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

**Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests (Montana and Idaho)**

# Summary of Public Comments Received on Draft Supplemental EIS

**November 2011**

Forest Service
Enterprise Unit

1602 Ontario St.
Sandpoint, ID
83864
208-265-6621

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

# Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 1
Content Analysis Process ..... 2
List of Commenters ..... 2
Public Concern Statements (PCs), Response to PCs, and All Public Comments Associated with each PC ..... 6
Air Quality ..... 7
Alternatives ..... 8
Best Available Science ..... 39
Fire ..... 43
Fish ..... 46
Forest Plan ..... 49
Management Indicator Species ..... 53
NEPA ..... 53
Plants ..... 62
Public Involvement ..... 65
Recreation ..... 69
Roads ..... 82
Social Economic ..... 92
Soils ..... 97
Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species ..... 98
Timber ..... 158
Watershed ..... 160
Outside of Scope ..... 162
Vote ..... 165
Appendix A – Content Analysis Process ..... 167
Appendix B – Coding Structure ..... 169
Appendix C - Demographics ..... 172
Appendix D – List of Preparers ..... 174

## Introduction

The Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, and Lolo National forests released the “Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones” Draft Supplemental EIS in the Federal Register on May 8, 2009 to begin the official comment period, which ended on June 22, 2009. The Forests received a total of 86 comment letters from Tribes, individuals, organizations, agencies, business owners, and elected officials and were received by U.S. Post Office or email.

All of the comment letters were analyzed using a process called content analysis, which was completed by a third-party contractor (see detailed process in the project record). In addition to the reports that were produced from the content analysis process, the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) members read all of the comment letters. Of the 86 comment letters that contained unique and substantially different comments, there were 857 comments that were coded, analyzed, addressed, and entered into an Access database. The 857 comments were then associated with Public Concern statements (PCs) and the IDT then developed responses to each of the PCs. There were 167 PCs and they begin on page 7.

## Content Analysis Process

The Forest Service followed a systematic process of carefully logging-in, numbering, reading, coding and summarizing all viewpoints and concerns that were submitted. The comments that were most helpful were those that were unique, substantially different, and were specifically related to the analysis disclosed in the DSEIS. In addition to capturing unique and substantially different comments, this report attempts to reflect the emotion and strength of public sentiment in order to represent the public's values and concerns as fairly as possible. When an individual raised multiple concerns within the same letter, each unique comment was numbered and tracked separately. Each comment was assigned a unique tracking number and coded by subject or topic (see Appendices for the detailed content analysis process and for the coding structure).

Once the unique and substantially different comments were coded, concerns raised by different commenters on the same subject and with the same intent and issue were grouped and summarized into public concern statements that capture the essence of those like-concerns. In this way, multiple comments may be addressed by one response. In some cases, more nuanced or complex concerns may be answered through multiple responses to multiple concern statements, or they may have a single response dedicated to just that specific commenter. It is important to keep in mind that even though the public concern statements attempt to capture the full range of public issues and concerns, they should be reviewed with the understanding that there is no limitation on who submits comments. Therefore, the comments received do not necessarily represent the sentiments of the public as a whole. This report attempts to provide fair representation of the wide range of views submitted. Every comment has the same value, whether expressed by many, or by one respondent. Analyzing comments is not a vote-counting process. The Forest Service response to the public comments, which in some cases resulted in changes to the DEIS, was not determined by majority opinion but rather by the substance of the comments. The content analysis process ensured that every comment was read, analyzed, and considered.

## List of Commenters

Each public concern statement is accompanied by a response that was developed by subject matter experts. In addition, each PC and response is accompanied by all of the public comments associated with each PC. The public comments provide commenter's specific perspectives and rationale regarding that concern. For each public comment, it indicates the letter number after the comment, enabling the reader to track and review the original comment letters, if desired (see the column Letter No. in Table 1). The primary purpose is to provide a topical review of voluminous comments in a format that aids in careful consideration and agency response, but doesn't preclude the Forest Service from reading every comment letter.

Following is a list of the commenters, their letter number, and the associated PCs. In order to find the PC statements that address your comments, find your name or organization (which lists the organizations and then individuals alphabetically) and then a list of the PC numbers associated with your comment letter are listed. In Table 2, the PCs are organized by subject so if you look for the subject that most closely aligns with your comment, it might be easier for you to find the PC number associated with your letter. In some cases your concerns may be addressed as part of several different, but related PC statements. The PCs and their response follow Table 2 and are organized according to Table 2.

**Table 1. Public concern statements by commenter's name and organization**

| Organization | Last Name | First Name | Letter No. | PC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alliance for the Wild Rockies | Selder | Liz | 56 | 3, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 114, 115, 116, 117, 123, 127, 128, 129, 135, 141, 144, 158 |
| BearKat Ranch | Baum | Bill | 1 | 168 |
| Boundary County Commissioners | Smith<br>Dinning<br>Kirby | Ronald<br>Dan<br>Walt | 77 | 49, 54, 58, 64, 68, 69, 70, 111, 156 |
| Cabinet Resource Group | Hernandez | Cesar | 83 | 8, 15, 43, 52, 110 |
| Capital Trail Vehicle Association | Salo | Ken | 26 | 2, 5, 15, 28, 31, 32, 33, 41, 42, 48, 59, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 62, 73, 74, 79, 80, 82, 84, 89, 90, 91, 92, 147, 162, 163, 164, 170 |
| Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 | Reichgott | Christine | 57 | 12, 87, 100, 157 |
| Federal Highway Administration | Hasselbach | Brain | 40 | 168 |
| FH Stoltze Land and Lumber Co | Hobday | Brain | 48 | 15, 64, 78, 91, 169 |
| Forest Capital Partners LLC | Moe | Ed | 72 | 12, 50, 109 |
| Great Bear Foundation<br>Defenders of Wildlife<br>Idaho Conservation League<br>Wildlands CPR<br>Natural Resources Defense Council | Peck<br>Proctor<br>Smith<br>Rissien<br>Willcox | Brian<br>Jonathan<br>Brad<br>Adam<br>Louisa | 65 | 4, 8, 13, 15, 44, 67, 72, 78, 81, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 114, 115, 121, 122, 127, 128, 130, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 158, 159, 166 |
| ID Dept of Fish and Game | Corsi | Charles | 50 | 12, 23, 24, 93, 113, 145 |
| ID Dept of Lands | Groeschi | David | 58 | 11, 19, 25, 50, 57, 65, 118, 142, 149, 150, 169 |
| Idaho Dept of Parks and Recreation | Meinen | Robert | 8 | 5, 12, 26 |
| Idaho for Wildlife | Kimp | Kevin | 60 | 54, 78, 79, 91, 92, 111, 113, 152, 159 |
| Kinnikinnick Chapter of the ID Native Plant Society | O' Reilly | Molly | 14 | 4, 15, 30, 45, 46, 47 |
| Kootenai Environmental Alliance | Mihelich | Mike | 24 | 20, 154, 155 |
| Kootenai Tribe of Idaho | Porter | Jennifer | 42 | 12, 35, 36, 71, 93, 131, 156 |
| Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative | Anderson | Dave | 79 | 68, 70, 93, 156 |
| Lincoln County Commissioners | Konzen<br>Roose<br>Berget | John<br>Marianne<br>Anthony | 82 | 1, 5, 15,18, 78, 133, 152 |

| Organization | Last Name | First Name | Letter No. | PC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Montanans For Multiple Use | Hodgeboom | Fred | 64 | 15, 18, 20, 27, 39, 41, 50, 60, 64, 101, 136, 137, 146, 158 |
| MT DNRC | Harrington | Robert | 49 | 95, 111, 134, 152 |
| The Lands Council<br>Alliance for the Wild Rockies | Juel<br>Garrity | Jeff<br>Michael | 45 | 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 37, 38, 45, 63, 66, 81, 86, 94, 111, 112, 123, 124, 125, 126, 131, 132, 133, 143, 144, 151 |
| Troy Snowmobile Club | Wandler | Jerry | 63 | 5, 12, 15, 91, 169 |
| US Border Patrol Planning Branch | Koerner | Koerner | 81 | 70 |
| USDI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance | Stewart | Robert | 29 | 34 |
| | Artley | Dick | 17 | 6, 13, 111 |
| | Attemann | Rein | 18 | 4, 13, 85, 111 |
| | Banks | Mike | 66 | 12 |
| | Biondo | Nat | 39 | 161 |
| | Brady | Joseph | 10 | 4, 85, 86 |
| | Braun | Rod | 31 | 111 |
| | Braun | Stephen | 34 | 4, 7, 13, 85, 148, 165 |
| | Brown | Ron | 78 | 54, 111 |
| | Capurso | Donna | 38 | 54, 111 |
| | Carrick | David | 73 | 54, 111 |
| | Causton | Robert | 35 | 15, 76 |
| | Cheshire | Robert | 5 | 54, 169 |
| | Cunningham | Bruce | 9 | 54 |
| | Dark | Nicholas | 33 | 111 |
| | Davis | Jayne | 52 | 15, 18, 53, 54, 64, 113 |
| | Davis | Stanley | 54 | 54, 111 |
| | Dilley | Matt | 53 | 54, 111 |
| | Erhard | John | 15 | 111 |
| | Fields | Edwin | 6 | 4 |
| | Fifiew | Jim | 2 | 168 |
| | Finch | Jim | 20 | 54, 111 |
| | Finney | John | 70 | 12, 40 |
| | Garvey | Lydia | 28 | 111 |
| | Gidel | Arthur | 4 | 5, 15, 54, 161, 169 |
| | Halvorsen | Ray and Joyce | 43 | 54, 161 |
| | Hart | Eric | 32 | 15, 54, 111, 161 |
| | Haynes | Michael | 30 | 53, 75, 111 |
| | Head | David | 3 | 111 |
| | Helmer | Rose Marie | 41 | 12, 64, 111 |
| | Helmer | Robert | 44 | 5, 54, 169 |
| | Hilderman | Larry | 16 | 15, 111 |
| | Hunt | David | 46 | 4, 13, 111, 169 |
| | Jokela | Brian, Mary | 68 | 4, 13, 54 |
| | Latta | John | 61 | 15 |

| Organization | Last Name | First Name | Letter No. | PC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lee | Doris | 25 | 4, 83, 111 |
| | Lewis | Colleen | 22 | 12, 53, 54, 78, 111 |
| | Lopez | Camilo,Terry | 37 | 4 |
| | Lutes | Mary Kay | 12 | 12, 54, 111 |
| | Mann | David | 23 | 54, 78, 111, 169 |
| | Montgomery | Rachel | 13 | 54, 111, |
| | Nagel | Barbara | 21 | 54, 111 |
| | Olmstead | Kyle | 62 | 15, 54, 91, 93, 111, 119, 120 |
| | Paulson | Steve | 80 | 59, 61, 167 |
| | Pluid | Ina | 76 | 12, 70, 156 |
| | Porter | Ed, Mary | 7 | 12, 54, 78 |
| | Roady | Chuck | 59 | 12, 15, 64, 91 |
| | Robertson | Evan | 11 | 54, 87, 88 |
| | Robertson | Amy | 71 | 18, 53, 54 |
| | Rose | Neil | 86 | 51, 54 |
| | Schaible | David | 84 | 64, 64 |
| | Schroeder | Jerry | 85 | 111 |
| | Shields | Royal, Jana | 47 | 54, 90, 111, 113 |
| | Stenros | Dawna | 74 | 54, 111 |
| | Stenros | Pete | 75 | 29, 54, 111 |
| | Ulrich | Roberta | 27 | 4, 13, 50, 111 |
| | Valentine | Jim | 69 | 29, 54, 111 |
| | Wenk | Dave | 51 | 54 |
| | West | Tim | 55 | 33, 54, 64, 111 |
| | Wheeler | Donald, Elaine | 67 | 53, 54, 111 |
| | Wood | Dave | 36 | 15, 54, 111 |
| | Zwinger | Diane | 19 | 53, 111 |

**Table 2. Public concern statements organized by subject**

| Subject | Public Concern Numbers Associated With This Subject |
|---|---|
| Air Quality | 1 |
| Alternatives | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 170 |
| Best Available Science | 158, 159 |
| Fire | 16, 17, 18, 19 |
| Fish | 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| Forest Plan | 26, 27 |
| Management Indicator Species | 28 |
| NEPA | 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 |
| Plants | 45, 46, 47 |
| Public Involvement | 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 |
| Recreation | 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 75 |
| Roads | 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76 |
| Social and Economics | 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82 |
| Soils | 83, 84 |

| Subject | Public Concern Numbers Associated With This Subject |
|---|---|
| Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species | 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150 |
| Timber | 60, 151, 152 |
| Watershed | 154, 155, 156, 157 |
| Out of Scope | 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167 |
| Thank you for your comment and voting issue | 168, 169 |

**Table 3. Number of coded comments by subject**

| Subject | # of Coded Comments (Total 856) |
|---|---|
| Air Quality | 3 |
| Alternatives | 171 |
| Best Available Science | 4 |
| Fire | 13 |
| Fish | 9 |
| Forest Plan | 8 |
| Management Indicator Species | 2 |
| NEPA | 31 |
| Plants | 6 |
| Public Involvement | 12 |
| Recreation | 89 |
| Roads | 83 |
| Social and Economics | 3 |
| Soils | 2 |
| Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species | 299 |
| Timber | 16 |
| Watershed | 9 |
| Out of Scope | 15 |
| Thank you for your comment and voting issue | 11 |
| **Total Comments** | **856** |

Complete letters from Federal, State, and local agencies are included in Appendix D of the FSEIS, as required (FSH 1909.15, 25.1 (3)). The remaining letters are available for review in the project record.

## Public Concern Statements (PCs), Response to PCs, and All Public Comments Associated with each PC

The following public concern statements (PCs), response to comments (RTCs), and all the associated coded public comments are organized by Subject:

## Air Quality

### Public Concern No. 1. The Forest Service should not change existing motorized access without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific data because of the potential negative effects to air quality from increased fire risk.

**Response:** Fires are a natural process in the west, and fires will continue to burn and produce smoke and this smoke that is produced can sometimes cause localized impacts to air quality. Larger fires that burn for a longer duration also tend to produce more smoke over time, thus increasing the probability of potential impacts to air quality. As described in the Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality section, reducing road access for firefighting forces does increase the chance that a fire will escape initial attack and grow to a larger size, thus producing more smoke than if the fire was controlled at a small size. However, even though there may be delayed response times for firefighting forces responding by road, other viable methods will still be employed such as the use of aircraft for delivering firefighters and for direct suppression actions (i.e., water and retardant). These actions may still allow a fire to grow but still may keep the fire at a size where the impacts to air quality will be minimal.

Other factors that influence the spread of fires are the weather conditions at the time and location of the ignition. If the fire starts in conditions that are wetter, the likelihood for fire spread is low, thus the air quality impacts would be lower. This reduced probability of fire spread also allows a longer window of opportunity for firefighting forces to reach the fire and keep it small. Weather and atmospheric conditions at the time of the ignition also play a role as atmospheric winds will also dictate where the smoke travels (i.e., away from a community or towards a community).

This analysis can't predict where the smoke impacts will be or for how long they might last due to too many complexities with weather influences as well as potential location of fires and the availability of firefighting resources. This analysis does conclude that there will be an increased risk of smoke being produced due to the reduced access. However, this decision does not analyze the effects of individual closed roads, which will be addressed in future site-specific decisions, and thus cannot describe where the impacts will be. This decision cannot assess what is the likelihood of a fire growing due to weather conditions, firefighting resource availability, and local management decisions to prioritize an individual fire burning in a specific location for the type of suppression response. In summary, we can state that there is an increased risk of smoke being produced, thus potentially having impacts to air quality; however due to the scope of the analysis we can't say where, when, or for how long those impacts may occur.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Potential of negative effects to air quality from increased fire risk* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 18)***

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Potential of negative effects to air quality from increased fire risk* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 18)***

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Potential of negative effects to air quality from increased fire risk* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 18)***

## Alternatives

### Public Concern No. 2. The Forest Service should develop a true No Action Alternative that is compliant with NEPA and other planning regulations so as to enable the decisionmakers and public to compare and contrast other management alternatives; and accurately and reasonably evaluate the Alternatives.

**Response:** From CEQ's Memorandum to Agencies on NEPA's Forty Most Asked Questions: "Section 1502.14(d) requires the alternatives analysis in the EIS to "include the alternative of no action." There are two distinct interpretations of "no action" that must be considered, depending on the nature of the proposal being evaluated. The first situation might involve an action such as updating a LRMP where ongoing programs initiated under existing legislation and regulations will continue, even as new plans are developed. In these cases, "no action" is "no change" from current management direction or level of management intensity. To construct an alternative that is based on no management at all would be a useless academic exercise. Therefore, the "no action" alternative may be thought of in terms of continuing with the present course of action until that action is changed. Consequently, projected impacts of alternative management schemes would be compared in the EIS to those impacts projected for the existing plan. In this case, alternatives would include management plans of both greater and lesser intensity, especially greater and lesser levels of resource development.

"The second interpretation of "no action" is illustrated in instances involving decisions on proposals for projects. "No action" in such cases would mean the proposed activity would not take place, and the resulting environmental effects from taking no action would be compared with the effects of permitting the proposed activity or an alternative activity to go forward."

The forest plan amendments proposed in this analysis are similar to the first situation described above. The amendments involve updating three forest plans where ongoing programs will continue; therefore, the no action alternative has been analyzed in terms of continuing with the present course of action until that action is changed.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The agency must develop a true No Action alternative in compliance with NEPA and other planning regulations. The agency must formulate a lawful, No Action Alternative so that the public and decision makers may reasonably compare and contrast other management alternatives. The No Action (existing condition) alternative must be accurately and reasonably evaluated.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 39)***

### Public Concern No. 3. The Forest Service should provide sufficient evidence that, if implemented, Alternative E Updated would create suitable habitat with sufficient security for grizzly bear recovery.

**Response:** The IGBC recommended that in individual BMUs with greater than 75 percent Federal ownership, the Forests are to: 1) attain 55 percent core habitat; 2) have less than 33 percent of each BMU with open motorized route densities exceeding 1 mi/mi$^2$; and 3) have less than 26 percent of each BMU with total motorized route densities exceeding 2 mi/mi$^2$. These parameters were based on the best available science of the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm study. Since January 1999, the Forest Service has been working toward achieving the Wakkinen and Kasworm recommendations within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems. Since that time, habitat conditions for grizzly bear have been steadily improving as existing road miles within the two recovery zones have been reduced.

