order HUC database for inclusion into the annual report.

3. The annual report shall provide an ongoing list detailing the locations, dates, duration, and circumstances for invoking the allowance for entering core area for the purposes of road decommissioning or stabilizations.

USFWS Biological Opinion Terms and Conditions for bull trout

In order to be exempt from the prohibitions of section 9 of the Act, the Forests must comply with the following terms and conditions. These terms and conditions are non-discretionary.

1. The Forests should assure consistent implementation of measures and standards specified in the Aquatic Conservation strategies as indicated in the 1998 Biological Opinion for the Effects to Bull Trout from the Continued Implementation of Land and Resource Management Plans and Resource Management Plans as Amended by the Interim Strategies for Managing Fish-producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, Western Montana and portions of Nevada (INFISH).
2. The Forests should ensure that the watershed baselines are updated according to the INFISH Biological Opinion's Reasonable and Prudent Measure #2 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1998b). These baselines should be updated after every project requiring consultation which may affect them until the LRMP for each Forest is revised, or another analysis method is developed in conjunction with the Service.
3. The Forests should assume bull trout are present in a given watershed if it is connected to an area known to be occupied, unless site-specific information indicates otherwise. The Forests should informally consult with the Service to determine the effects of proposed actions upon bull trout prior to initiating formal consultation and to ensure that the necessary site-specific information and technical data is provided in the baseline and effects analysis for biological assessments for the individual projects.
4. The Forests should integrate the value and risk to both bull trout and grizzly bears when deciding where to implement projects stemming from this proposed action. This action may entail increasing the priority for implementation of some BMUs.
5. In the course of planning projects to achieve the grizzly bear access standards, the Forests should conduct site-specific assessments of roads and road-crossings at the 6th code subwatershed scale to identify: road segments that are primary contributors of sediment or at risk of failure; stream crossings at risk of failure or that will not pass a 100-year flood event; culverts or other road crossings that act as fish barriers.

Assessments and corrective actions within any given BMU should follow the prioritization provided in this biological opinion, if practicable, unless new site-specific information changes the priority.

6. The Forests should ensure that all road features, particularly stream crossings on roads or any road that is closed by a barrier (i.e., not a gate) and is intended to be kept closed for at least 5 years is hydrologically neutral (as defined in subsequent project level consultations with the Service) and capable of passing at least a 100-year flood event with minimal erosion. Should the Forests decide to leave a culvert on a road blocked by a barrier, then that crossing should be capable of passing a 100-year event. Crossings that are barriers to fish passage should be removed, unless site-specific analysis contradicts such action. Roads that are intended to be kept closed for less than 5 years should be adequately stabilized so that maintenance is not expected to be required for the duration of the closure.

7. The Forests should minimize sediment input to the maximum extent practicable from culvert removals and subsequent streambed and streambank restoration activities by following all appropriate best management practices.
8. The Forests should, where practical, time culvert removals to coincide with low flow on perennial streams or no flow on intermittent streams to minimize sediment impacts to bull trout spawning activities and bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.
9. The placement of new roads and reopening of previously closed roads should be done in a manner to reduce or eliminate impacts to bull trout streams and critical habitat. The design of new or replaced culverts should be done in accordance with the Forest Service's Aquatic Organism Passage program, or other design criteria that ensure fish passage at the appropriate life stages.
10. Prior to closing a road by gate or barricade, the Forests should complete an inventory and risk assessment of individual stream crossing structures and features behind the proposed barrier and develop a monitoring plan based on the risk assessment. After closing, periodically monitor and inspect culvert stream crossings, bridges, fords, and other drainage features behind gated or barriered roads in bull trout watersheds which are subject to high erosion risk due to floods or peak storm events and/or are in close proximity to bull trout occupied streams or critical habitat.

XIV. Appendix C – Compliance Strategy

Kootenai National Forests

As of the end of 2009, there are eight BMUs solely managed by the Kootenai National Forest and one BMU co-managed with the Idaho Panhandle National Forests that would not be in compliance with the standards set forth in Alternative E Updated. One of these, Keno (13), will have achieved compliance in 2010. The estimated timeline is to achieve desired conditions in the remaining BMUs as follows: Vermillion (8), Pulpit (10), and Roderick (11) (33%) within three years of the amendment decision date; Wanless (6), Silver Butte (7), and East Fork Yaak (16) (66%) within five years of the amendment decision date; and Bull (4) and St. Paul (5) (100%) within eight years of the amendment decision date. Where tentative plans are available, the implementation strategy to show improvements and/or achieve desired conditions for each BMU on the Kootenai National Forest is outlined below:

NOTE: *Italicized* type is current condition; **bold** type is Alternative E Updated standard

BMU 4-Bull (Priority 2): No specific project on the Cabinet District planned at this time. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [37 (**36**)], TMRD [29 (**26**)] or core [62 (**63**)].

BMU 5-St. Paul (Priority 1): Improvements in standards could start with implementation of the Montanore Mine project on the Libby District. NEPA analysis is on-going at this time. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated core [58 (**60**)].

BMU 6-Wanless (Priority 1): Improvements in standards could start with implementation of the Miller-West Fisher and Montanore Mine projects on the Libby District. NEPA analysis on the Montanore mine project is on-going at this time. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated TMRD [34 (**32**)] or core [53 (**55**)].