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 (FSEIS, pages 57-62). 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. 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 (FSEIS, pages 57-62). However, implementing tighter access restrictions on wheeled motorized vehicle access within the recovery zones cannot completely remove grizzly bear mortality risk within and around the recovery zones. Minimizing habituation and mortality levels on adjacent ownerships as well as addressing other risk factors such as sanitation, agricultural food attractants, hunter identification errors, and human attitudes toward grizzly bear all plays a role. This document focuses on wheeled motorized vehicle access management, but at the same time, the Forest Service and other agencies are also pursuing the other elements essential to preventing unnecessary mortalities of the threatened grizzly bear (FSEIS, page 6).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Implementation of the proposals in DEIS will fail to create habitats suitable for grizzly bear recovery. Specifically, alternatives C and E: *Contain no evidence [nor even claims] that they would provide sufficient security for grizzly bear survival in these recovery zones; *Sanction excessive road densities; *-Would preserve inadequate roadless [core] habitat; *Include no standards to insure adequate and secure seasonal habitats; *The proposals in DEIS would doom efforts to recover grizzly bears in the Cabinet Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones. Effective management will require development of scientifically responsible, demonstrably sufficient habitat standards from the best available information. Any scientifically sound management plan will insure greater security of grizzly bear habitats than any alternative described in DEIS.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 41)***

### Public Concern No. 4. The Forest Service should select Alternative D Modified for implementation because:

**A) It provides maximum security and recovery of grizzly bears, is best supported by research, and better meets the needs of many other threatened, endangered, and sensitive species;**

**B) It is the most protective of native plant species and their habitat;**

**C) It reduces human-caused fires which reduces the budget for fire fighting and makes that funding available for habitat improvement; reduces weeds and the road maintenance budget; and protects soils and water quality;**

**D) The public has been drawn to these areas for generations, however road closure exceptions for a few of the special places are acceptable;**

**E) It is politically more palatable in the long-term and less expensive now, and as species recover, another amendment can be made to the Forest Plan;**

**F) It provides greatest potential to reduce appeals and litigation at the project level, and grizzly bear core areas could form basis of restoration zones that could assist in facilitating collaborative agreements.**

**Response (A, B, C, D, E, and F):** Alternative E Updated was selected by the responsible officials for implementation. While Alternative D Modified would provide for increased levels of security habitat for grizzly bears and other threatened, endangered and sensitive animal and plant

species, the purpose and need for this proposal included the need to consider social and economic impacts when developing the parameters for road densities and core habitat (FEIS, page 1-6). Upon consideration of comments received on the DSEIS and the potential impacts disclosed in this FSEIS, it was determined that Alternative E Updated would best achieve the purpose and need for this proposal while responding to identified issues, including increased secure habitat for grizzly bears. Of the over 80 individual comment letters or emails received on the DSEIS, only about 15 expressed support for Alternative D Modified. The Record of Decision for this FSEIS discusses in detail the rationale for the selection of Alternative E Updated (see ROD, *Rationale for the Decision*).

**(C):** While decreased wheeled motorized vehicle access to the general public may decrease the number of human-caused fires, if the total amount of wheeled motorized recreation does not decrease and is simply relocated in different areas, the results may only be that human-caused ignitions are more concentrated into those areas with access, with fewer ignitions in the areas with wheeled motorized vehicle access restrictions (FSEIS, page 252). When fires do start, reduced administrative access could result in delays in initial attack and fire suppression efforts of undesirable fires. This may lead to large, landscape-sized fires with the associated changes in forest resources, including reduced security cover for grizzly bears (FSEIS, page 252).

**(F):** Since 2001, when this amendment process began, core habitat within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones has increased by about 21,400 acres. Full implementation (by 2019) of Alternative E Updated will provide for about another 28,000 acres of core habitat being created. Rather than maintenance of the status quo, Alternative E Updated provides for an improvement in grizzly bear habitat conditions. Across the recovery zones, at full implementation, there would be about 1.27 million acres of core habitat (compared to Alternative D Modified which would provide for about 1.53 million acres of core habitat) available for grizzly bears and the percent of core habitat would increase to 58 percent within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and 61 percent within the IPNF portion of the Selkirk Recovery Zone, which are above the researcher recommended level of 55 percent (FSEIS, page 94). Additionally, design features include the stipulation that except as provided for in road stabilization projects, there will be no reductions in core area without in-kind replacements until all BMUs administered by the IPNFs, KNF, and LNF in the respective ecosystems achieve their assigned standard (see ROD, *Description of the Decision*).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # F*

*As the DSEIS indicates, Alternative D-Modified would better meet the needs of a whole host of Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, and Management Indicator Species, which depend upon old growth and other natural forest conditions, as well as clean water and good aquatic habitat conditions. This would have the strong potential to reduce appeals and litigation of various project-level decisions in these three national forests. The Lands Council's involvement in the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition has resulted in collaborated agreements among timber and conservation interests that result in better forestry in about a third of the Forest while designating another third of the otherwise "suitable" base for management, where emphasis is restoration to a condition where natural processes will be primary. Grizzly bear core and high security areas might form the basis of similar "restoration" type zones that would help facilitate collaborative agreements in another third of these Forests for active management. On the other hand, Alternative E-Updated provides none of those opportunities, basically continuing status quo management and making little progress on solving this whole host of issues.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern #A*

*I support Alternative D. Any plan that supports maximum recovery of Grizzlies is the plan for me.* ***(Ltr# 6, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Please consider full protection for the grizzly as you decide how to implement the forest plan amendment.* ***(Ltr# 10, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Rather than repackaging a severely flawed alternative that has already been rejected by a federal court, the Forest Service must adopt Alternative D Modified, which would provide the highest secure habitat level for bears in accord with bear biologist recommendations.* ***(Ltr# 18, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Alternative E has already been rejected and I strongly favor the Alternative D Modified which would accept the opinion of bear biologists' recommendations rather that what the Forest Service thinks is right.* ***(Ltr# 25, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*While Option D also falls short in some areas, it comes close to meeting the researchers' recommendations and therefore would normally be my choice of options.* ***(Ltr# 27, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*People have the choice to live here or not. Many species do not have this latitude. This is the only place for them to live. Instead of this being a problem for people, it should be looked at as an opportunity to recover species. This has been mandated by the courts. Recovery of species falls upon federal lands. With this in mind Alt D is the only choice that has potential to allow for recovery.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Be advised that we own property near the entry to the Panhandle National forest. We support the closure of this area to motorized vehicles for the creation of a grizzly bear recovery zone. We find the public is so uncaring of the natural beauty of the land, that in order to ensure that the grizzly bear have habitat for survival of the species, closure of the proposed areas is a must. There is still plenty of public land available for the public to use and abuse.* ***(Ltr# 37, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*TLC and AWR favor further restrictions on motorized access, which are necessary to provide the best chance for recovering the grizzly bear populations in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones. We urge you to adopt Alternative D-Modified, to provide the highest secure habitat level for bears in accordance with bear biologist recommendations.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*TLC and AWR favor further restrictions on motorized access, which are necessary to provide the best chance for recovering the grizzly bear populations in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones. We urge you to adopt Alternative D-Modified, to provide the highest secure habitat level for bears in accordance with bear biologist recommendations.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*The Federal Courts have already rejected flawed alternatives, and will likely be urged to do so again if adequate habitat protections (as demonstrated in altemative D modified) are not adopted. Alternative D Modified may temporarily "ruffle a few feathers" amongst those who want to take their ORVs and 4WD vehicles anywhere they want, regardless of the consequences or impact, however, there are endless options for those ORV and 4WD users, while there is only one small, extremely endangered population of Selkirk Grizzlies which require our responsible stewardship and habitat management.* ***(Ltr# 46, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # A*

*When we look at Alternative D Modified (Table 4, P: 20) we see that OMRD would improve in 27 of 30 BMU's (90%); TMRD would get better in 25 of 30 BMU's (83.3%); and Core would increase in 25 of 30 BMU's (83.3%). IfUSFS wishes to meet its requirement to follow the science, obey the law, and avoid*

*Jeopardy to grizzlies, the choice is clear.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 17)***

*Subconcern # A*

*If the Service is unwilling to follow that course, it must select Alternative D Modified -the only option presented that will follow the science, obey the law, and stop the slide of these ecosystem's grizzlies toward extinction.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 48)***

*Subconcern # A*

*It is unacceptable to maintain status quo or worse habitat seurity, with grizzly populations already so endangered. Rather than repackaging a severely flawed alternative that has already been rejected by a federal court, the Forest Service must adopt Alternative D Modified, which would provide the highest secure habitat level for bears in accord with bear biologist recommendations.* ***(Ltr# 68, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*As these two options are the only offered we must support Option D as most protective of native plant species and their habitats. We do not believe that Option E presents a supportable alternative.* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # C*

*The best chance for Grizzly bear recovery is to choose Alt D Modified. As is well known bears and roads are not compatible. It is time to make a decision that will reduce human caused fires, reduce the road maintenance budget, protect soils, provide the best chance for Grizzly bear recovery, reduce weeds, protect water quality and enhance a host of other sensitive species.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # C*

*To recover species it is important to pick Alt D modified. Human caused fires will be reduced, which in turn will reduce the budget for fire fighting. This will afford the USFS to have funding to improve habitat on federal lands, a right of all Americans. Alt. E is not change. Get rid of the roads, many that have no funds for maintenance. While some will complain selfishly that they will loose the ability to drive everywhere they can now, it will not lock them out of the woods. It will allow for more traditional uses, which include walking and horseback riding. Alt D is the best choice!* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 10)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I suggest that you adopt Option D modified with road closure exceptions for a few of the special places that have drawn the public for generations.* ***(Ltr# 27, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # E*

*Please make the decision for future generations and pick Alt. D. It may be politically more palatable in the long term and cheaper to make this decision now to protect habitat. As species recover, a different amendment can be made to the forest plan.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 5. The Forest Service should not select Alternative D Modified for implementation as the preferred alternative because:

**A) It emphasizes grizzly bear security over public access, which is unpopular with many local residents;**

**B) It does not comply with the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act and National Forest Management Act;**

**C) The science is not conclusive enough to support more severe restrictions; basis for security measures is that the assumed need for 100 bears is not soundly established on scientific basis; information given concerning bear numbers indicate an increase not decrease.**

**Response:** The responsible officials have selected Alternative E Updated for implementation. Alternative E Updated was selected for the reasons discussed in the accompanying ROD to this FSEIS (see ROD, *Rationale for the Decision*). In deciding upon a selected alternative, the responsible officials took into consideration how the alternatives considered responded to the identified purpose and need for action (see FEIS, pages 1-4 to 1-5), the issues identified through public involvement (see FEIS, page 2-2), and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The decision weighs and balances the social considerations (public acceptance) with the biological. Alternative D Modified being based on the needs of one bear while Alternative E Updated is based upon the needs of six bears.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We simply ask that all of the instructions and requirements of the law as agreed to under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act be honored and applied to this project.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 41)***

*Subconcern # A*

*While Alternative D provides greater Grizzly Bear security than Alternative E, it does so at the expense of greater public access restrictions. Greater access restrictions are unpopular with many local residents. In order to have successful Grizzly Bear recovery levels, there needs to be support at the local level. Alternative E strives to balance public access with Grizzly Bear Security while Alternative D places security over public access.* ***(Ltr# 8, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # A*

*I spend a great deal of time in the mountains and forests enjoying the trails, hunting, fishing and the great scenery. Alternative D Modified cuts all of the access to trails and campgrounds in north Idaho and western Montana. It seems the intent is to lock up the forest and not allow use.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Alternative D is a wonderful approach to closing off the forest to everyone. This is absurd and cannot be considered as a valid recovery zone alternative.* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # B*

*I strongly oppose Alternative D as the worst possible alternative I can imagine. These lands are substantially multi use national forest lands with existing motorized access that has been actively and historically used by many for various recreational purposes for many years****. (Ltr# 4, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # B*

*In the first part of the document a statement is made about the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act. It basically states the national forests are established and shall be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed and wildlife and fish purposes. It further states that the National Forest Management Act requires that forest plans provide for multiple use and sustained yield of the products and services obtained there from. After reading much of the EIS I am not sure these two acts are being followed in Alternative D. Over 1,900 square miles of forest would be locked up and unavailable for most uses as described in the EIS except wildlife.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # C*

*We do not believe the emerging "science" is conclusive enough to support the more severe restrictions of Alt D (modified). First of all, it seems the basis for the security measures is the assumed need for "100" bears across these ecosystems. This is a nice round number, but is it soundly established on a solely scientific basis? Or might some other number just as easily been hap hazarded as the goal based on someone else's biased and elusive guess? How can we really know what the "right" number is? Secondly, there seems to be some inventory "issues". Several years ago, we were given an estimate of "30 to 40" bears, while this year our information indicates a "minimum of 45" bears, accompanied with a concern over the decrease. What decrease? It seems to us that "45" is an increase over "30 to 40"****(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 6. The Forest Service should explain why Alternative D Modified, which was developed in response to court direction, was not selected as the preferred alternative.

**Response:** Alternative D Modified was not required to be considered in detail by the Court. However, in 2008, the responsible officials directed the interdisciplinary team to conduct additional environmental analysis to address the issue regarding improved habitat conditions for bears in all BMUs. This included development of an alternative (in addition to the alternatives in the 2002 FEIS) that best met the observed secure habitat use by one of the six female grizzly bears in the Wakkinen and Kasworm study (OMRD of less than or equal to 17 percent, TMRD of less than or equal to 14 percent, and core area of greater than or equal to 72 percent in each BMU) (DSEIS, page 15). Consideration of such an alternative would allow the responsible officials to consider the effects of meeting higher levels of secure habitat versus an alternative that considers the biological, social, valuational, and institutional needs (Alternative E Updated).

While Alternative D Modified would provide for increased levels of habitat security for grizzly bears and other threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, it does not consider the social, valuational, and institutional forces (Recovery Plan 1993). The Recovery Plan states "that the future of the grizzly bear will depend on integrating, as Kellert (1986) states: "the socioeconomic and utilitation 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." Alternative E Updated integrates the biological needs of the grizzly bear with the social, valuational, and institutional needs based on unique circumstances of each BMU. Alternative E Updated considered other 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. The responsible officials selected Alternative E Updated because it best integrated the needs of the bear with social and economic considerations; therefore, it should have a higher likelihood of social tolerance.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Since Alternative D (modified) was completed to respond to District Court direction, why didn't the Forest Service select it as the preferred alternative?* ***(Ltr# 17, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 7. The Forest Service should improve Alternative D Modified by:

**A) Examining restrictions under Alternative D because: they are not restrictive enough to repair past management decisions which focused on resource extraction over other uses; gated roads and bermed roads are not suitable restrictions; and roads need to be obliterated because only a small percentage of lands in the drainages will be effective habitat;**

**B) Shortening timeframe for meeting standards equivalent to or quicker than Alternative E Updated;**

**C) Further developing Alternative D Modified to include identification of habitat features that would provide sufficient resources and security for recovery of the grizzly bear.**

**Response:** Per the Inter-agency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC, 1998a), core areas are delineated by identifying and aggregating the full range of seasonal habitats that are available in

the BMU and each BMU represents all available habitats and elevations. Core areas do not include any gated or restricted roads, but may contain roads that are impassable due to vegetation or barriers. The Forest Service monitors closures throughout the course of the active bear season, often multiple times, to determine extent of any unauthorized use on restricted and bermed roads (USDA Forest Service 2008, 2009, 2010). The Forest Service submits annual reports to the USFWS documenting the progress made toward achieving and maintaining the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The timeframes for accomplishing meeting the standards have been reviewed and consulted on with USFWS. The agreed upon timeframes have been revised from those contained in the DSEIS and are discussed in the Design Elements for Alternative E Updated, starting on page 27 of the FSEIS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # A*

*Alternative D may not be restrictive enough to repair past management decisions that focused on resource extraction over other uses. I do not think that gated and bermed roads are suitable responses. The roads need to be removed for the best management decision at this point. When looked at as a whole, a very small percentage of lands in the drainages will be affected under Alt.D.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Alternative D-Modified should be improved by shortening the timeframe for accomplishing meeting standards to the same or even quicker timeframe than for Alternative E-Updated. The highly endangered grizzly populations in these recovery areas are facing development pressures now, and managers must be motivated to act more quickly.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # C*

*Alternative D, summarily dismissed in DEIS for reasons unrelated to the needs of grizzly bears [p.2-18], needs to be developed. This development must start with identification of habitat features that would provide sufficient resources and security for recovery of these threatened populations. The present effort, as embodied in Alternatives C and E fails to incorporate sound science and abandons statutory and moral obligations to identify biological needs and formulate a credible plan to meet them.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 59)***

### Public Concern No. 8. The descriptions and analyses of effects are clearly biased against Alternative D Modified. The Forest Service should present the various ways this alternative could be achieved while lessening the recreation and timber management impacts, and still provide the highest level of security and recovery. Furthermore, the Forest Service should provide an independent scientific review of its options and analysis.

**Response:** Alternative D Modified was developed to focus more fully on the issue of increased secure habitat for grizzly bears (FEIS, page 2-18; DSEIS, page 15). An alternative that is designed to only address one issue, in this case maximum grizzly bear security, without any other considerations, can have substantial impacts on other uses of the national forest. Alternative E Updated is a more balanced alternative because it was developed to address a number of issues, including increased grizzly bear habitat security and some management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, access to private inholdings (FEIS, page 2-15). Therefore, the potential effects of Alternative E Updated upon motorized access are going to be more moderate than those for Alternative D Modified.

Alternative D Modified and its effects are presented in an unbiased manner and; therefore, an independent scientific review is not warranted. The Forest Service has presented an alternative

way Alternative D Modified could be achieved while lessening its associated impacts and still provide for higher levels of security that exceed the research recommended levels for the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. Alternative E Updated is that alternative (FSEIS, page 36). It provides increased amounts of habitat security for grizzly bear, while lessening impacts on access for other valid uses of the national forest. Full implementation of Alternative E Updated would result in a core area value of 58 percent in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and 61 percent in the IPNFs portion of the Selkirk Recovery Zone (FSEIS, page 94). The USFWS in the biological opinion for these amendments has determined that implementation of Alternative E Updated would not jeopardize the continued existence of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear population as long as the design features are implemented (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, pages A-75 and A-86).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Its descriptions and analyses of effects are clearly biased against Alternative D-Modified.**(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 9)***

*Alternative D provides the highest level of security selected by one of the adult female bears in the Wakkinen/Kasworrn 1997 Study (W/K 1997). The security levels selected were: Open Motorized Road Density over 1 mile/sq mile (OMRD) equaled no more than 17% of her home range; Total Motorized Road Density over 2 miles/sq mile (TMRD) equaled no more than 14% of her home range and 72% of the area within her home range met the definition of Core. The standards in Alt. D (14/17172) reflect this relatively high level of security. According to Table 4, Alternative D would reduce OMRD in 26 of 28 BMU's (93%); TMRD would be reduced in 25 of 28 BMU's (83%); and Core would increase in 23 of 28 BMU's (82%).1 DSEIS at 20, Table 4. Accomplishing the substantial increase in security called for in Alt. D would constitute a giant step toward meeting the Forest Service's mandatory duty to conserve and recover these small grizzly populations. But the DSEIS makes it abundantly clear that Alt. D will not be selected because of its impacts on access for recreation and timber extraction. **(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 8)***

*Table 18, P: 56 of the DSEIS rates the two alternatives based on ten "Quantitative Indicators." In every case, Alternative D Modified equals or exceeds Alternative E Updated in meeting the security and recovery requirements of the grizzly bear. For populations the Service acknowledges have been found to be "Warranted for uplisting to Endangered status, but precluded by other listing priorities", choosing the weakest alternative is simply not an option -biologically or legally. **(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 25)***

*Although USFS is prohibited from making its decision in advance of the public process, it's abundantly clear that this has already happened. Alternative E Updated is framed as moderate, reasonable, balanced, and unlikely to interfere with much recreation. Alternative D Modified however, is cast as positively draconian, excessive, and the end of all recreation as we know it. One can almost see mom and dad thrown off the forest before they can get their winter wood, or huckleberries snatched from the mouths of children. The agency bias is so blatant that we question whether USFS hasn't intentionally skewed the Alternative D Modified analysis to paint the most bleak picture possible agency claims to the contrary. We therefore request that the Service present the various ways in which this alternative could be achieved with lesser impacts. We further request that USFS provide an independent scientific review of its options and analysis. **(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 26)***

*It appears in this DSEIS the US Forest Service is intent on defending its initial Record of Decision (2004) while meeting the merest minimum requirements of the judicial decision that remanded a do-over. In this case, including at least a minimal development / discussion of Alternative D. **(Ltr# 83, Cmt# 2)***

*The compliance timelines (12/31/19, 12/31/25 & 12/32/29) are overly long, and significant as a reminder that grizzly bears were added to the ESA list in 1975. They also serve to demonstrate that in 35 years since listing, the US Forest Service has only managed to maintain barely sufficient habitat to keep the bear from going extinct. This makes all of the time-lines, comparison charts, schedules and discussion in this DSEIS academic, since its readily discernible the Forest Service has determined their preferred alternative (E) is the only game in play. (**Ltr# 83, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 9. The Forest Service should explain how the "estimated" changes in OMRD, TMRD, and core area under Alternative D will retain the stated greatest degree of access, when the DSEIS doesn't even disclose the specific roads that would be affected.

**Response:** While there is no strict hierarchy determining which road segments could theoretically have access changes, first priority would usually be given to unclassified open roads or local opened/gated roads with Maintenance Level 1, followed by local and collector roads with Maintenance Level 1 or 2, and finally arterial routes with Maintenance Level 2. Road segments were theoretically eliminated one or a few at a time and densities recalculated each time so that the proposed standards could be met with the least possible change in motorized access. Roads were also identified for their strategic placement on the landscape in order to minimize access changes while maximizing gains in core or reductions in road densities. Therefore, open or currently restricted roads in close proximity to other drivable roads were identified for potential barrier ahead of road segments in relatively unroaded areas, as this would have a greater effect upon road densities at the upper end (greater than 2 mi/mi$^2$) of the scale. Consequently, open roads theoretically identified for a gate would be likely to occupy a part of the BMU with few roads rather than be in a highly roaded part of the BMU. This approach would maximize reductions in OMRD, since a single road segment is often enough to push the surrounding density into the greater than 1 mi/mi$^2$ class.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*(p. 125): "In the analysis for Alternative D Modified, any estimated changes to wheeled motorized vehicle access status are modeled such that the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and Core Area are achieved while retaining the greatest degree of public and administrative access." (Emphasis added.) How is it determined that the "estimated" changes will retain this greatest degree of access, when the DSEIS doesn't even disclose which roads you are referring to?* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 26)***

### Public Concern No. 10. The Forest Service should address the inadequacy and contradiction within the DSEIS in that Alternative D Modified has the greatest negative cumulative effect on resource management access for vegetation treatment needs and in contrast, is better for other resources such as soils, water quality, fish, and wildlife.

**Response:** The purpose and need for action recognizes the Forest Service' responsibility under ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones (FSEIS, page 12). As acknowledged in the EIS, there are resources for which implementation of Alternative D Modified would provide a greater benefit than Alternative E Updated. For example, Alternative D Modified provides the greatest overall long-term decrease in net associated risk of sediment delivery from roads (FSEIS, page 196); however, Alternative E Updated also provides a benefit, by decreasing the risk of sediment delivery to streams (FSEIS, page 196).

While Frissell and Bayles (1996) and Wuerthner (2006) may advocate a nuanced understanding of the complexity of natural systems and recognition that nature operates beyond human control, there is not a contradiction within the EIS. The Forest Service manages the national forests under the principles/philosophy of ecosystem management, which is an ecological approach to achieve the multiple-use management of national forests and grasslands by blending the needs of people and environmental values in such a way that national forests and grasslands represent diverse, healthy, productive and sustainable ecosystems. The NFMA imposes substantive duties on the Forest Service, including the duty “to provide for diversity of plant and animal communities.” However, as described in the recent U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit decision of *Lands*

*Council v. McNair*, it has been consistently acknowledged that the Forest Service must balance competing demands in managing the national forests and it has never been the case that the national forests were to be set aside for non-use. The MUSYA of 1960 states that "it is the policy of the Congress that the national forests are established and shall be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes" [16 U.S.C. §528]. NFMA requires that forest plans "provide for multiple use and sustained yield of the products and services obtained therefrom… and [must] include coordination of outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness" [16 U.S.C. §1604(e)(1)].

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*"Alternative D Modified would have the greatest negative cumulative effect on the ability of the land and resource manager to access suitable timber land in order to respond to vegetation treatment needs created by fire, windthrow, and insect and disease, and the ability to provide timber or other commodities to society." (P. 154-155.) Unfortunately, the DSEIS fails to recognize the abject failure of this paradigm, tacitly admitted in the DSEIS' s statements elsewhere that indicate Alternative D Modified is better for a whole host of resources, such as soils, water quality, fish, and wildlife. Itseems that, above all else, the Forest Service values its discretion to perform management, despite the failures of that paradigm. Frissell and Bayles (1996) elucidate this point quite well: Most philosophies and approaches for ecosystem management put forward to date are limited (perhaps doomed) by a failure to acknowledge and rationally address the overriding problems of uncertainty and ignorance about the mechanisms by which complex ecosystems respond to human actions. They lack humility and historical perspective about science and about our past failures in management. They still implicitly subscribe to the scientifically discredited illusion that humans are fully in control of an ecosystemic machine and can foresee and manipulate all the possible consequences of particular actions while deliberately altering the ecosystem to produce only predictable, optimized and socially desirable outputs. Moreover, despite our well-demonstrated inability to prescribe and forge institutional arrangements capable of successfully implementing the principles and practice of integrated ecosystem management over a sustained time frame an at sufficiently large spatial scales, would-be ecosystem managers have neglected to acknowledge and critically analyze past institutional and policy failures. They say we need ecosystem management because public opinion has changed, neglecting the obvious point that public opinion has been shaped by the glowing promises of past managers and by their clear and spectacular failure to deliver on such promises. (Emphasis added.) Along those same lines, Wuerthner (2006a) states: The industriaJianthropocentric perspective believes ...that natural processes are mechanical and that they respond to human tinkering much like a machine. Ultimately, the industriaJianthropocentric perspective ... negatively affects the health and well-being of the environment. Wuerthner (2006a) identifies several reasons why management based upon the kind of worldview dominating the DSEIS is simply not sustainable.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 30)***

### Public Concern No. 11. The Forest Service should explain the shortened timeframe for implementing the more restrictive Alternative D Modified (page 17 of the DSEIS), as opposed to Alternative E Updated (page 21 of the DSEIS).

**Response:** As discussed in the DSEIS (pages 17 and 21): Under Alternative D Modified, those BMUs currently not meeting core area, OMRD, and/or TMRD standards would be brought up to standards in the following manner: 35 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard are estimated to meet all standards by 12/31/2019; 70 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard are estimated to meet all standards by 12/31/2025, and 100 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard are estimated to meet all standards by 12/31/2029.

For Alternative E Updated, those BMUs currently not meeting core area, OMRD, and/or TMRD standards would be brought up to standards in the following manner: 35 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard are estimated to meet all standards by 12/31/2014; 70 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard are estimated to meet all

standards by 12/31/2017, and 100 percent of those BMUs currently not meeting one or more standard are estimated to meet all standards by 12/31/2019. As can be seen from the above implementation timeframes, Alternative E Updated has a shorter timeframe for implementation than Alternative D Modified because a substantially greater amount of road would need to be barriered or gated under Alternative D Modified. Based upon consultation with USFWS, the timeframe for implementing Alternative E Updated, the selected alternative, has been revised (FSEIS, page 28).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Why are there different (counterintuitive) implementation timeframes for Alternative D (page 17) and Alternative E (page 21)? It would seem more realistic that the implementation for Alternative D (the more restrictive alternative) would potentially take longer to implement than Alternative E, however the dates as currently written suggest the opposite.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 12. The Forest Service should select Alternative E Updated because:

**A) It has the least effect on local economy, recreational access, and timber management;**

**B) It provides for better local public support and visitor compliance on the ground;**

**C) The Tribe supports the decision to "not" prescribe site-specific access management; to address future proposals through Tribal-Forest Service collaboration and consultation; to consider multiple jurisdictions; and provide for flexibility in management for access and economic considerations;**

**D) Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) is accepted as best available science; recommendations from report were used to develop current standards; and current guidelines were based on local bear data;**

**E) Bear numbers are increasing while mortality is decreasing, thus additional travel restrictions are not necessary and there's a need to reduce existing restrictions.**

**Response:** The responsible officials have selected Alternative E Updated for implementation. Alternative E Updated was selected for the reasons discussed in the accompanying Record of Decision (ROD) to this FSEIS (see ROD, *Rationale for the Decision*). In deciding upon a selected alternative, the responsible officials took into consideration how the alternatives responded to the identified purpose and need for action (FEIS, pages 1-4 to 1-5), the issues identified through public involvement (FEIS, page 2-2), and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Given the objectivity of the underlying cause for which this new DSEIS is being reevaluated, I seem to think that there should be no major action that would alter the original ROD, and therefore the selected alternative E should remain in place for the revised ROD.* ***(Ltr# 66, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*While the unnecessary killing of grizzlies is tragic, we do not believe the answer is to deny access to these public lands for logging, and for summer and winter recreation. If it is determined that access must be limited, we favor the less restrictive plan known as Alternative E Updated. This plan would have considerably less effect on our ability to use these areas and on the economy of the area where we live.* ***(Ltr# 7, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*With the information I've read, I feel Alternative E is preferred, with fewer gates and fewer roads closed.* ***(Ltr# 12, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Feel the updated Amendment E should be chosen. I feel that it will provide for the grizzly to be less disturbed but still allow for financial, educational, and emotional benefits for humans. This would be a profitable situation for all.* ***(Ltr# 22, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # A*

*I support the less restrictive Alternative E Updated Plan, closing fewer roads for grizzly bear habitat improvement, for a number of reasons. As a frequent recreational user of the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forests, I am concerned about restricting access to trail heads in the Selkirk, Cabinet, and Kootenai Mountains, for hiking, backpacking, fishing, and huckleberry picking, activities we participate in during the spring, summer and fall seasons. Many trails in these areas have already been lengthened many miles, due to road closures by gates & barriers. Trails that once provided good day hikes to a high mountain lake or mountain peak, have now become long, multi-day hikes, requiring a commitment of time that many people cannot afford to make.* ***(Ltr# 41, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*We prefer Alternative E as described in the Draft Supplemental EIS (DSEIS) as opposed to Alternative A. I would not consider either Alternative in the DSEIS as a "good" approach, but E is the less of the two in regards to negative impacts upon our local economy and access limitations.* ***(Ltr# 59, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*If the numbers from DNA testing warrant changing the recovery zone then the least restrictive alternative should be selected* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Alternative E is an ok approach to recovery but still restricts access by closing, gating, or eliminating access.* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # A B*

*We appreciate the close coordination between the USFS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the design of this Forest Plan Amendments and respect the challenge inherent in balancing grizzly bears' habitat needs with the social and economic well-being ,of the local communities. We do not object to the Forest Service's preferred alternative, Alternative E Updated.* ***(Ltr# 57, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We believe that Alternative E should be the selected alternative. This alternative will have better local public support than Alternative D and lead to better visitor compliance on the ground. In order to have true security, forest visitors need to understand and comply with travel restrictions.* ***(Ltr# 8, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # C*

*The Tribe supports the decision to "not" prescribe site-specific access management decisions within the two recovery zones and, instead, to address future proposals through Tribal-USFS collaboration and consultation. The Tribe acknowledges that the USFS states it will maintain flexibility in setting road density and core area standards, and take into account Tribal and public input and agency and Tribal jurisdiction. Moreover, the key to the DSEIS Alternative E is to provide for flexibility in forest management, public coordination, Tribal consultation and administrative access, while ensuring economic considerations are considered and addressed.* ***(Ltr# 42, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) has been accepted as the best available science and recommendations from this report have been used to develop current standards. Current guidelines represented in Alternative E*

*Updated, were based on local grizzly bear data (radio collared females in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems) so they are appropriate for this document. Alternative E Updated most closely resembles the recommendations; therefore, we support Alternative E Updated.* ***(Ltr# 50, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # E*

*Initially, as far as having to choose between Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated, Alternative E Updated is preferable. Outside this constraint, Alternative E Updated on its own is too restrictive to motorized access, particularly given the increasing Grizzly Bear numbers and decreasing mortality under the current motorized travel restrictions. Additional restrictions are not necessary, and existing restrictions should be reduced.* ***(Ltr# 70, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # E*

*FCP half-heartedly endorses Alternative E Updated for the Forest Plan Amendments for Motorized Access Management DSEIS. If at all possible, we would encourage you to keep the status quo without further closures.* ***(Ltr# 72, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # E*

*I encourage you to choose the modified Alternative E. History has proved that under the current plan, bear numbers are increasing. Alternative E provides appropriate science and allows more multiple use for the public.* ***(Ltr# 76, Cmt# 1)***

**Public Concern No. 13. The Forest Service should not select Alternative E Updated because:**

**A) It fails to provide management direction for increased bear security;**

**B) The Alternative doesn't address the issues that were identified by the Federal court and are lacking in the DSEIS alternative;**

**C) There are fewer protective standards which allow higher road density and less secure habitat; it is not acceptable to allow lessened security or maintain status quo; and the assumption in the DSEIS is that access will be reduced yet also in the DSEIS it indicates potential for more access;**

**D) Even though the Alternative provides for more management flexibility, it could challenge managers to meet higher security levels at a later date that are more in-line with grizzly bear biologists' opinions;**

**E) Security will be lowered in BMUs that currently have lower OMRD, TMRD and/or higher core area than the 33/26/55;**

**F) It will reduce core habitat in 12 (42 percent) BMUs, increase OMRD in 18 (64 percent) BMUs, increase TMRD in 11 (39 percent) BMUs; and Table 5 indicates 9 BMUs core would be increased to minimum standard; and Table 5 proposed minimum standards would decrease core in all but two BMUs;**

**G) Available science suggests 55 percent core may not provide enough spatial security for reproduction and rearing;**

**H) Table 33 indicates open roads will increase and failure to meet minimum road density standards and reduction of core in many BMUs is unacceptable with population declining;**

**I) The Forest Service states Alternative D has been modified and analyzed in detailed study to respond to the best available science, thus acknowledging the levels of security provided by Alternative D are more**

**likely to be based on the best available science than that provided by Alternative E Updated;**

**J) There is false premise that road densities below a standard in some BMUs can offset greater road densities elsewhere and it inflates the merits of Alternative E Updated. Management by BMUs is designed to distribute suitable habitat throughout each recovery zone and deny managers the flexibility to locate secure habitats according to their perceptions of feasibility;**

**K) The DSEIS provides an explanation for the twisted reasoning that lead to its preference when it states [p.2-15] that Alternative E ". . .was developed to provide more management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, access to private inholdings and grizzly bear habitat security. Management flexibility is more important than the statutory obligations of the agency to manage these habitats for grizzly bear recovery.**

**Response (A, C, and K):** Alternative E Updated would provide for grizzly bear security, thereby contributing toward conservation of grizzly bear in accordance with Section 7(a) of the ESA (FSEIS, page 96). This alternative incorporates direction for OMRD, TMRD, and core area, and goes beyond recommended levels for these measures in many BMUs, although not to the level of Alternative D Modified (FSEIS, page 95). The alternative also includes conservation measures for grizzly bear in recurring use areas outside of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. When the core standards of Alternative E Updated are fully implemented there would be an increase in core area of about 28,000 acres over the 2009 existing condition (FSEIS, page 94). Across the recovery zones, there would be about 1.27 million acres of core area available for grizzly bears. On average, at full implementation, OMRD would be less than or equal to 33 percent, TMRD would be less than or equal 27 percent, and core area would average about 58 percent across the recovery zones (FSEIS, page 94), while only three BMUs would not achieve the research recommended core area value of 55 percent and 14 would exceed the value (ROD, Table 2). The USFWS in the biological opinion for these amendments has determined that implementation of Alternative E Updated would not jeopardize the continued existence of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear population as long as the design features identified in Chapter Two of this FSEIS are implemented as part of the selected alternative (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, pages A-75 and A-86).

**(B):** The District Court decision 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 recovery zones. The analysis in the DSEIS and FSEIS has addressed these findings (see FSEIS, page 45 and Allen et al. 2011 in Appendix C of this FSEIS).

**(C, E, F, and H):** Full implementation of Alternative E Updated will result in 22 BMUs having OMRD less than or equal to 33 percent, 23 BMUs with TMRD less than or equal to 26 percent, and 27 BMUs with core area greater than or equal to 55 percent. The percent of core area would increase to 58 percent within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and 61 percent within the IPNFs portion of the Selkirk Recovery Zone, which are above the researcher recommended level of 55 percent (FSEIS, pages 94). Under Alternative E Updated, those BMUs currently exceeding (being better than) the standards for core area, the design criteria stipulate that there be no permanent net losses of core area below the baseline levels identified in the FSEIS until all BMUs

in each respective recovery zone have achieved their designated standards. The maximum reduction that could result from reducing the core area in those BMUs currently exceeding their standard would be about 24,000 acres. This would result in average weighted core levels of about 57 percent for the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and 59 percent for the Selkirk Recovery Zone, which is above the researcher recommended level of 55 percent (FSEIS, page 94). Some permitted changes, such as increases in road densities (i.e. potential increases in open road of 110-330 miles across the recovery zones) or decreases in core area in BMUs that are currently better than standards, would be unlikely to occur to the extent identified in the EIS because changes to one standard affects the others (FSEIS, page 92). For example, the OMRD and TMRD standards are measured in a spatial context so that the location of roads is part of the determination of whether or not a standard is achieved. Regardless, any project that proposes changes that would make the condition worse than the existing condition (but not drop below standards) would require a site-specific analysis. The project level analyses would need to consider all resources and there may be other resource requirements that would prevent roads from being reopened to public wheeled motorized vehicle travel. Public involvement and consultation with USFWS would also be required. In contrast, proposed changes needed to bring deficient BMUs up to standard would be required for compliance with the biological opinion.

**(D and J):** Both Alternatives D Modified and E Updated are based upon the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) grizzly bear research from the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems. The standards for Alternative D Modified are from the home range data of a single 20-year-old female grizzly bear. The specific standards for Alternative E Updated were developed in consultation with USFWS biologists and the grizzly bear research scientists and reflect the unique features of biological and social factors in the specific BMUs (FEIS, page 2-15). The best available local information has been utilized in development of these standards.