BMU 7-Silver Butte (Priority 2): No specific project on the Libby District is planned at this time that would improve bear habitat. OMRD and core levels met standards in place at the time during the recent NEPA analysis for Miller-West Fisher, so no additional changes were proposed. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [32 (**26**)] or core [62 (**63**)].

BMU 8-Vermillion (Priority 3): Planned under the Cabinet District Travel Management Planning effort and separate major watershed restoration effort. Anticipate most work being done by changing gated roads to barrier with associated long-term storage or decommissioning. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [33 (**32**)] or TMRD [24 (**20**)].

BMU 10-Pulpit (Priority 2): The recent BPA Libby-Troy Powerline EIS ROD on the Three Rivers District included road management decisions that will bring this BMU up to standards when it is implemented. There are no other specific projects planned at this time. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated core [51 (**52**)].

BMU 11-Roderick (Priority 1): Road management decisions planned as part of the Grizzly Project on the Three Rivers District will be implemented in the next year or two and will bring standards into compliance. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated TMRD [28 (**26**)] or core [54 (**55**)].

BMU 13-Keno (Priority 1): No specific project on the Three Rivers District is planned at this time, but gate installation on Bonners Ferry District was implemented in the fall of 2009 to achieve a 1%

reduction in OMRD in 2010. Hence, based on 2009 baseline conditions, it does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [34 (**33**)] but it does as of this writing.

BMU 16-East Fork Yaak (Priority 1): Planned as part of the Northeast Yaak project on the Three Rivers District. This project has been in litigation but was recently resolved by the court. Implementation is expected within the next few years and standards will be met. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated TMRD [27 (**26**)] or core [54 (**55**)].

Idaho Panhandle National Forests

As of 2009, there are seven BMUs managed by the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (3 in the SRZ; 4 in the CYRZ) that are not in compliance with the standards set forth in Alternative E Updated. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests estimates bringing two additional BMUs into compliance in the first timeframe (three years), three in the second timeframe (five years), and two in the last timeframe (eight years).

While importance was given to achieving standards by order of BMU priority other factors such as the time needed to achieve standards was a factor considered in scheduling BMU compliance. Where tentative plans are available, the implementation strategy to show improvements and/or achieve desired conditions for each BMU on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests is outlined below:

NOTE: *Italicized* type is current condition; **bold** type is Alternative E Updated standard

Blue-Grass BMU (Priority 1): No specific projects planned at this time. Decisions will address restricted roads and require coordination between the Priest Lake and Bonners Ferry Ranger Districts (IPNFs), as well as between the USFS and other agencies. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated TMRD [28 (**26**)] or core [50 (**55**)].

Kalispell-Granite BMU (Priority 1): Implementation of the Lakeview Reeder vegetation project and related watershed restoration decisions (e.g., Road 308 reroute). These projects will bring the BMU into full compliance with the proposed standards. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [31 (**33**)] TMRD [28 (**26**)] or core [49 (**55**)].

Lakeshore BMU (Priority 1): Implementation of the Lakeview Reeder vegetation project will bring the BMU into full compliance with the proposed standards. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated core [19 (**20**)].

North Lightning BMU (Priority 1): Implementation of the Lightning Creek watershed restoration decision. The decision includes the decommissioning of open and restricted roads, the conversion of an open road segment to a non-motorized trail and the conversion of a motorized trail to non-motorized. This project will bring the BMU into full compliance with the proposed standards. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [36 (**35**)].

Scotchman BMU (Priority 1): Implementation of the Lightning Creek watershed restoration decision on the Sandpoint District. The decision includes the decommissioning of open and restricted roads, and the conversion of a segment of open road to a non-motorized trail. This project will bring the BMU into full compliance with the proposed standards. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated TMRD [27 (**26**)].

Grouse BMU (Priority 3): No specific projects planned at this time. Strategy will likely require a Habitat Conservation Plan between USFWS and private landowners, coordination between Sandpoint and Bonners Ferry Ranger Districts (IPNF), and changes in road use agreements. This

BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [61 (**59**)], TMRD [59 (**55**)], or core [32 (**37**)].

Boulder BMU (Priority 3): Implement existing road closure decisions (Katka Peak EIS) in 2011-12. Leonia EA (expected decision in 2011) will improve core area and TMRD. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated TMRD [35 (**29**)] or core [50 (**55**)].

Lolo National Forest

BMU 22-Mt. Headley (Priority 3): The Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District completed an EIS for the Fishtrap Project in 2008. This project will decrease OMRD by 0.1 % (to 38.0 %), decrease TMRD by 2.9 % (to 33.8 %) and increase core area by 2.3 % (to 53.7 %). This project may be completed in 2015 to 2017 and will achieve the TMRD standard. The District plans to begin a travel management project with a dual purpose of meeting the BMU 22 Core Area and OMRD standards and providing Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) opportunities on the district in the next few years. It is likely that the planning portion of the travel plan will take 2 to 5 years and the implementation of road closures will take an additional 3 years; however, these activities are dependent on funding.

NOTE: *Italicized* type is current condition; **bold** type is Alternative E Updated standard

The LNF estimates bringing BMU 22 (Mt. Headley) into compliance within eight years of the amendment decision date. This BMU does not currently meet Alternative E Updated OMRD [38 (**33**)] TMRD [37 (**35**)] or core [51 (**55**)].