**(G):** Please see response to Public Concern No.14.

**(I):** Six radio collared female grizzly bears monitored during 1989-94 represent the basis for the open road, total road and core standards (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997). These animals were radio collared within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. All animals produced young, either during, prior or after this monitoring period with five of the six females producing cubs that are known to have survived to dispersal age (2 or 3 years of age). Individual home ranges for these animals were evaluated for percent of area over one mile per square mile of open road density, percent of area over two miles per square mile of total road density, and percent of area in core. Previous analyses showed less than expected use when these road densities were exceeded. The methods used followed those described by previous research (Mace and Manley 1993) and by guidelines from the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC 1994). These six bears were chosen because they were females that had survived long enough to provide sufficient data for analysis and had reproduced within the study area. Values for these six radio collared bears were averaged to produce these results: 33 percent of the home range had an open road density of one mile per square mile or greater, 26 percent of the home range had a total road density of two miles per square mile or greater, and 55 percent of the home range was core. Once core is established, it must remain in place for 10 years, roughly the generational time for a grizzly bear. This is a widely accepted standard. The IGBC directed each ecosystem to develop ecosystem-specific guidelines using local data where possible. The 33/26/55 numbers were generated with such data. The amendment thus incorporates the best available local information.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # A*

*Your Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement definitely fails to provide management direction that would help the bears gain in population numbers such that they could be unlisted. In fact, your*

*preferred alternative E provides direction which will surely extirpate the grizzly bear from NE Washington, N Idaho and NW Montana.* ***(Ltr# 17, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # A*

*I strongly favor restrictions of motorized access as necessary to provide the best chance for recovering grizzly bear populations. The Forest Service's Preferred Alternative is likely to result in the same levels of habitat degradation and continuing legal battles that have plagued grizzly bear management in the past. It is not acceptable to maintain status quo or worse habitat security, with grizzly populations already so endangered.* ***(Ltr# 18, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Option E does not seem to close enough roads to meet the needs laid down by the scientific research.* ***(Ltr# 27, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Why do you not accept the fact that Alternative E is nothing but a rewrite of the alternative that was rejected by a federal court in 2006. Knowledge of this fact now and saying "aw shucks" later will not help the Forest Service prevail in a lawsuit alleging Endangered Species Act violations.* ***(Ltr# 17, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Alt. E does little to to protect any resources. It allows for little to no change in current management stratagies that so far have not been effective in protecting habitat, retaining water quality, fisheries and allowing for the survival of many species. It is time, due to court orders, to make better decisions to stay out of the courts. Alt E will be litigated and no projects will allowed to proceed without litigation.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*I do not see that Alt E will keep the courts out of management decisions that the USFS likes.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 9)***

*Subconcern # B*

*TLC and AWR recognize the huge opportunity that implementing the correct alternative provides for solving a whole host of management issues on these national forests, and wishes that the Forest Service would see this as well. That is why TLC and A WR stand firmly opposed to the Forest Service's Preferred Alternative, E-Updated. Alternative E-Updated is a slightly altered version of the same severely flawed alternative that was rejected by the Court, and if adopted will result in increasing habitat degradation and continuing legal battles that have plagued grizzly bear and other issues of forest management in the past.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The Forest Service's current "Preferred Alternative" will likely result in the same levels of habitat degradation and continuing legal battles that have plagued grizzly bear management in the past, and it simply maintaining the status quo or worse habitat securlty with grizzly populations already so endangered, is not acceptable.* ***(Ltr# 46, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We favor restrictions of motorized access as necessary to provide the best chance for recovering grizzly bear populations, recognizing that the Forest Service's Preferred Alternative is likely to result in the same levels of habitat degradation and continuing legal battles that have plagued grizzly bear management in the past.* ***(Ltr# 68, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # F*

*Alternative E-Updated features less protective standards that could allow higher road density and less secure habitat than currently exist on the land. It is not acceptable to allow worse habitat security or just maintain the status quo, with these grizzly populations now just barely hanging on. Curiously, in many*

*places the DSEIS assumes that this alternative will result in overall less access and open/usable roads, when in fact the DSEIS indicates in other places that there very well might be more.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # F H*

*Implementation of the proposals in DEIS will fail to create habitats suitable for grizzly bear recovery. Specifically, alternatives C and E:-Contain no evidence [nor even claims] that they would provide sufficient security for grizzly bear survival in these recovery zones. -Sanction excessive road densities. -Would preserve inadequate roadless [ core] habitat. -Include no standards to insure adequate and secure seasonal habitats. -The proposals in DEIS would doom efforts to recover grizzly bears in the CabinetYaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones. Effective management will require development of scientifically responsible, demonstrably sufficient habitat standards from the best available information. Any scientifically sound management plan will insure greater security of grizzly bear habitats than any alternative described in DElS.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 42)***

*Subconcern # G*

*The DSEIS claims that of its two action alternatives, E-Updated provides the most management flexibility. However, selection of that alternative would politically hamstring efforts of managers to later meet habitat security levels that are higher, and more in line with grizzly bear biologists' opinions.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 12)***

*Subconcern # H*

*Alt. E as described in the DSEIS is similar to Alternative E selected in the 2004 Record of Decision for the Grizzly Bear Access Management Amendments. As before, different levels of OMRD, TMRD and core would be set for individual Bear Management Units (BMUs) and the average levels of OMRD (33%), TMRD (26%) and Core (55%) from W/K 97 (33/26/55) provide the benchmark for acceptable minimum levels of security at the BMU scale. Under Alt. E, as before, security will be lowered in the BMUs that currently have lower OMRD, TMRD and/or higher Core than the 33/26/55 minimum standards.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 10)***

*Subconcern # I*

*According to DSEIS, Alt. E would reduce the amount of core habitat in 12 BMUs out of 28 or 42% of the BMUs. Alt. E would increase OMRD in 18 BMUs, or 64% of the BMUs and TMRD would be increased in 11 BMUs, or 39% of 28 BMUs. Table 5 indicates that in 9 of the 29 BMUs core would be increased to the minimum standard of 55%. DSEIS, Table 5, Alternative E Updated at 24. The proposed minimum standards would decrease core in all but two of the BMU's that currently (as of 2006) contain >55% core.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 11)***

*Subconcern # I*

*In addition, if Alternative E Updated is adopted, OMRD will get worse in 20 of 30 BMU's (67%); TMRD will get worse in 12 of 30 BMU's (40%); and Core will degrade in 12 of 20 BMU's (40%). A clearer example of a "Preferred Alternative" headed in the wrong direction is difficult to imagine.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 16)***

*Subconcern # J*

*Table 5 also indicates that under Alt. E 5 of the 28 BMU's comprised of more than 75% federal land would not be required to meet the minimum OMRD standard of 33% or less, that 5 BMU's would not be required to meet the TMRD standard of 26% or less and that 13 BMUs will barely meet the minimum 55% standard for Core. Available scientific information suggests that 55% core may not provide enough spatial security for female grizzly reproduction and rearing of cubs to be unhindered by habitat conditions.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 12)***

*Subconcern # J*

*By selecting Alternative E Updated, however, the Forest Service has once more chosen a minimalist approach that will not even maintain the unacceptable status quo. Under this Alternative, we see that OMRDwould get worse in 67% ofthe BMU's, while TMRD and Core would be degraded from current conditions in 40%. In fact, under this alternative OMRD would be allowed to increase by 112-336 miles! This is a prescription for extinction -not recovery.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 45)***

*Subconcern # K*

*Table 33 indicates that open roads will increase anywhere from 112 to 336 miles in the combined recovery zones as a result of Alt. E DSEIS at 133. In the CYRZ open roads will increase by anywhere from 74 to 222 miles. This along with the failure to meet minimum road density standards in many BMUs and the fact that Core will be reduced in BMUs that currently have more than 55%, is unacceptable, particularly given the fact that the probability that the CY population is in decline is very high (91.4%).* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 13)***

*Subconcern # K*

*When we refer to DSEIS P: 132-133, Table 33, we see that Open Roads under Alternative E Updated will increase by 74-222 miles in the CYRZ, and 38-114 miles in the SRZ, for a total of 112-336 miles. Thus, the Service's Preferred Alternative will lead to a significant deterioration in an already unacceptable Baseline Condition. And of course, this is before we factor in the reality that the vast majority of the Gated Roads under this alternative (844-1224 miles) are functionally Open.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # L*

*On the cover page in the DSEIS the Forest Service states that "Alternative D has been modified and analyzed in detailed study to respond to the best science for the SRZ and CYRZ." Thus the Forest Service acknowledges that the levels of security provided by Alt. D are more likely to be based on the best available science than that provided by Alt E.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # M*

*The claimed superiority of Alternative E rests on the false premise that road densities below a standard in some BMU's can offset greater road densities elsewhere [p.215], Application of this premise inflates the relative "merits" of Alternative E in Tables 3-5 and 3-7 [pp.3-12,17]. The illogic of that reasoning becomes apparent when rephrased as: a really good BMU somewhere could offset lots of other, highly developed BMU's. Management by BMU's was designed to distribute suitable habitat throughout each recovery zone and deny managers the "flexibility" to locate secure habitats according to their perceptions of "feasibility."* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 49)***

*Subconcern # N*

*DEIS provides an explanation for the twisted reasoning that lead to its preference when it states [p.2-15] that Alternative E " ... was developed to provide more management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, access to private inholdings and grizzly bear habitat security." In the USFS choice of alternatives, flexibility [ability to develop] trumped the statutory obligations of the agency to manage these habitats in a manner compatible with grizzly bear recovery.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 51)***

### Public Concern No. 170. The Forest Service should not select Alternative E Updated because:

**A) It is not a reasonable alternative as there is a loss of motorized routes, which doesn't meet the need for public access and motorized recreation;**

**B) There's predisposition in the process to eliminate motorized access and recreation without addressing public needs and proper evaluation of facts and information;**

**C) It assumes ecological sustainability is more important than social and economic sustainability, and sufficient data was not provided to substantiate these assumptions;**

**Response (A, B, and C):** While Alternative E Updated could result in the loss of motorized routes within the recovery zones, it is a reasonable alternative because it responds to the need 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 ESA (FSEIS, page 12). Alternative E was developed to more fully address public needs, as well as increased grizzly bear habitat

security (FEIS, page 2-15); therefore, it addresses both ecological sustainability and social/economic sustainability.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*While we appreciate the attempt to minimize the loss of motorized routes in the project area, the loss of 197 miles of high quality motorized routes and 30 miles of motorized trail in the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests is not a reasonable alternative given the historic use of these routes and the needs of the public for access and motorized recreation.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 6)***

*The starting alternative proposed to eliminate motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities without first adequately addressing the needs of the public for motorized access and motorized recreation and without proper evaluation of facts and information. This procedure is evidence of a significant predisposition in the process.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 35)***

*The proposed alternative is built upon a tenuous foundation which assumes that: (1) various statutes require that ecological sustainability be the dominant consideration for all management of National forests; (2) sustained yield of various goods and services derived from the forests cannot be achieved without first achieving ecological sustainability; and (3) that ecological sustainability in all cases is the highest and best use of the forests for the American people. To be supportable, these assumptions would require significant legal, scientific, and economic data. As it is, such data has not been provided and these assumptions are false, therefore, the proposed alternative is flawed and should not be adopted.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 42)***

### Public Concern No. 14. The Forest Service should provide the scientific basis for its conclusion that the overall lack of security associated with Alternative E Updated will result in the conservation and recovery of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly populations.

**Response:** Full implementation of Alternative E Updated would result in an increase in grizzly bear security levels over 1998 conditions when BMUs were initially analyzed using the OMRD:TMRD:core area parameters within the two ecosystems AND when compared with the 2002 on-the ground conditions documented in the 2002 EIS (FSEIS, page 94). Furthermore, comparison of the projected 2019 on-the-ground core area conditions at full implementation versus available core area in the 1980s demonstrates the huge gains made in providing secure habitat for the grizzly bear over the last two decades (FSEIS page 11). Alternative E Updated would benefit grizzly bear by requiring up to 324 miles of currently open or gated road be closed to motor vehicle use. Alternative E Updated also includes conservation measures for grizzly bear in those recurring use areas outside of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.

While opportunities have been identified for accommodating some increase in wheeled motorized vehicle access, in those BMUs with conditions that are better than the standard, permitted changes, would be unlikely to occur to the extent identified in the EIS (FSEIS, page 92). Any project that proposes changes that would increase OMRD or TMRD or decrease core area (but not drop below proposed standards) would require a site-specific analysis, including public involvement and consultation with USFWS. In contrast, proposed changes needed to bring deficient BMUs up to standard would be mandatory.

Currently (2009), there are about 1.25 million acres of core habitat within the recovery zones. When the core standards of Alternative E Updated are fully implemented there would be an increase in core area of about 28,000 acres over the 2009 existing condition (FSEIS, page 94).Across the recovery zones, there would be about 1.27 million acres of core habitat available for grizzly bears upon full implementation of the alternative. If the maximum amount of permitted changes in core area were to occur, there would still be over 1.25 million acres of core habitat within the recovery zones, an increase of about 4,000 acres over the 2009 condition.

Alternative E Modified is based upon the best available science[1] (FSEIS, page 97; Appendix C). The IGBC directed each ecosystem to develop ecosystem-specific guidelines using local data where possible. The Wakkinen and Kasworm study (1997) numbers (33/26/55) were generated with such data. The methods used by Wakkinen and Kasworm followed those initially developed by research in the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem (Mace and Manley 1993) and later standardized and enhanced by guidelines from the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC 1994).

There has been a decreasing trend in the annual rate and/or percentage of human-caused mortalities occurring over time on NFS lands in both ecosystems since implementation of wheeled motorized vehicle access strategies began on NFS lands in the late 1980s and early 1990s (FSEIS, pages 60-62). Specifically, as the overall population increased over the last two decades in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem (i.e. from an estimated 15 in 1993 to 42 bears in 2009) the average number of bears that died annually due to human causes remained about the same but the percentage of human-caused mortality occurring on NFS lands noticeably decreased within each time period (FSEIS page 57). This indicates that human-caused mortality kept pace with the expanding population over time, but the proportion of human-caused mortality shifted dramatically from NFS lands to privately owned properties and areas in British Columbia (FSEIS pages 57-59). In most cases, this shift can be attributed to greater numbers of bears seeking foraging opportunities at lower elevations in the fall where they have a greater chance of having a fatal encounter with people (FSEIS page 61). Likewise, as the overall population of bears increased in the Selkirk ecosystem (i.e. from an estimated 25 bears in 1993 to 46 bears in 1999), there has been an apparent decrease in mortalities occurring on NFS lands within-and-around the Selkirk 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 occurring on NFS lands within each time period (FSEIS, pages 57-62). This shift in the Selkirk ecosystem can primarily be attributed to greater numbers of bears in the British Columbia portion of the recovery zone seeking foraging opportunities at lower elevations where they have a greater chance of having a fatal encounter with people (FSEIS page 61). Given these trends, implementing tighter access restrictions on wheeled motorized vehicle access on NFS lands within the recovery zones would not completely remove grizzly bear mortality risk within-and-around the recovery zones. Minimizing habituation and mortality levels on adjacent ownerships as well as addressing other risk factors such as sanitation, agricultural food attractants, hunter identification errors, and human attitudes toward grizzly bear all plays a role. This document focuses on wheeled motorized vehicle access management, but at the same time, the Forest Service and other agencies are also pursuing the other elements essential to preventing unnecessary mortalities of the threatened grizzly bear (FSEIS, page 6).

In the biological opinion for these amendments, the Fish and Wildlife Service concluded with regard to the selected alternative (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, page A-65):

> Given the proposed standards for core area, the proposed action is likely to result in adequate levels and distribution of core area within the action area. Based on the findings of Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997), and Allen et al. (2011), this level and distribution of core area is likely to provide levels of secure habitat for grizzly bears, including females, that provide for breeding, feeding, and sheltering activities.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Alternative E Updated is not based on the Best Available Science as Required by ESA and NEPA.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 15)***

[1] Alternative E Updated is based upon the habitat values of six bears, while Alternative D Modified is based upon the habitat values of a single bear.

*The Forest Service must provide a scientific basis for its conclusion that the overall reduction in security associated with Alt. E will result in the conservation and recovery of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly populations. The best available scientific information indicates otherwise.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 18)***

**Public Concern No. 15. The Forest Service should develop additional alternatives.**

**A) An alternative that initiates a Phase-in approach, which would provide for moderate and appropriate road closures over a predicted period of time and would be better for habitat and species;**

**B) A Pro-Recreation alternative that: 1) meets the needs of the increasing motorized recreational public; 2) limits cumulative effects to motorized users; 3) provides for multiple use, 50/50 sharing of these lands for all users, and equal opportunity of nonmotorized to motorized trails; 4) provides reasonable motorized closures; 5) considers historical and traditional uses; 6) retains high value trailhead access; and 7) balances the need for motorized access with the need for protecting grizzly bears, and in addition provides supportable and acceptable levels of scientific data to substantiate the change in the motorized access;**

**C) A full range of alternatives, which includes an alternative that provides a better mix of Alternatives D and E;**

**D) A full range of alternatives, which includes an alternative that provides a balance between protecting grizzly bears and providing recreational access and should be based on best available science; include more precise information regarding the numbers of miles of roads that would be opened, closed with gates, and/or closed with barriers in order to achieve the targets; and be based on requirements for multiple use by law;**

**E) An alternative that doesn't likely jeopardize the existence of the grizzly bear and firmly reverses decades of fragmenting formerly roadless security habitat;**

**F) An alternative that considers the science that indicates the need for more access to improve treatments for vegetative habitat, which will then provide for better bear forage and thus greater bear populations;**

**G) A moderate, reasonable alternative that will provide a balance between protecting grizzly bears and providing recreational access, while also providing access for fire fighting and timber management;**

**H) An alternative that maintains access at the current condition, which in-turn provides equal access for everyone;**

**I) An alternative that considers closing a reasonable number of routes during hunting season and other critical seasons and then re-opening during the summer recreation season;**

**J) An alternative that considers an amendment to reverse the designation of these lands as grizzly bear recovery zones.**

**Response (A):** Both alternatives D Modified and E Updated would provide for a phased in approach to implementation. Under Alternative D Modified, those BMUS currently not meeting one or more standard would be brought up to the assigned standard by 2029. For Alternative E Updated, BMUs currently not meeting standards would be brought up to the assigned standard

within eight years of the amendment decision date (2019). Full implementation of Alternative E Updated would benefit grizzly bear by closing up to 324 miles of currently open or gated road to motor vehicle use. Alternative E Updated also includes conservation measures for grizzly bear in those recurring use areas outside of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.

**(B, H, and I):** The FEIS considered programmatic alternatives that would: 1) maintain current levels of access and 2) provide for as much access as possible for recreational and economic activities in the three national forests. These alternatives were not given detailed study because they did not meet important elements of the purpose and need for action (FEIS, page 2-18). Alternative(s) that would site-specifically designate individual roads and trails for motorized and/or non-motorized use, as indicated by the comments, are beyond the scope of this analysis and do not respond to the purpose and need for action. This is not a site-specific analysis done under the auspices of 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose and need in this instance 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). This programmatic environmental analysis will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use.

Under Alternative E Updated, no decreases in core area would be allowed in an individual BMU until all BMUs in the respective ecosystem (Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone or IPNFs portion of the Selkirk Recovery Zone) meet their assigned OMRD, TMRD and core area standards. At that time, in those BMUs with conditions that are better than the standard, it may be possible to accommodate some decrease in core area (FSEIS, page 27). However, no assumption should be made that this option can be utilized to any extent to absorb displaced recreational activities because any project level analyses proposing increases in wheeled motorized access within the recovery zones would need to consider all resources and there are other resource requirements that may prevent roads from being reopened to public wheeled motorized vehicle travel (FSEIS, page 220).

**(C, D, and E):** The FSEIS (pages 19-32) in conjunction with the 2002 FEIS (pages 2-6 to 2-19) has considered a full range of alternatives. With respect to Alternatives A, B, and C, their analysis was not restated in the DSEIS because there was no new or updated information associated with the analysis area that warranted further analysis of these alternatives (DSEIS, page 9). With respect to other alternatives, NEPA does not require a separate analysis of alternatives which are not significantly distinguishable from alternatives actually considered, or which have substantially similar consequences. From a grizzly bear security standpoint, an alternative that provides a better mix of Alternatives D and E, with respect to security habitat, would not be significantly distinguishable in effect from either Alternative D Modified or Alternative E Updated because both alternatives provide for sufficient levels of security for grizzly bear in a manner consistent with IGBC access direction, current scientific research, and include measures for conservation outside of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones (FSEIS page 95-98). Both alternatives would have similar consequences by contributing toward conservation of the species in accordance with Section 7(a)(1) of the ESA (FSEIS, page 96). The effectiveness of the ongoing implementation of the OMRD, TMRD, and core area parameters is evidenced by a decreasing trend in moralities occurring on NFS lands within the recovery zones since beginning implementation of the IGBC guidelines in 1998 (FSEIS, pages 57-62). A comprehensive program to minimize human-caused grizzly bear mortalities involves many elements, including wheeled motorized vehicle access management, regulation of hunting, sanitation, law enforcement, and education. While, this document focuses on wheeled motorized vehicle access management, at the same time, the Forest Service and other agencies are also

pursuing the other elements essential to preventing unnecessary mortalities of the threatened grizzly bear (FSEIS, page 6). The USFWS in the biological opinion for these forest plan amendments has determined that implementation of Alternative E Updated would not jeopardize the continued existence of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear population as long as the design features identified in Chapter Two of this FSEIS are implemented as part of the selected alternative (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, pages A-75 and A-86).

Alternatives D Modified and E Updated do not represent extreme ends of the potential grizzly bear security level spectrum. At full implementation, Alternative D Modified would provide for about 1.53 million acres of core habitat across the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones, while Alternative E Updated would provide for about 1.27 million acres. This is not the extreme ends of potential grizzly bear security. While opportunities have been identified for accommodating some increase in wheeled motorized vehicle access, in those BMUs with conditions that are better than their assigned core standard, once all the BMUs in each respective recovery zone reaches its assigned standard, if these opportunities were to be implemented to the fullest extent available under Alternative E Updated, core habitat could potentially decrease to about 1.25 million acres (FSEIS, page 94). However, some permitted changes, such as increases in road densities (i.e., potential increases in open road of 110-330 miles across the recovery zone) or decreases in core area in BMUs that are currently better than the standards, would be unlikely to occur to the extent identified in the EIS because changes to one standard affects the others (FSEIS, page 92). For example, the OMRD and TMRD standards are measured in a spatial context so that the location of roads is part of the determination of whether or not a standard is achieved. Regardless, any project that proposes changes that would make the condition worse than the existing condition (but not drop below proposed standards) would require a site-specific analysis, including public involvement and consultation with USFWS. Additionally, project level analyses would need to consider all resources and there are other resource requirements that may prevent roads from being reopened to public wheeled motorized vehicle travel. Therefore, no assumption should be made that this option can be utilized to any extent to absorb displaced recreational activities (FSEIS, page 220). In contrast, proposed changes needed to bring deficient BMUs up to standard would be required for compliance with the biological opinion.

It is not possible to precisely predict the number of miles of road that may be opened, closed with gates, and/or closed with barriers in order to achieve the OMRD, TMRD, and core area parameters of each alternative. Implementation of the amendments will be accomplished through project level decisions. Roads or trails proposed to be barriered, opened, or gated will only be identified as part of the site-specific implementation of these amendments, when they are ripe for decision. However, as a result of simulations, resource specialists concluded that it takes approximately two to six miles of change in wheeled motorized vehicle access status to achieve a one percent change in OMRD, TMRD, or core area (FSEIS, page 169).

The identified habitat parameters for Alternative E Updated were developed in consultation with grizzly bear research scientists and USFWS Biologists from the both the Helena, Montana and Spokane, Washington field offices. They reflect the unique features of biological and social factors (highways, high quality habitat, residential developments, and linkage zones) in specific BMUs (FEIS, page 2-15). Implementation of either alternative would result in a decrease in road densities within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones from the 2002 environmental baseline, thereby addressing habitat fragmentation from roads (FSEIS, page 90).

**(F and G):** Alternative E Updated was developed to address a number of issues, including increased grizzly bear habitat security and the ability of management to respond to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, and access to private inholdings (FEIS, page 2-15) and; therefore, would provide for more balanced levels of reductions in motorized access and increases in grizzly bear habitat security. While there would be reductions in existing levels of

public motorized access with Alternative E Modified (potentially up to 102 miles), the reductions would be less than those associated with Alternative D Modified and; therefore, would provide more opportunities for among other things, "improvements in vegetative habitat conducive to better satisfy the food needs of the grizzlies" (FSEIS, pages 26).

Augmentation of the Cabinet-Yaak population is ongoing and has been occurring since 1990. The success of this initial effort resulted in additional augmentations of ten grizzly bears (seven females and three males) from 2005-2011 from the North and South Fork of the Flathead River (U.S.) and the Whitefish Mountain Range. Reproduction by at least one of these females has been confirmed (Kasworm et al. 2007a).

**(J):** An alternative that considers an amendment to reverse the designation of the grizzly bear recovery zones 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). Designation of the recovery zones is done under the authority of the USFWS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # A*

*We are unable to understand why the two extreme options, D and E, are the only ones forwarded. From the information in the draft it would seem an option with phased moderate and appropriate road closures over a predicted period of time would have noticeable positive impact on habitat and retention of native species. It may not be necessary to close 2,460 miles of road to achieve a high positive impact. It seems clear, however that the other extreme, option E, offers no real benefit, and likely will have negative impact on native plants.* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We pay thousands of dollars in taxes and deserve appropriate and varied motorized opportunities.* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Multiple uses of the forest are marginalized every time a forest plan or travel management plan comes up for action. The motorized closure trend has created significant cumulative effects and has reached the point where it is causing severe public distress. Reasonable alternatives to motorized closures must be pursued.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The project area is where we go and what we do to create those memories of fun times with family and friends. Management of these lands for multiple-uses including reasonable motorized use allows the greatest enjoyment of these lands by the widest cross-section of the public to continue. These lands are designated as multiple-use lands. We ask that management for sharing of these lands for multiple-use be selected as the preferred alternative. Sharing would include a 50/50 sharing and equal opportunity of non-motorized to motorized trails.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # B*

*There is nothing radically wrong with the existing condition except that it does not meet all of the needs of motorized recreationists, does not provide equal opportunity which is defined as a 50/50 sharing of motorized to non-motorized trails, and does not adequately address the growing needs of motorized recreationists. These are the supreme issues that this action must address. The evaluation and proposal must adequately address these three issues and the predisposition to motorized closures must be avoided. The proposed action must meet the needs of motorized recreationists both today and tomorrow. We respectfully request that the evaluation and proposal be directed to adequately address these issues and goals.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We request that the Forest Service provide an adequate and fair evaluation of at least one pro-recreational alternative in the analysis.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 11)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We request that the Forest Service provide an adequate and fair evaluation of routes under the existing condition, 5.36% of the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forest are set-aside for segregated exclusive non-motorized use for 0.1.52% of the visitors to the forest. We do not agree with all of the effort that the agency is going through to segregate users. Multiple-use lands are public places. Segregation in public places has not been acceptable since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 . In order to reasonably meet the requirements of integration a reasonable management goal for the remaining 94.64% of the forest would be for shared multiple-use that would produce a forest-wide 50/50 sharing of non-motorized/motorized trail opportunities and correct the current 70/30 imbalance of non-motorized to motorized trails.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 12)***

*Subconcern # B*

*If the Forest Service successfully avoids the evaluation of a pro-recreation alternative, then motorized recreationists end up losing before the process begins. A range of true pro-recreation alternatives should include at least one with a 50/50 sharing and equal opportunity of non-motorized to motorized trails.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # B*

*As shown in the following comments there is a great shortage of ATV and motorcycle trails in the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. Right now the ratio in the KLIP project area is grossly imbalanced with 4,229 miles of non-motorized trails (70%) versus 1,826 miles of motorized trails (30%). In order to restore an equitable balance and 50/50 sharing of recreational resources either 1,202 miles of non-motorized trails must be converted to motorized trails or 2,403 miles of new motorized trail must be created. The proposed closure of 30 miles of motorized trail further worsens the imbalanced allocation.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 15)***

*Subconcern # B*

*A reasonable alternative based on reasonable expectations for sharing and a 50/50 balance or equal trail opportunity should include -Sharing non-motorized trails with mountain bikes and motorcycles, -Creating new mountain bike and motorcycle trails, -Creating ATV trails from roadbeds that both currently open and closed, -Creating new ATV trails -Creating new ATV trails that connect with converted roadbeds to create loops, and, -Establishment of 4x4 challenge trails using roadbeds that are both currently open and closed including historic mining routes.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 16)***

*Subconcern # B*

*This action and others to follow should address the issues and needs of the public by preserving all reasonable existing motorized recreational opportunities,enhancing existing and developing new motorized opportunities to address the growing needs of the public for motorized recreational opportunities, and implementing mitigation plans to compensate for excessive amount of past motorized closures.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 17)***

*Subconcern # B*

*As demonstrated by Table 3, the ratio of acres available to wilderness/non-motorized visitors versus the acres available to multiple-use visitors is way out of balance in the existing condition with 6.42.0 acres per wilderness visitor and 1.75 acres per multiple-use visitor for a ratio of about 4:1. This proposed action makes this inequity even worse by providing 45.35 acres per wilderness visitor and 1.15 acre per multiple-use visitor for a ratio of about 40:1.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 29)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The existing level of access and motorized recreation is a reasonable starting position and alternative. An even fairer position given that this should be a travel plan seeking to address the needs of the public for*

*motorized access and recreation would be an alternative based on an enhanced level of opportunity. However, a starting position of massive closures is completely unreasonable and tells us a lot about where the process is heading. It seems to be predisposed. This strategy is outrageous because it forces the public to fight to get every inch of motorized road and trail added back into the preferred alternative. This strategy is designed so that motorized recreationists are destined from the outset to lose big time. The damage has been done as we hear many people saying what's the point of participating, the process is rigged and the Forest Service has already made up its mind?. We request that this strategy be corrected by presenting a starting alternative that addresses the need for multiple-use access and recreational opportunities.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 37)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The planning team should formulate an Alternative that maximizes all existing recreational opportunities, as well as anticipates and plans for an increase in recreational use in the future. None of the Draft Alternatives maximize recreational alternatives and most of them fail to provide adequate recreational opportunity to meet the current need.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 38)***

*Subconcern # B*

*In fact I think there is a need to encourage more distribution between hiking/horseback trails to motorized use trails.* ***(Ltr# 32, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The people living in the three counties of the Idaho Panhandle have very little access to places for entertainment other than in the National Forces and it's been that way since people moved into those areas. It doesn't seem reasonable at all to close off so much land locking out the public. After all the forests are part of the Public Domain which their taxes support. I realize we are talking about restricting Motorized Vehicles but how many people are going to be able to hike and pack in their camping equipment to the camp grounds?* ***(Ltr# 35, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*If this area were shut off to motorized travel I would no longer be able to travel and visit the places of my youth do to the lack of time on my trips north. I ask you to PLEASE consider other options, I am not the only one that feels this way.* ***(Ltr# 36, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*In its lack of a full range of alternatives, the DSEIS illogically avoids presentation and discussion of the finer details of an alternative that might retain high-value trailhead access, for example. The DSEIS seems intended to make good management for grizzly bears more controversial than it need be.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 10)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Motorized Access Summer/Winter: Both alternatives show that more trails will be removed from motorized recreation. This will cause more activity to be placed on other areas of the National Forests and other landowners such as State and private. We urge you not to restrict motorized use on these trails and work to provide more opportunities for motorized access to Forest Service lands. Alternative D shows 57 miles removed and Alternative E shows 30 miles. If these trails are removed from motorized recreation then an equivalent amount of miles should be added to the forests with similar features such as aesthetics, views, and terrain.* ***(Ltr# 48, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Closing roads (call it barriered or gated) estimated to be 1200 miles to possibly 2300 miles of road you have got to be kidding-for how many grizzlies vs the affect on how many people -148 trail heads? for how many grizzlies?* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 9)***

*Subconcern # B*

*This document appears to be written more from the standpoint as a response to litigation and/or to avoid future litigation than from the aspect of truly protecting Grizzly Bears. Much of the contents of the*

*document come across as simply an attempt to justify eliminating access to our public lands.* ***(Ltr# 59, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # B*

*I consider myself a law abiding citizen and patriot but continued closures of Forest Service land based on poor science infuriates me to a point that even I, consider doing terrible things to the grizzlies of our forests. Imagine what the redneck yokels will do if you close more forests. Please reject any decisions that further close forest land to the public.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*If bear populations are more similar in statistical results as the Flathead, then its time to relax the restrictions currently in place to allow additional access for recreation, forest management, ETC* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Loss of hundreds of miles more to motorized access* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion:Extensive loss to motorized developed recreation (22 developed sites impacted)* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 10)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion:Loss of 57 miles of motorized trails* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 11)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion:Extensive negative impact on dispersed motorized summer recreation* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 12)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion:Loss of access for preparing and grooming winter snow trails* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 13)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion:Loss of access to summer recreation trail heads* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # C*

*The DSEIS does not contain a full range of alternatives* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 8)***

*Subconcern # C*

*In addition, the Service has failed in its fundamental obligation under NEPA to provide the public with a "full range of alternatives" from which to choose. Instead, the Service has given us just two alternatives that are polar opposites, with no other science-based options in between, and has so demonized Alternative D Modified, that it's clear the agency made up its mind long ago.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 46)***

*Subconcern # C*

*It appears to us that the proposed decision is between, essentially, the status quo (Alternative E) and an alternative that extends grizzly bear "security" to the highest level possible with little consideration for*

*anything else (Alternative D modified), with, curiously enough, no middle range of alternatives considered. (Ltr# 82, Cmt# 2)*

*Subconcern # C*

*It appears to us that the proposed decision is between, essentially, the status quo (Alternative E) and an alternative that extends grizzly bear "security" to the highest level possible with little consideration for anything else (Alternative D modified), with, curiously enough, no middle range of alternatives considered. (Ltr# 82, Cmt# 2)*

*Subconcern # C*

*It appears to us that the proposed decision is between, essentially, the status quo (Alternative E) and an alternative that extends grizzly bear "security" to the highest level possible with little consideration for anything else (Alternative D modified), with, curiously enough, no middle range of alternatives considered.* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # C*

*Public attitudes, fire and land management needs are all important considerations, but in this document they only serve to blur the great disparity (126/378 vs 1,0601 1877) between the two alternatives under consideration and the fact that there is no in-between-ground alternative.* ***(Ltr# 83, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # D*

*The DSEIS Contains an Inadequate Range of Alternative. The two alternativesin the DSEIS represent extreme ends of the potential grizzly bear security level spectrum. Preferred Alt. E Updated reduces security for bears overall by increasing open and total road densities and reducing core in BMUs that "exceed" the 3326-55 minimum standards. Available information indicates that reducing security in the CY and SRZs will neither conserve nor lead to the recovery of these small grizzly populations. These populations are in trouble, and in the case of the CY population there is strong evidence that existing levels of security, i.e., the status quo, is causing it to decline. Alt. E will lead to a significant deterioration in an already unacceptable Baseline Condition. Reducing security further through the implementation of Alt. E has the potential for causing both populations to go extinct. On the other hand, Alt. D Modified, which would increase security substantially, is characterized as unacceptable due to reduction or elimination of recreational and other access. Achieving it would require closing many miles of road which, as we all know, is very unpopular with recreational motorized users. It would also affect the Forest Service's timber extraction program, which of course is unacceptable to the timber industry, and therefore the Forest Service. The DSEIS makes it clear that the Forest Service does not consider Alt. D to be a viable alternative. The Forest Service is required by NEPA to explore and consider a wide range of alternatives. Clearly there are other possible alternatives that would increase security in the SCYE and actually improve conditions for grizzlies, thus meeting the ESA requirement to conserve, and perhaps even move the popUlations toward recovery, without closing almost 1900 miles of roads with barriers.7 More alternatives with lawful levels of security based on the best available science can and should be developed and considered by the Forest Service, prior to a decision being made regarding the future of access management for the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk grizzly bears.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 26)***

*Subconcern # D*

*As a practical matter you give us only two alternatives to choose from in this DSEIS. Because the status of roads has changed so much since 2002 when you released the DEIS, Alternatives A, B, and C are no longer relevant and must be updated before they can be used in this document. NEPA requires that you present a full range of alternatives from the existing situation and the DSEIS does not do that.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 9)***

*Subconcern # D*

*As the Service is well aware, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to provide a full range of alternatives to achieve the goals of a project. It's abundantly clear that this fundamental and required step has been ignored, and we urge the agency to address this error by withdrawing the DSEIS and developing one which will pass legal and scientific muster.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 27)***

*Subconcern # D*

*We recommend that the Service withdraw this fundamentally flawed DSEIS and develop one which presents the required full range of alternatives; is firmly grounded in grizzly bear science; allows no further degradation from the current situation; and will clearly improve habitat security, and lead to grizzly bear recovery.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 47)***

*Subconcern # E*

*Continued from comment 26 in letter 56. It has been two and a half years since the district court ordered the Forest Service to rethink the access management standards. It is rather disappointing, but comes as no surprise, that the best the Forest Service could come up with is a virtual repeat of 2004 Alt. E and an alternative that would increase security significantly, but that the Forest Service clearly considers a non-starter. While we realize that figuring out how to achieve the high standards in Alt. D in as many BMUs as possible must be a very complicated procedure, it would seem that the Forest Service could get closer to figuring out more precisely how many miles of road would need to be barriered, for example, than a range between 1060 and 1880 (for both open and gated to barriered, Table 7, p. 26) during more than two years of deliberation. The Forest Service should develop and include additional alternatives that are based on the best available science, e.g., that would increase security substantially in the SRZ and CYRZ in the FSEIS. Please also include more precise information regarding the numbers of miles of roads that would be opened, closed with gates, and/or closed with barriers in order to achieve the targets in the alternatives.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 27)***

*Subconcern # E*

*Under Section 7 (a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA, 1973), "Each Federal agency shall, in consultation with and with the assistance of the Secretary, insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species ..." Furthermore, under Section 9 (a)(B) of the ESA, " .. .it is unlawful for any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to ...take any such species within the United States..." It should be noted that "Take" includes harm to the habitat of any listed species likely to further imperil that species. Yet in its Preferred Alternative, the Forest Service has proposed a course of action that clearly violates both provisions. As noted in our comments, the science shows that both ecosystems are almost completely isolated, both from each other, Canadian populations, and the NCDE; both are repeatedly suffering excessive mortality; neither meets even one Recovery Plan recovery standard; and the CYRZ has a 94% probability of decline. Under these circumstances, both the science and the law cry out for an alternative that firmly reverses decades of fragmenting formerly roadless security habitat.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 44)***

*Subconcern # F*

*The proposed amendment imposes a new "rule set" which defines "minimum management requirements", or criteria for compliance with laws (ESA) and other management requirements (36CFR219.12 (c) (e)), and as such restricts decision space for legal multiple use alternatives (36CFR219.(b)). The definition of "Core Area" as defined (FEIS, p.G-I) precludes the implementation of existing multiple use land allocations for motorized access for recreation, forest protection, and timber management. The mandate to impose "Core Area" non-motorized management in place of current multiple use management areas violates existing law relative to timber management (Organic Act, MUSYA, and NFMA), as well as existing laws disclosing the significant resource tradeoffs and opportunity costs associated with the decision (36CFR2l9.12(1)(4). Since the rule set is new information, no systematic integrated evaluation of the long term effect of these ESA requirements in the original forest plan nor the proposed amendment FElS as required by NFMA and NEPA has been accomplished. The only way statuary requirements can be met in this case is to do the required analysis and disclosures of these new grizzly bear minimum management requirements, along with other requirements mandated by ESA or other laws, to provide the public with the required information on legal constraints and what if any decision space is left to formulate a range of legal multiple use alternatives in a good faith revision process.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # F*

*We are definitely not "anti-grizzly", and believe in the potential for increasing their numbers. But we*

*believe the "science" could as easily be interpreted to suggest the need for more access, not less, to provide treatments for improvements in vegetative habitat conducive to better satisfying the food needs of the grizzlies; bears observed outside the core areas are usually there looking for food. Feed them and they will come. Perhaps an alternative based on more bear forage rather than more closed roads could have a greater impact.* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 20)***

*Subconcern # G*

*We encourage you to bring forward a moderate option that will both be protective and provide a reasonable balance between grizzly bear recovery, habitat preservation and recreation goals. As currently proposed either alternative is likely to be regarded as extreme by the recreation community on one hand or the conservation community on the other.* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 8)***

*Subconcern # G*

*I believe that the Forest Service's Preferred Alternative E Updated is not restrictive enough and Alternative D is untenable. I believe that a compromise plan should be made to better protect grizzly bear, lynx and caribou habitat. If Alternative E Updated is adapted I believe that it is a matter of a short time before we will lose these animals in the Selkirk, Cabinet and Yaak River Mountains.* ***(Ltr# 61, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # G*

*In addition to loss of access for fire fighting and fuel reduction, both of these alternatives will have a negative impact on timber harvest and recreation due to road restrictions. Even though you do disclose these negative impacts and their resulting impact on the social and economic environment in the affected counties, you nevertheless proceed to reduce access for multiple-use in both alternatives. Clearly Alternative D is much worse than Alternative E Updated but even the latter is unacceptable when the benefits to the bear and the cost to multiple-use are objectively balanced against each other.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 8)***

*Subconcern # H*

*If the decision is made to implement one of the road access alternatives C, D, or E the resulting closures will hinder or stop the average person's access into the Cabinet Wilderness creating an elitist wilderness only for the people who own horses. As chief administrator for this forest proposal your decision will be largely based upon the draft supplement and input from the public. I implore you to keep the road access at status quo which is a compromise satisfying neither the far left or the far right ideologies of road access, but the vast majority in the middle.* ***(Ltr# 16, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # H*

*We do not support in any form further closures or restrictions of motorized access to our national forests. Restricting additional summer and/or winter access to public lands will only further infuriate the public towards the governing agencies and unwarranted animosity against the grizzly bear.* ***(Ltr# 59, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # I*

*The road density evaluations must also consider the viable alternative of closing a reasonable number of routes during hunting season and other critical seasons and then opening them during the summer recreation season. This strategy would effectively address road density criteria without nearly as many motorized closures as proposed.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 55)***

*Subconcern # J*

*The real problem with these lands is their designation as Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones. An amendment to reverse this status should be proposed for public comment.* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 8)***

*Subconcern # J*

*How many grizzly bears have been clearly documented on these lands, outside of designated wilderness? Why should we impact historical/traditional motorized use just in case Grizzly bears might relocate/expand from other areas?* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 9)***

## Best Available Science

**Public Concern No. 158. The Forest Service should not use Wakkinen and Kasworm's 1997 report because it is not the best available science and:**

**A) 2 of the 6 studied bears were killed in the small sample size from which behavioral data was drawn, and failure of researchers to determine whether selection of home ranges with high ORMD and TMRD, and low levels of core area was due to lack of available areas with lower ORMD and TMRD and high levels of core area;**

**B) It failed to consider the interaction between the findings with the best available population trend information;**

**C) Is an obvious attempt to excuse the agency from due diligence in terms of limiting access in grizzly habitat for timber sales;**

**D) The Merrill 2003 habitat study findings indicate more stringent standards for OMRD/TMRD/core area is needed.**

**Response (A and C):** The Forest Service acknowledges the small sample sizes, mortality of individual study bears, and the lack of a second-order habitat selection analysis in the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm study beginning on page 45 of the FSEIS with an indepth review included in Appendix C of this FSEIS. The Forest Service and the USFWS still consider the Wakkinen and Kasworm study to be the best available science in regards to grizzly bears and access management for the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. As such, the Forest Service is committed to working with the USFWS and state wildlife managers to developing appropriate access parameters and implementing them on NFS lands.

As stated in the biological opinion for these amendments (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, page A-58):

> In 2006, the United States District Court for the District of Montana upheld the Service's biological opinion on the Forests' 2004 access management proposal, concluding that the Service appropriately relied on Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) to assess the impacts of access management on grizzly bear habitat (Cabinet Resource Group v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 465 F. Supp. 2d 1067, 1088). There is no subsequent research which would replace the continued reliance on Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) as the scientific benchmark against which to analyze the Access Amendment. To emphasize this point, Allen et al. (unpublished report, April 2011) conducted a rigorous review of the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) report and concluded that it remains the best available science for the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery zones.

**(B):** Direct correlation between the habitat selection study and modeled population trend rates is inappropriate because grizzly bear mortality (one factor is estimating population growth) is influenced by more than just the availability of motorized access on NFS lands situated within the recovery zones. As outlined in pages 55-60 of the FSEIS, annual rates of human caused grizzly bear mortality (bears killed/year) have increased since 1982, but have shifted dramatically to areas beyond Forest Service control in the last 13 years.

**(D):** The Merrill paper's approach to evaluating the ability of bears to find more core area in the study area was flawed. The Merrill paper's methods state that home ranges of the same size and shape and apparently orientation were used to test the possibility that bears could have established home ranges in areas with lower road densities and more core area. This approach assumes that bears will not change the size, shape, or orientation of their home range under different places or conditions in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone. It assumes that a bear can only have a home range of the exact same size, shape, and orientation as the two home ranges they utilized in the

Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study and suggests that all bears must be exactly the same in their use of the habitat. By not varying the shape or orientation of the home ranges, Mr. Merrill has taken any form of selection by grizzly bears out of the process. Wayne Kaworm a USFWS grizzly bear research biologist and coauthor of the 1997 Wakkinen/Kasworm study reviewed the 2003 Merrill paper. In Mr. Kasworm's professional opinion, the Merrill Paper offers a narrow view of a grizzly bear's ability to adapt to differing conditions and the methodology utilized is inappropriate for testing the question of optimal versus available habitat. Taking such an approach to its logical conclusion would suggest that bears cannot exercise any selection and; therefore, may not be reacting to high road densities at all. Data from the Wakkinen/Kasworm study and other studies indicate that bears do select areas of low road density more than areas of high road density or that bears use areas near roads less than expected (Mattson et al. 1987, McLellan ahd Shackleton 1988, Aune and Kasworm 1989, Kasworm and Manley 1990, Mace and Manley 1993, Mace et al 1996 and Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997).

In his review of the Merrill paper, Mr. Kasworm visually examined maps of core area. This and his personal knowledge of the Yaak portion of the study area led him to conclude that there were areas of core that were available but not utilized by the bears in the Yaak portion of the study area.

On the roads data map provided Mr. Merrill, only that portion of the map within the home ranges of the radio collared bears and adjacent drainages were fully edited to reflect the actual road classification at the time the radio location data was gathered in 1991-1994. Portions of the supplied map far outside the home ranges of bears in the study (bears 106 and 206) were not edited and may have had errors. In Mr. Kasworm's review, this area far outside of the home ranges appeared to have a significant portion of the area sampled in the Merrill paper.

The percent of home range in core area was calculated for polygons greater than 5,000 acres. The reason for doing so or the reason for the size of 5,000 acres as a cutoff was not described by Mr. Merrill. The Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) research could not show a clear relationship between size and core area polygon and actual use by grizzly bears. The Wakkinen and Kasworm study (1997) suggested that if a relationship did exist, it might likely occur at polygon sizes between two and eight mi/m2 (1,280 to 5,120 acres).

There were numerous inaccuracies about the population data and staus of grizzly bears presented in the Merrill paper with unclear reference for the source of the data used. Also, the Merrill paper's characterization of the grizzly bear population based on bears known to be dead, or last seen on a given date misrepresents the data. The listing of bears by Mr. Merrill appeared to come from tables of bears captured, monitored by telemetry, or observed study personnel in different years during the study (Kasworm et al 2000). Captures, telemetry, and observations can be affected by effort expended, bear behavior, location of expended effort, type of telemetry, mark observability or longevity dispersal and other issues. For example, bears 128, 303, and 353 which were bears that were captured, ear-tagged, and collared, but lost radio collars and were not recaptured or observed in the study area for two to five years. Bear 244 was first collared from 1992-1994. This bear subsequently lost its radio collar and was not recaptured again until 2003. Though its home range during 2003 was similar to its home range in 1992-1994, this animal evaded detection by trapping for nine years. These examples indicate that one should not assume an animal is dead or has left the area because it could not be detected by trapping or observation.

The Merrill paper argued that neither bears 106 or 206 from the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm study was representative of the population and; therefore, should not be used as a basis for the subsequent development of access standards. Bear 206 was thought to be inappropriate because she was young and had not replaced herself in the population and bear 106 because she was too successful at replacing herself, had a small home range, and was too wary. However, both of

these bears represent a portion of the variation in the population. In Mr. Kasworm's professional opinion, the attributes of these bears are the very reasons that these bears should be the basis for access standards. Bear 106 produced 13 cubs in 14 years of monitoring (at least three and possibly four female offspring have survived to produce cubs of their own). As of 2003, bear 206 produced at least 4 offspring. Neither bear was known for any nuisance activities around humans.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # A*

*As discussed in comments on the 2001 DEIS, 2002 FEIS for the Access Management Amendments and elsewhere, there are many reasons why the standards derived from W/K 1997 do not qualify as the best available science. Deficiencies in the W/K 1997 Study were, and still are a factor. These include the small sample size (6 females, one of which was a sub-adult when the study period started) from which behavioral data was drawn, the fact that soon after the timeframe selected for the study 2 of the 6 female bears were killed by humans and the failure of the researchers determine whether selection of home ranges with relatively high open and total road densities and low levels of core by the female bears in the study was due the lack of availability of areas with lower road densities and larger core areas in the study area.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 16)***

*Subconcern # A B*

*Without a doubt, the low levels of security in the Selkirk and Cabinet -Yaak RZs, due to the high density of roads, continues to pose the most imminent threat to these two small populations. Based on the fact that Alternative E is the preferred alternative in the DSEIS, it seems clear that Forest Service intends to continue to avoid utilizing the best available science as the basis for its access management in grizzly bear habitat. We hope that the FSEIS signals a shift to legally defensible, science based access management by the Kootenai, Idaho Panhandle and Lolo national forests.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 40)***

*Subconcern # A B*

*This proposal failed to use the best available science in the analysis. There is no updated 24 hr. GPS monitoring data of grizzly bear use of habitat even though there is plenty of new data available that shows the old technology of monitoring bear use by radio location from aircraft did not provide adequate data to draw accurate conclusions on bears' use of available habitat, especially the use of so called "core area" mapped by biologists. The Kasworm and Wakkinen, 1997 study cited in the DSEIS used inadequate old technology. In fact there is no attempt whatsoever to assess the effectiveness of the proposed standards dictated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) even though standards have been inflexibly implemented for 15 years on the Flathead and other National Forests.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The Forest Service has failed to consider the interaction between the findings of the W/K 1997 Study and the best available population trend information. As stated above, the 2005 Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Research Monitoring Report (USFWS, 2006) states that there is a 91.4% probability that the Cabinet-Yaak population is in decline. The Research Monitoring Report also indicates that the mortality rate for this population increased from 0.71 bear mortalities per year between 1983 and 1998 to 2.14 mortalities per year between 1999 and 2005. USFWS, 2006. The increase in mortalities occurred under security levels that would be reduced by Alt. E. Likewise, as discussed above, recovery plan mortality limits have not been met in the Selkirk RZ. Reducing core and increasing road densities in the SRZ (Table 5 indicates that Alt, E calls for increasing OMRD in 6 of the 7 SRZ BMUs that are more than 75% federal land and reducing Core in four of them.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 17)***

*Subconcern # C*

*The agency appears to have adopted a new, basically "why bother" attitude about the use of access management as a tool in the grizzly bear conservation and recovery toolbox. The Forest Service's dismissal of the 'best available science' is an obvious attempt to excuse the agency from due diligence in terms of limiting access in grizzly habitat in order to implement timber sales.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 33)***

*Subconcern # D*

*The DSEIS notes that in the absence of such a map, " ...this study determined bear use of areas greater or lesser than expected within existing home ranges relative to access route density..." The DSEIS then concludes, " ..., it is NOT POSSIBLE (emphasis added) to conclude whether the 33 percent OMRD; 26 percent TMRD, and 55 percent Core Area conditions in the SCYE represent the optimal selection of habitat by bears or if these numbers simply reflect the condition of the environment from which they have to choose..." Unfortunately for the Service, this is simply untrue, and the Forest Service knows it. Troy Merrill, and independent scientist working on large carnivore issues did the very study that the agencies found was not possible and presented his results to the Selkirk/Cabinet Yaak Grizzly Bear Subcommittee in 2003. Merrill's conclusion was as follows: " Our analysis shows that grizzly bears have little or no opportunity to select home ranges with lower road density or higher percentages of core... Because grizzly bears could not have selected home ranges having more core area and lower road densities, and there has been no growth in the population, there is no basis to conclude the proposed access standards are sufficient to insure the recovery of the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk grizzly bear populations" (Merrill 2003). However, despite the fact that this research represents part of the "best available science" which federal agencies are required to consider, it is not even mentioned in this DSEIS. The fact that it represents an "inconvenient truth" for the agencies, and requires them to consider and adopt far more stringent standards than 33%/26%/55% should be obvious.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 29)***

### Public Concern No. 159. The Forest Service has not used the best available science as best available science should include the following reports as they strongly recommend road management be given the highest priority: Mace/Manley 1993 The Effects of Roads on Grizzly Bears; Kasworm/Manley 1988 Grizzly Bear and Black Bear Ecology in the Cabinet Mtns of NW MT; Kasworm/Manley 1991 Road and Trail Influences on Grizzly Bears and Black Bears in NW MT; Aune/Kasworm 1989 Final Report East Front Grizzly Bear Project; Mattson/Knight 1991 Effects of Access on Human-Caused Mortality of Yellowstone Grizzly Bears McLellan/Shackleton 1988.

**Response:** The Forest Service is well aware of the body of research and scientific studies regarding the negative effects that roads have on grizzly bears and have summarized those effects in the FSEIS (page 91). Furthermore, the document makes no such claim concerning the ineffectiveness of access management. Indeed, the data provided on pages 56-60 of the FSEIS (Table 10-Table 12) indicates that grizzly bear mortality on NFS lands in the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem has in general decreased over time since the implementation of access management strategies in the early 1990s.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Perhaps, before the Service makes unsupported and unscientific claims about the ineffectiveness of access management, it should review the last 20 years of "best available science" which reaches the exact opposite conclusion. A starter list would include: - Mace and Manley. 1993. The Effects of Roads on Grizzly Bears. "if unroaded habitats are reduced in quantity or size, the number of adult females will eventually decline." - USDI. 1993. Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. "Roads probably pose the most imminent threat to grizzly habitat today. The management of roads is on of the most powerful tools available to balance the needs of people with the needs of bears. It is strongly recommended that road management be given the highest priority within all recovery zones." -Kasworm and Manley. 1988. Grizzly Bear and Black Bear Ecology in the Cabinet Mountains of Northwest Montana. "Areas within 500m of a road received significantly less use by grizzly bears than expected." -Kasworm and Manley. 1991. Road and Trail Influences on Grizzly Bears and Black Bears in Northwest Montana. "Grizzly Bears used habitat within 914m of an open road less than expected, and habitat within 122m of a trailless than expected." -Aune and Kasworm. 1989. Final Report, East Front Grizzly Bear Project. "Sixty three percent (63 %) of known, human-caused grizzly bear deaths on the east front of the Rocky Mountains occurred within 1km of a road, including ten of eleven known female deaths. -Mattson and Knight. 1991. Effects of Access on Human-Caused Mortality of Yellowstone*

*Grizzly Bears. " .. .increased access facilitates increased bear-human encounters, which usually has negative consequences for bears ...Areas impacted by secondary roads have roughl y 5 times the mortality rate of the Yellowstone Park backcountry... habituated bears are killed 3.1 times as often as non-habituated bears." -McLellan and Shackleton. 1988. "Bears used habitat within 100m of a road less than expected. Bears used habitat 250m to 1000m from a road greater than expected ...The bears avoidance of roads was independent of traffic volume; even a few vehicles was sufficient to displace bears."* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 32)***

## Fire

### Public Concern No. 16. The Forest Service should disclose the ecological benefits of wildland fire.

**Response:** It is recognized that wildland fire does produce ecological benefits. In the Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality section of the DSEIS and FSEIS, there is mention of the National Fire Plan's direction to increase the use of prescribed fire with the intent to manage fuels across the landscape and restore naturally occurring ecosystem processes. In addition, the Forest Service has the ability to make management decisions to allow naturally occurring wildfires to grow across the landscape to achieve Resource Benefit. This tool is being used more where allowed by Land Management Plans and where practical due to firefighter and public safety, fire resource availability, and the potential for resource benefit and/or resource damage. This decision document does not analyze the effects of allowing fires to burn but rather recognizes that with decreased road access there will be an increased potential of fires growing due to delayed response times. However, decisions made at the time of a fire discovery may decide that it is beneficial to allow the fire to burn and achieve resource benefit. The lack of access by road will not force that decision but would, in all likelihood, be one of many factors as to why a decision would be made to either suppress a fire or allow it to grow.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS also contains an extreme bias against wildland fire, disclosing few of the ecological benefits and instead continuing in the public's mind the exaggerated fears of fire that Smoky Bear has historically fomented.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 33)***

### Public Concern No. 17. The Forest Service is biased in its presentation of the potential impacts from fire and should address the vital natural role that fire plays in these ecosystems.

**Response:** It is recognized that wildland fire does produce ecological benefits. In the Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality section of the DSEIS and FSEIS, there is mention of the National Fire Plan's direction to increase the use of prescribed fire with the intent to manage fuels across the landscape and restore naturally occurring ecosystem processes. In addition, the Forest Service has the ability to make management decisions to allow naturally occurring wildfires to grow across the landscape to achieve Resource Benefit. This tool is being used more where allowed by Land Management Plans and where practical due to firefighter and public safety, fire resource availability, and the potential for resource benefit and/or resource damage. This decision document does not analyze the effects of allowing fires to burn but rather recognizes that with decreased road access there will be an increased potential of fires growing due to delayed response times. However, decisions made at the time of a fire discovery may decide that it is beneficial to allow the fire to burn and achieve resource benefit. The lack of access by road will not force that decision but would in all likelihood be one of many factors as to why a decision would be made to either suppress a fire or allow it to grow.

As stated above, the Forest Service does recognize fire's role in fire adapted ecosystems and does consider allowing fires to take on more of their natural role on the landscape through Fire Use and Resource Benefit. As fires burn closer to human values and infrastructure, there are management concerns that have to be considered and balanced such as protecting human life and safety with the potential benefits gained from allowing a fire to burn for Resource Benefit. The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy (USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management 2002) listed four goals: 1) Improve fire prevention and suppression; 2) Reduce hazardous fuels; 3) Restore fire-adapted ecosystems; and 4) Promote community assistance. While it may seem that there are discrepancies (i.e., improve fire prevention and suppression versus restore fire-adapted ecosystems) it is clear that the Agency recognizes that fire has an important role to play and should be allowed to be a feature on the landscape. In addition, it is also clear that there are expectations that when fire's role could have negative impacts that we still maintain an appropriate suppression response.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*P. 209: "The occurrence of a high intensity wildfire would have an increased potential for impacts to soils and soil productivity in severely burned areas, especially since the risk of soil erosion increases proportionally with fire intensity (Megahan 1990). Burns that create very high soil surface temperatures can result in a reduction of water infiltration and an almost complete loss of soil microbial populations, nutrients, woody debris, and the protective duff and litter layer over mineral soil (Hungerfordet al. 1991; Neary et al. 2005; Wells et al. 1979)." In contrast, Forest Service and other fisheries biologists point out the misleading bias of the DSEIS' s position. Riggers et al., 2001 state: "The real risk to fisheries is not the direct effects of fire itself, but rather the existing condition of our watersheds, fish communities, and stream networks, and the impacts we impart as a result of fighting fires. . .. If we are sincere about wanting to reduce risks to fisheries associated with future fires, we ought to be removing barriers, reducing road densities, reducing exotic fish populations, and re-assessing how we fight fires. At the same time, we should recognize the vital role that fires play in stream systems, and attempt to get to a point where we can let fire play a more natural role in these ecosystems. The Forest Service should go back to the drawing board, reconcile those opposing positions, and eliminate the obvious bias the agency has against Alternative D-Modified.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 34)***

### Public Concern No. 18. The Forest Service should provide supportable and acceptable levels of scientific data and disclose the complete effects of lack of access for fighting forest fires, the fuel buildup contributing to these wildfires (vegetation management), and disclose the probable cost to taxpayers and damage to natural resources from escaped fires due to lack of initial attack access.

**Response:** This decision does not assume that there will be a lack of access for fighting forest fires due to implementing road closures. The most common form of firefighting access in a roaded area is by engines or by driving firefighters close to the fire by a road system. Where there is no road access, firefighting can and does occur. Oftentimes there may be a delayed response time due to not being able to drive a vehicle such as an engine directly to the fire which means that firefighters may have to hike into the fire without engine support. Other methods such as use of helitack crews, rappel crews, smokejumpers, helicopter water drops, and retardant aircraft are all utilized to initial attack fires where road access is limited. All of these methods are effective; however they usually come with a delayed response time which allows for an increased risk that the fire may grow. Currently, across the landscape there are several roaded systems that are not accessible by engines due to lack of maintenance as well as areas where there has never been road access. In these areas there has already been a transition in how firefighters respond and with how they are delivered to the fire.

Another factor that must be considered is that the Forest Service also recognizes that fire plays a role in the ecosystem and has direction to allow fire to assume more of its natural process where practical and feasible. Managers have the authority, where allowed, to make a decision to let a fire grow and achieve Resource Benefit across the landscape. These decisions must consider firefighter and public safety as the highest priority. As fires burn closer to human values and infrastructure there are management concerns that have to be considered and balanced such as protecting human life and safety with the potential benefits gained from allowing a fire to burn for Resource Benefit. The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy (USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management 2002) listed four goals: 1) Improve fire prevention and suppression; 2) Reduce hazardous fuels; 3) Restore fire-adapted ecosystems; and 4) Promote community assistance. While it may seem that there are discrepancies (i.e., improve fire prevention and suppression versus restore fire-adapted ecosystems) it is clear that the Agency recognizes that fire has an important role to play and should be allowed to be a feature on the landscape. In addition, it is also clear that there are expectations that when fire's role could have negative impacts that we still maintain an appropriate suppression response. Fires that are allowed to burn for Resource Benefit generally have a lower cost per acre associated with them compared to full suppression fires and achieve several of the goals listed above such as reducing hazardous fuels and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems. In future site-specific decisions, there will be a need to evaluate the effects of changing status of individual roads and what effects that will mean for firefighting forces. Some areas will need aggressive initial attack while other areas may be candidates for allowing fire to play more of a natural role.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Have you thought about forest fire access on these thousands of miles that are locked up and non-maintained* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 11)***

*The DSEIS states, "Delayed response time for initial attack and reinforcements for emerging fires is the critical limiting factor for most fire starts. Extended response times due to reduced surface access increases the possibility of an escaped fire. The cost of suppression increases due to needs for aviation support and firefighter support in remote areas." The statement is true, but it greatly understates the seriousness of the probable effects. Barriered or decommissioned roads are the most common cause for delayed response yet you want to reduce fire-fighting access by 90 to 270 more miles in your preferred alternative. Even worse, you don't reveal how many of these barriered roads might be decommissioned or otherwise made unusable. Furthermore, barriered roads prevent you from managing the growing fire fuels that are the primary reason for the increase in large, uncontrollable wildfires. The FEIS must disclose an honest appraisal of the probability of several catastrophic fires that will escape due to lack of access and fuel buildup if these amendments are implemented. Every decision to barrier or otherwise close a road so initial attack is thwarted or delayed is potentially a multimillion dollar decision. (e.g. 2007 Skyland fire on Flathead, approx. $30 MM suppression cost and significant private property damage). The DSEIS must disclose the probable cost to taxpayers and damage to natural resources from escape fires due to lack of initial attack access.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 6)***

*I am also concerned that if the roads are all closed off they will eventually become grown over and impossible to use-what will happen in the event of a forest fire? Without access roads for the fire fighting trucks from the Department of Lands and the Forest Service, what might have been a small fire could easily consume thousands of acres because there was no easy way to gain access in order to put out the blaze. Animals and land will suffer and possibly even homes and people's lives could be put at risk because of an out of control fire.* ***(Ltr# 71, Cmt# 3)***

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Extensive loss of administrative access* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 7)***

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Increased fire risk* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 17)***

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable*

*and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Reduced access for vegetative treatments, fuel reductions, fire suppression* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 19)***

### Public Concern No. 19. The Forest Service should include potential impacts to state fire management activities on state, private, and federal lands under state protection that will result from road closures.

**Response:** This decision does not recommend specific roads to be closed. That decision will follow in future site-specific decisions that will be able to consider the effects of individual and specific road closures within smaller project areas. When those decisions are made, an analysis will be included to determine the effects of road closure on fire management activities as they relate to other agencies and fire protection responsibilities.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Without specific identification of proposed road closures, IDL cannot assess how our fire management and control operations on State and private forestlands will be impacted. In addition, a portion of USFS lands are under IDL jurisdiction for fire response. The EIS should identify any potential road closure affecting State 'fire management activities on state, private and Federal lands under State protection.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 3)***

*After review of the DSEIS, the Idaho Department of Lands is very concerned about the potential impacts to the State's fire protection program.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 14)***

## Fish

### Public Concern No. 20. The Forest Service should indicate whether removal of fish passage barriers on existing roads will occur only as funding becomes available.

**Response:** Fish passage barriers would be addressed when site-specific projects are identified and analyzed, and as funding becomes available. The KNF, LNF, and IPNFs have been very successful over the past ten years at acquiring funds and implementing fish passage projects. For example, the LNF has replaced approximately 80 culverts (Tracy Sylte, personal communication) and the IPNFs has replaced approximately 25 culverts and removed at least 10 culverts. Over the past 10 years, one district on the IPNFs has received funding to decommission or place into long-term storage (hydrologically stabilized) over 80 miles of road, which would have included removal of culverts.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The aquatics analysis in the Final SEIS needs to provide expert agency comments that indicate whether removal of fish passage barriers on the existing roads will only occur as funding becomes available.* ***(Ltr# 24, Cmt# 3)***

*You state that a decommissioned road will deliver less sediment to streams but the reduction in sediment is trivial compared to the increased sediment from a large stand replacing fire and from the disturbance of the road ripping itself. By barricading and ripping out roads you set the forest up for exactly this kind of catastrophic fire.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 21. The Forest Service should include hydrologically neutralizing roads upon closure of the road to address effects to stream channels.

**Response:** Current forest plan direction as embodied in the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH) Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (1995) requires that projects and activities not retard the attainment of riparian management objectives (RMOs). Consistency with INFISH

standards and guidelines for road management include providing for: 1) Pre-, during-, and post-storm inspections and road maintenance (RF-2) and; 2) Closing and stabilizing roads not needed for future management activities (RF-3).

In addition to INFISH standards and guidelines, the Idaho Forest Practices Act and State of Montana Best Management Practices provide for regular preventive maintenance operations to minimize disturbance and damage to water quality and fish habitat. On barriered roads, achieving consistency with these requirements could include maintaining culverts left in place or removing the drainage structures. Per the alternative design features and USFWS Biological Opinion, roads closed to create core habitat will be put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for at least 10 years (FSEIS, p. 21; USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, page A-13). Furthermore, as part of incidental take statement for the selected alternative, terms and conditions require that 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. (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, page B-66).

As a result of these requirements, we expect implementation of the selected alternative to provide additional opportunities to address watershed concerns through site-specific projects developed to meet the selected TMRD and Core objectives. Where site-specific projects propose to barricade roads, the analyses will consider the risks of not removing culverts and will demonstrate consistency with forest plan standards, the Idaho Forest Practices Act, and Montana Best Management Practices as applicable. Therefore, we expect aquatic systems to benefit as needs are site-specifically identified through additional analyses (FSEIS, page 197).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Another straw man typical of this DSEIS, on p. 143: "Gating or constructing barriers across roads have the greatest long-term risk to aquatics when roads are closed but are not made hydrologically stable prior to closure. Once a road is closed to administrative access, maintenance is discontinued, which may increase the potential risk to aquatic resources as the lack of maintenance is the primary cause for road failures and subsequent sedimentation to stream channels." At the project level, as discussed in almost all NEPA documents we've reviewed, when such road closures occur the fisheries biologists weigh in and argue against doing such closures without at least hydrologically neutralizing the roads. Therefore, TLC and AWR have rarely, if ever, had to appeal a project on that basis. (**Ltr# 45, Cmt# 28)***

### Public Concern No. 22. The Forest Service should provide quantitative estimates of instream habitat quality in order for a meaningful comparison of the alternatives to be made regarding water quality parameters and fish habitat.

**Response:** The FSEIS discusses watersheds within the project area in Chapter 3, section Aquatics; Watershed and Fisheries, Affected Environment for Watersheds. Greater detail regarding instream habitat quality, including quantitative estimates of habitat within specific streams, would be presented when specific projects are identified and NEPA documents are prepared.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS makes this important statement on page 143: "The long-term benefits of reducing water routing, sediment input, the potential for road failures, and restoring fish passage would outweigh the short-term negative effects of the work required to make proposed roads (hydrologically) stable." We agree. Unfortunately, by not providing any quantitative estimates of instream habitat quality and only focusing on differences in road mileage, the DSEIS misses an opportunity to make a meaningful comparison between the two action alternatives in regards to various water quality parameters and fish habitat. **(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 29)***

### Public Concern No. 23. The Forest Service should protect bull trout spawning streams within several Bear Management Units by stabilizing or decommissioning roads prior to closing the core areas.

**Response:** This FSEIS is a programmatic document which will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. The Forest Service has a responsibility to protect bull trout and other aquatic species. When site specific projects are proposed and NEPA initiated, the protection of bull trout and other aquatic species will be considered and could assist in the development of the proposed action.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Each BMU will have a Core Area, which must remain in place for at least 10 years (average life span of a grizzly) to be functionally effective and can not be shifted, moved or impact in any other way by activities more than once every 10 years. The Forest Service (USFS) may enter a Core Area more than once in the 10 year period only to decommission or stabilize a road. Core Areas have not yet been delineated in the BMUs. Some roads may be closed to create the Core Area and "Will be put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for at least 10 years." Ideally, when Core Areas are established, roads will be decommissioned or stabilized (e.g., removing culverts) prior to closing the roads. The USFS road network in our region is currently, and has in the past, suffered from lack of funding for maintenance or correction of "legacy" problems. There are several bull trout (USFWS Threatened) spawning streams within several BMUs. If no entry for road/culvert maintenance can occur, it will be particularly important that roads are stabilized or decommissioned prior to closing the Core Area to avoid culvert/road failures that may severely affect water quality and habitat.* ***(Ltr# 50, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 24. The Forest Service should assess the effects of entry restrictions that may prohibit important activities (i.e., State fisheries management programs) necessary to promote recovery of bull trout in Trestle Creek and other watersheds in the Bear Management Units.

**Response:** The need for Idaho Department of Fish and Game access to specific roads within BMUs for survey and other purposes would be considered by the Forest Service at the project-specific level when individual roads/road segments are identified and public comment sought on the potential changes in access status for these roads. The potential impact of Alternative D Modified on IDF&G access to survey areas would likely be greater than Alternative E Updated because Alternative E Updated balances the need for increased grizzly bear security with other needs within the BMUs, such as the need for administrative access, whereas Alternative D Modified was designed to address increased grizzly bear security only.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Trestle Creek, one of the most important bull trout spawning streams in North America and has been designated as Critical Habitat by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We are unaware of any stream that supports a higher density of spawning bull trout anywhere. On average Trestle Creek accounts for approximately 40% of the Lake Pend Oreille spawning. If, for example, Trestle Creek is primarily contained within the BMU Core Area, entry restrictions may prohibit important activities necessary to promote recovery for this Threatened species.* ***(Ltr# 50, Cmt# 2)***

*The DSEIS describes a limited number of allowable USFS vehicle round trips per active bear year: 57 in the SRZ (<19 trips April 1- June 15, <23 trips June 16 -September 15, and :<15 trips September 16 - November 15) and 60 in the CYRZ (<18 trips April 1 -J une 15, :< 3 trips June 16 - September 15, and <19 trips September 16 - November 30). (page 2 -Scope of this Analysis states that the active bear year in the SRZ is April 1 through November 15, and for the CYRZ April 1 through November 30; however, on page 18 -E. the text indicates that the active bear year for the SRZ is April 1 through September 30. We are assuming the text on page 18 is in error.) As mentioned above, there are several bull trout spawning streams within several BMUs. IDFG conducts numerous surveys (e.g., redd counts, population estimates)*

*during the year that are essential for bull trout recovery. Additionally, IDFG conducts similar surveys on various streams throughout both Recovery Zones for westslope cutthroat trout, a State Sensitive Species. Again, entry restrictions may exclude these important activities from taking place.* ***(Ltr# 50, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 25. The Forest Service should include the most recent information from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game on the status of westslope cutthroat trout.

**Response:** Current information regarding the status of the westslope cutthroat trout has been added to the Affected Environment for Fisheries section of the FSEIS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Page 139, paragraph 2. The statement that distribution and abundance of westslope cutthroat has declined ... "... persist in only 39% of their historic range in Montana." We are not familiar with WSCT populations in Montana, but Idaho Fish and Game recently found WSCT populations to be strong throughout Idaho, with some exception in the Pend Oreille basin. This most recent status review indicated ESA listing of WSCT was not warranted.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 12)***

## Forest Plan

### Public Concern No. 26. The Forest Service should consider adding a guideline to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests Forest Plan that institutes consultation with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) when an IDPR Grant Project will be affected by route restriction or decommissioning.

**Response:** It is in everyone's best interests if potential issues are resolved early in the process. To that end the list of recreation projects completed utilizing IDPR grant monies has been forwarded to the ranger districts on the IPNF for their use. We currently do not see a need for inclusion of a guideline into the amendment for the purposes of requiring consultation between the IDPR and the IPNF. Such an arrangement would best be addressed more informally between the parties.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Motorized route standards can impact motorized recreation access to National Forest lands. These standards can also impose restrictions on motorized use in BMUs. Sometimes, these standards can conflict with IDPR Grant Program Rules.* ***(Ltr# 8, Cmt# 1)***

*It is in the best interests of recreationists, the Forest Service and IDPR if we can resolve potential issues early in the process. To that end, we are including a list of completed projects on the IPNF (attached). We are working to have this information updated into a GIS layer within the next year. Meanwhile, this will alert your staff to the need to work with IDPR staff on specific routes to find alternatives that will protect the interests of recreationists while still meeting the needs of grizzly bear management.* ***(Ltr# 8, Cmt# 2)***

*We understand why these standards have to be incorporated into the Forest Plans. At the same time, IDPR is obligated to protect the investment of recreationist dollars we have made in building and maintaining Forest Service facilities.* ***(Ltr# 8, Cmt# 3)***

*We would like to see another guideline in the Idaho Panhandle Forest Plan advising the decision maker or the ID Team to consult with IDPR staff when an IDPR Grant Project will be affected by a route restriction or decommissioning project. This guideline would give the decision maker the necessary information to avoid a conversion or get the conversion process started before a decision is signed. That would avoid the need for IDPR to appeal a decision based on grant rules.* ***(Ltr# 8, Cmt# 4)***

**Public Concern No. 27. The Forest Service should revise the IPNF, KNF, and LNF Forest Plans versus completing this DSEIS and Forest Plan amendment because:**

**A) The DSEIS is proposing significant changes that allocates multiple use lands to de-facto wilderness;**

**B) There is significant new information in the DSEIS that makes the current plans illegal and changed conditions require a plan revision per NFMA statutes and violates the Administrative Procedures Act, NFMA, and NEPA by agreeing to settle a lawsuit with an amendment**

**C) The DSEIS does not disclose the real consequences of this amendment, such as elimination of roads for motorized access; the means to implement current direction for vegetation management, forest protection, and recreation opportunities promised by the current forest plans are removed; no alternative roadless management prescription is disclosed; and no site-specific analyses and site-specific analyses at the project level do not evaluate long-term cumulative effects or reduced access;**

**D) The decision being made is insignificant because of the short period of time it would be in effect is misinformation as it will be carried into the forest plan revision process as current direction.**

**Response (A and B):** In the spring of 1999, the Alliance for the Wild Rockies filed a lawsuit challenging the KNF and IPNFs implementation of the Interim Rule Set without amending their forest plans. The national forests settled the lawsuit in March 2001 and agreed to amend their respective forest plans to address grizzly management. Settlement of the lawsuit was not a violation of the Administrative Procedures Act, NFMA or the NEPA.

The KNF, LNF, and IPNFs are currently in the forest plan revision process. The revised forest plans will include standards to protect grizzly bear (ROD, *Description of the Decision*). It is expected that the specific provisions of this amendment will be carried forward into the revised forest plans and is being addressed during the forest plan revision process (ROD, *NFMA Significance of the Amendment*). The programmatic ROD changes the forest plans by amending the objectives, standards, and guidelines that address grizzly bear management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The ROD for these amendments describes, from an NFMA perspective, the significance of these amendments based upon planning direction found in 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]) (ROD, *NFMA Significance of the Amendment*). Based upon the information and analysis contained in the FSEIS, it was determined that adoption of the management direction contained in Alternative E Updated would not result in a significant amendment to the existing forest plans (ROD, *NFMA Significance of the Amendment*).

**(C):** The programmatic ROD changes the Forest Plans by amending the objectives, standards, and guidelines that address grizzly bear management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones; it does not consider site-specific future activities that implement the amendments. Site-specific decisions will implement this decision. Future project level analyses and decisions used in implementation of these programmatic actions will provide a more detailed assessment of the effects to specific resources and opportunities. There will not be project-by-project site-specific changes (amendments) to the existing Forest Plans (ROD, *Introduction*). The FSEIS does not establish new Management Areas, nor change the land base considered suitable for timber production. Reconsideration of goals, objectives, and land allocations will be part of the analysis of the longer-term strategy considered when the Forest Plans are revised (FEIS, page

1-7).

Many of the indirect and cumulative effects disclosed in Chapter 3 of the FSEIS include an assessment of forgone opportunities. Any direct effects would occur at the project-level when site-specific decisions are made about road and trail use restrictions. Most of the effects identified in this analysis are indirect effects in that they would occur later in time as a result of this programmatic decision. Cumulative effects of past and present activities are considered in the existing condition and are discussed as part of the affected environment. Cumulative effects of ongoing and foreseeable activities on threatened and endangered species, watershed and fisheries, transportation, timber, recreation, and social/economic analyses are addressed in the FSEIS (please see the Table of Contents for applicable page numbers).

**(D):** The ROD states that the future revised Forest Plans will need to include standards to protect grizzly bear. The specific provisions of this amendment would be carried forward into the revised Forest Plans and addressed during the revision process (ROD, *Description of the Decision*).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Please withdraw the proposed Amendment DSEIS, and instead invest resources in proper integrated Forest Plan revisions.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 12)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Montanans For Multiple Use believes these proposed amendments are illegal because they are in fact significant revisions of the existing Forest Plans due to the re-allocation of lands designated for sustained timber management, wildlife, and recreation, with motorized access to a de-facto wilderness prescription. Even if the proposed amendments did not significantly change the long-term land management, the Purpose and Need Statements describe "changed conditions" and "new information" that by NFMA statute requires a Plan revision, not amendments. Even if a Court found the 2004 Access Management analysis and decision flawed, there is no excuse to ignore statutory requirements and blindly proceed with yet more attempts to amend Plans well over two decades old.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The Decision to Amend these forest plans is illegal: The "Purpose and Need" statements (ROD, p. 2-3), especially considering the time frames, Clearly define a need for Forest Plan Revision, not an amendment. The 1994 IGBG recommendations, the 1995 USFWS Biological Opinion, the Access Management Task Group recommendations were obviously significant new information that represented "changed conditions" from those on which the existing LRMP (Land and Resource Management Plan) were based. Any cursory analysis of these events in relation to current LRMP age and NFMA law, should have triggered a decision to revise the forest plans which were due for revision even without a changed conditions finding (16USCI604.(4) & (5), or a 1999 lawsuit by preservationist extremists. This decision directs significant revision of the long term land use allocations of current forest plans with no integrated analysis of long term effects, and no public disclosure of how the land will be managed without the roads that supported the current multiple use land management prescriptions, a violation of NFMA and NEPA. The decision imposes a new "rule set" of grizzly bear security requirements on current forest plans (FEIS, p. 1-7). The new "rule set" prohibits implementation of existing Forest Plan multiple use prescriptions on thousands of acres (FEIS, p. 3-96,3-99,3-.104,3-105,3-145,3-146,3-152,3-153), and restricts motorized use on millions of acres. The proposed amendment mandates cumulative project by project site specific changes to existing Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMP) with no analysis or disclosure of long term effects on the availability and suitability of affected lands for resource management as required by NFMA (16USCI604.(c ) (1)).* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 13)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The Forest Service violated the Administrative Procedures Act, NFMA and NEPA by agreeing to "settle" a lawsuit with an amendment in 2001 instead of implementing the revision process required by law. Six years' experience from similar amendments on the Flathead National Forest had already demonstrated a*

*high probability of significant effects on protection and multiple uses of National Forest lands promised to the public in existing forest plans. Responsible Officials knew the new standards would be highly likely to produce significant effects on the human and biological environment without doing any analysis. A decision to settle a lawsuit with an amendment was a predetermined arbitrary and capricious decision to do an "insignificant amendment" rather than a good faith effort to evaluate significance of the new "nondiscretionary" requirements and benefits of instead beginning an integrated plan revision (l6USC1604.(f)).* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 15)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The arguments presented in the Decision Notice relative to the decision being insignificant are without merit. The finding that this amendment is "insignificant" is biased and arbitrary and capricious. A fair and unbiased analysis of effects of this amendment during environmental analysis process should have identified the effects as significant and recommended Forest Plan Revision. The analysis is biased to support a predetermined finding of "insignificant" in order to settle a lawsuit illegally, and make the amendment appear to be "mandated by the Court". The' FEIS admits that the new "non-discretionary" constraints are so significant that continuing to manage under current direction (the no action alternative), would likely result in the USFWS finding current direction to jeopardize the continued existence of grizzly bears, a violation of the ESA (FEIS, p. 3-20, ROD p. 54). How can a finding that the new information is so significant that it makes the current plans illegal be judged to be "insignificant"? That finding alone should have triggered a decision to revise forest plans in 1999.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 18)***

*Subconcern # C*

*This decision mandates site specific changes to current LRMP long term land use allocations without disclosing that is the real consequence of the amendment. When a decision is made to eliminate roads for motorized access, the means to implement current direction for vegetation management, forest protection, and recreation opportunities promised by the current plan is removed. No alternative "roadless management" prescription is disclosed in this analysis or the site specific analyses as evidenced by experience on the Flathead National Forest. Justification for road obliteration at the project level is always a simple cite of the new rules set forth in the access amendment. Local managers claim they have no choice except to implement the access mandate, and never has there been an evaluation of long term or cumulative effect when added to other obliteration decisions. The experienced dramatic indicators of the serious adverse cumulative effects of these amendments are readily understood by the public (rapidly declining timber sales, rapidly increasing tree mortality and hazardous fuel accumulations, catastrophic fires with attendant costs and natural resource and private property losses, closure of mills, loss of jobs and recreation opportunities in the last 10 years). Changes to long term land use are actually being made by these amendment decisions, but there is no disclosure and statutory requirements for making those changes are ignored.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 16)***

*Subconcern # D*

*The argument presented in the Decision Notice relative to the decision being insignificant because of the short period of time it would be in effect is misinformation deviously crafted to mislead the public. In fact if the amendment is approved as proposed, there is no possibility of not continuing these standards into the revision. There is every intention on the part of responsible officials to continue the requirements of these cumulative significant 11th hour amendments of outdated forest plans into the revision process as "current direction" just as the Flathead National Forest has done (Bitterroot, Flathead, Lolo National Forests Forest Plan Revision Proposed Action (p. 2> .. By law, Current Direction is a benchmark that is used for comparing all other revision alternatives. If the requirements of the new "rule set" are in fact the "non-discretionary" minimum requirements necessary to avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of the grizzly bear as alleged (ROD, p. 4), there is no decision space to formulate any alternative to revise forest plans without these requirements as alleged (ROD, p. 57). Leading the public to believe that these requirements will only be in effect two or three years until the forest plans are revised, thus making the amendment "insignificant" when officials know better, is just plain dishonest and a breach of public trust.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 19)***

## Management Indicator Species

### Public Concern No. 28. The Forest Service should protect wildlife by placing more emphasis on hiking restrictions than on motorized recreation and access closures because studies have found greater disturbance to elk or deer resulting from hikers than from motorized vehicles (Telemetered Heart Rate of Three Elk As Affected By Activity and Human Disturbance by A.L. Ward and J.J. Cupal 1976; and Response of Mule Deer to Persons Afoot and Snowmobiles by David J Freddy, et al Wildlife Society Bulletin 1986).

**Response:** The purpose of this Forest Plan Amendment is to address motorized access for the threatened grizzly bear within-and-around the Selkirk or Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery areas. Specifically, the scope of the analysis pertains to access standards for wheeled motorized vehicle use during the active bear year (FEIS, page 1-2; FSEIS, page 2). Therefore, the effects analysis for elk and deer that focuses on motorized access impacts is appropriate (FEIS, pages 3-46 to 3-38; FSEIS, pages 149-151).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*A study of the heart rate of elk found that humans walking between 20 to 300 meters from the elk caused them to flee immediately 41% of the time while an OHV passing within 15 to 400 meters of the elk caused them to flee 8% of the time (Ward, A. L. and J. J. Cupal. 1976. Telemetered heart rate of three elk as affected by activity and human disturbance. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station. Laramie, WY. 9 pp.). Therefore, hikers disturb elk more than motor vehicles and, disturbance of wildlife, should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 50)***

*A study of mule deer found that 80% fled in reaction to encounters with persons a foot while only 24% fled due to encounters with snowmobiles (David J. Freddy, Whitcomb M. Bronaugh, Martin C. Fowler, Responses of Mule Deer to Persons Afoot and Snowmobiles, Wildlife Society Bulletin, 1986). Therefore, hikers disturb deer more than motor vehicles and, disturbance of wildlife, should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors****. (Ltr# 26, Cmt# 51)***

## NEPA

### Public Concern No. 29. The Forest Service should provide local citizens more say in the decision made by the decisionmaker.

**Response:** The Forest Service considers all comments equally.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*I am writing to express the primary opinion that local input from people that live in and near these forests should weigh heavily in management decisions regarding the forests. I am writing to express the primary opinion that local input from people that live in and near these forests should weigh heavily in management decisions regarding the forests****. (Ltr# 69, Cmt# 1)***

*Montana residents are the ones who live, work and enjoy this country here and should have the majority voice in decision making here. Radical environmental goups from outside the area, scientists, and bureaucrats from Washington DC can give their opinions, but please, let us have the final say since we live here and are ultimately the ones impacted.* ***(Ltr# 74, Cmt# 6)***

*I believe the Kootenai, Lolo and Panhandle National Forests need to have more local control over how they are managed. Having federal bureaucrats in Washington DC and radical environmentalists, the tree hugging, bunny hugging variety from California or elsewhere dictating how our forest should be managed*

*is absolutely ludicrous. This is our backyard and we are much better suited, more concerned and definitely more rational about how to use and manage these Forest Service lands.* ***(Ltr# 75, Cmt# 5)***

### Public Concern No. 30. The Forest Service should be more specific when comparing alternatives, as there is a lot of disparity between Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated and this makes it difficult to estimate and compare impacts between the two alternatives.

**Response:** It is not possible to precisely predict the number of miles of road that may be opened, closed with gates, and/or closed with barriers in order to achieve the OMRD, TMRD, and core area parameters of each alternative. Implementation of the amendments will be accomplished through project level decisions. Roads or trails proposed to be barriered, opened, or gated will only be identified as part of the site-specific implementation of these amendments, when they are ripe for decision. However, as a result of simulations, resource specialists concluded that it takes approximately two to six miles of change in wheeled motorized vehicle access status to achieve a one percent change in OMRD, TMRD, or core area; therefore the DSEIS and FSEIS present a range in the number of miles of road potentially affected (FSEIS, page 169).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The most obvious obstacle to evaluating the presented options is the huge disparity between Alternative D Modified (D) and Alternative E Updated (E). Option D may entail closing up to 2,460 miles of road, while results of implementing option E may close from as few as 20 miles of road or as many as 420 miles of road. (Option E also has the possibility of opening 140 miles while at the same time closing only 160 miles). Why is such a vague option presented as reasonable for evaluation? Who can guess what its impacts will be? How can two such divergent options be presented as accomplishing similar goals?* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 31. The NEPA process should have been an issues-driven process and the significant issues for a travel plan should be those that have the greatest impact on motorized recreationists. The Forest Service should address all comments that affect motorized recreationists even though they didn't show up on the agency's significant issue list (i.e., importance of each existing route, cumulative effects of all motorized closures, and need for more, not less motorized recreational opportunities).

**Response:** The NEPA process for this EIS was an issues driven process and identified public access for recreation and social uses as a significant issue (FEIS, page 2-2). However, this is not a site-specific analysis completed according to 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose and need in this instance 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). This programmatic environmental analysis will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Many comments by motorized recreationists are being dismissed by the agency as not being substantive comments because they did not show up on a list of significant issues developed by the agency. The injustice is that the agency is not identifying and addressing issues that are significant to motorized recreationists including importance of each existing route, cumulative effects of all motorized closures, and need for more not less motorized recreational opportunities, and others discussed in the following*

*comments. The NEPA process should have been an issues driven process and the significant issues for a travel plan should be those that have the greatest impact on motorized recreationists. The agency is avoiding and selecting issues that circumvent the requirement to address significant issues that affect motorized recreationists. We request that this evaluation address all of the significant issues that affect motorized recreationists.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 18)***

### Public Concern No. 32. The Forest Service should base their schedule for this project on allowing the time to adequately address the current and future needs of motorized recreationists, not to meet a specific deadline.

**Response:** This is not a site-specific analysis completed according to 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose and need in this instance 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). This programmatic environmental analysis will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We have heard the explanation for this sideboard is that it is needed because of the schedule for completion of the travel plan. We have also been told that the forest could evaluate new routes at a later date. First, we strongly recommend that the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests take whatever time is necessary to adequately address the public's needs. The schedule is not an adequate or reasonable amount of time especially considering that the public has been able to access and enjoy this area for decades. Secondly, we have requested the reopening of routes before the Forest Service has no history of reopening or creating any new routes for OHV use at a later date. Thirdly, whenever we suggest a new route, the agency is hesitant to reopen or pursue the environmental analysis required to address it. Therefore, we are uncomfortable banking any hopes of mitigation and enhancement on a new project at a later date. And lastly, a later date probably means 10 to 15 years out (if ever) and many of us who are impacted now may not be able to take advantage of any new opportunities at a later date.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 25)***

### Public Concern No. 33. The Forest Service decisionmaking process should fairly analyze all comments received disregarding number or specificity, and not use comments as a voting process.

**Response:** The Forest Service considers and analyzes all comments received during the comment period; however, this is not a voting process. This process is about comments that identify areas within the document that need further study or clarification and/or provide rationale for the comment. The number of comments received and the number of comments pertaining to any given resource or alternative do not constitute a vote.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We are concerned with the way that comments are being used by agencies in the decision-making process. Agency management has said that the total number of comments received during the process is considered during the decision-making. There is a clear indication that decisions are being made based on those interests producing the most comments. We strongly disagree with a decision-making process using comments as a voting process where the most comments wins the most trails and recreation opportunities because motorized recreationists and working class citizens have a low participation rate in NEPA processes for reasons discussed further in this document.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 59)***

*NEPA did not intend for citizens who do not comment on NEPA actions to give up their standard of living to those that do. We ask that public comments not be used as a voting process and that the needs of all*

*citizens be fairly addressed in the document and decision-making.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 60)***

*If you will ever take the time to check letter writers, signatures, memberships of the opposing groups, etc, I am sure you will find many duplicated members, which means the actual numbers are skewed basically, you have many people voting more than once.* ***(Ltr# 55, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 34. The Forest Service design elements for Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated should be clarified and edited through the section 7 consultation process, then determinations should be made as to which, if any, are to be adopted as standards for the alternatives versus kept as terms and conditions to a new biological opinion.

**Response:** The design elements as presented in the DSEIS were the best information available at the time the document was published to assist in disclosing the potential effects of the alternatives. Since that time, the terms and conditions have been updated and finalized. The final version is presented in this FSEIS and ROD.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Our comments on the SDEIS are directed toward the design elements of alternatives D modified, and E updated. Both alternatives incorporate the non-discretionary terms and conditions from the 2004 biological opinion on the project (since withdrawn) as design elements of the proposed action. There are two issues with these design elements: * The combined Service and Forest Level 1 biologist team recognized at their May 12, 2009, meeting that some of those terms and conditions are open to broad and differing interpretation. The final intent of these must be clarified and edited between Service Regions (1 and 6) and between the Service and the Forests. As of this writing, this process is ongoing through the section 7 consultation process. *Once the intent of the 2004 terms and conditions are clarified and edited, the agencies must discuss which, if any, should be adopted as design elements (i.e. standards) of the alternatives versus kept as terms and conditions to a new biological opinion.* ***(Ltr# 29, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 35. The Forest Service should monitor the progress of the DSEIS and implement standards that will assist with future revision of motorized access management standards.

**Response:** The Forests have and will continue to monitor their progress in implementing the standards. Annual reports are submitted to USFWS detailing the progress made toward achieving and maintaining the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The amount of administrative use is also reported.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Identify and implement standards that track the DSEIS progress and monitor, review and assist in the future revision of motorized access management standards.* ***(Ltr# 42, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 36. The Forest Service should have stronger accountability in the management, updates, and accuracy of the road system GIS data.

**Response:** The GIS roads layer is updated annually for the purposes of providing accurate information to the USFWS on the ability of the Forest Service to achieve and maintain the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. While errors in the data are certainly possible, they are corrected upon discovery.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Recommend stronger accountability in the management, updates and accuracy of data, maps and*

*Geographical Information System (GIS) of the USFS road systems.* ***(Ltr# 42, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 37. The Forest Service should include road density columns for all ownership in Table 17 for the table to be biologically meaningful.

**Response:** The information presented in Table 25 of the FSEIS (formerly Table 17 in the DSEIS) displays the size, land ownership, and linear miles of open and total roads for the identified recurring use areas, which are outside of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The standards for linear miles of open and total road will only apply on NFS lands within the recurring use areas; therefore, adding a column for other ownerships would not serve a purpose.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Table 17 ought to contain road density columns for across all ownerships, to be more biologically meaningful.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 38. The Forest Service should be more specific in identifying which roads and trails would require closure to meet standards under various alternatives, thus enabling the public to assess which alternative is more compatible with their needs for access.

**Response:** Planning for units of the NFS involves two levels of decisionmaking. The first level, often referred to as programmatic 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 management area prescriptions or decisions with goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for future decision-making through site-specific planning. The environmental analysis accomplished at the plan amendment level guides resource management decisions and aids the next level of site-specific planning.

The second level of planning involves the analysis and implementation of management practices 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 that includes 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 FSEIS and the accompanying ROD do not prescribe site-specific access management decisions within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. This analysis has examined the effects of setting various levels of human access within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. Implementation of this programmatic decision will be accomplished through project level decisions; so it is not possible to predict the actual effect of each alternative in this programmatic analysis. A series of computer simulations were run in order to determine an approximation of what changes in wheeled motorized vehicle access status may be necessary to meet the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area.

A Moving Windows computer application was used for OMRD and TMRD simulations. Core area simulations were performed using a GIS buffering routine. Each simulation produces a different numerical result in the number of miles of change in wheeled motorized vehicle access status it may take to move towards the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area. The degree of change in OMRD, TMRD, and core area varies from BMU to BMU. It is relative to the degree of change in wheeled motorized vehicle access status and the variability of spatial relationships resulting from those changes. For example, the buffering of a switchback road can have a different result in core area compared to buffering an equal length of road that traverses in a

continuous manner across a hillside. As a result of the simulations, resource specialists concluded that it takes approximately two to six miles of change in wheeled motorized vehicle access status to achieve a one percent change in OMRD, TMRD, or core area.

Site-specific decisions on individual roads and trails will be proposed through future project-level planning. These proposals will require public notification and will seek public input for identification of issues and concerns and development of alternative actions. This FSEIS and ROD will not be directly authorizing any specific action; rather, they will identify and select a programmatic action which sets standards for implementation of site-specific proposals.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*This DSEIS should have specifically identified which road segments and motorized trails that would require closure to meet standards under various alternatives. Likewise the DSEIS should have identified other roads that might require closure given that there might be various options in the various BMUs. Such a step is necessary to more adequately inform the public dialogue about which choices we need to make to meet the various alternatives, rather than leave it in the realm of speculation and thus unnecessary controversy. So for example, it may tum out to be that Alternative D-Modified's motorized route closures/obliterations might be very compatible with most people's needs for access, contrary to the DSEIS's statements on the social acceptability of this alternative.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 11)***

### Public Concern No. 39. The Forest Service should evaluate actions fairly and unbiased, as required by law, and make concise disclosures of the rationale for their decisions.

**Response:** The analysis of the probable effects of each alternative has been presented in a clear and unbiased manner. This FSEIS and the accompanying ROD do not prescribe site-specific access management decisions within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones, so it is not possible to predict the actual effect of each alternative (FSEIS, page 169). The ROD provides the rationale for selecting Alternative E Updated for implementation.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The kind of arbitrary and capricious biased actions documented above is supported with illegal encyclopedic EIS's that required almost 100 pages of bureaucratic spin in the Record of Decision designed to confuse and mislead the public (The Record of Decision for the entire integrated Forest Plans were only 25-30 pages). This manipulation of current laws and regulations is contrary to Congress' intent for Agencies to make good faith efforts to do a fair evaluation of actions required by law, and make concise disclosures of their reasons for decisions (NEPA and NFMA).* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 22)***

### Public Concern No. 40. The Forest Service should address actions programmatically in the DSEIS and refine them in future site-specific decisions.

**Response:** Site-specific decisions on individual roads and trails will be proposed through future project-level planning.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*I support the amendment not resulting in any site-specific actions, but rather being considered in future site specific decisions.* ***(Ltr# 70, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 41. The Forest Service should analyze the cumulative effects of motorized closures over the past 30 years and:

#### A) Analyze past, current, and reasonably foreseeable actions, which includes

**other planning efforts such as forest planning and travel management planning, that will result in motorized closures in the States of Montana and Idaho; and includes human environment (issues, needs, alternatives, and impacts on the public associated with reduction or lack of adequate motorized recreation) and social, cultural, historic use, current use, future needs, economic impact from perspective of motorized recreationists.**

**Response:** Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions (40 CFR 1508.7) that could affect the issues pertinent to this analysis were considered for the cumulative effects of implementing Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated. Reasonably foreseeable actions include those Federal and non-Federal activities not yet undertaken, for which there are existing decisions, funding, or identified proposals (36 CFR 220.3). These activities may occur regardless of which alternative is selected for implementation. Cumulative effects of past and present activities are considered in the existing condition and are discussed as part of the affected environment. Cumulative effects of ongoing and foreseeable programmatic activities on threatened and endangered species, watershed and fisheries, transportation, timber, recreation, and social/economic analyses are addressed in the FSEIS (please see the Table of Contents for applicable page numbers). Because of the programmatic nature of the decision, many of the indirect and cumulative effects disclosed in Chapter 3 include an assessment of forgone opportunities.

The FSEIS includes a list of activities, decisions, and environmental documents that are applicable to all or portions of the NFS lands included in the analysis area (FSEIS, page 42). The list is divided into three sections: 1) programmatic or relatively large-scale decisions, plans, projects, and policies; 2) management practices that directly or indirectly result in ground disturbance; and 3) activities that typically do not result in ground disturbance. These lists are not all inclusive, as other activities may be considered in the given resource sections of Chapter 3.

The accompanying ROD clearly explains why the decision to amend these forest plans is not a significant amendment (see *NFMA Significance of the Amendment*). Future revised forest plans will need to include standards to protect grizzly bear. It is expected that the specific provisions of this amendment would be carried forward into the revised forest plans and are addressed during the revision process (ROD, *NFMA Significance of the Amendment*).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Our comments document that the current management trend towards massive motorized closures (25 to 75% of the existing routes) is not responsive to the public's needs for motorized access and recreation and is contrary to the multiple-use management directives specified by congress. The agency can no longer ignore that motorized access and recreation are the largest (over 50 million) and fastest growing group of visitors. The agency can no longer ignore the needs of motorized recreationists and act irresponsibly by continuing to close a large percentage of existing motorized access and recreation opportunities. The agency can no longer ignore the need for new motorized recreational opportunities. The agency can no longer ignore the significant cumulative effect that all of the motorized closures over the past 30 years have had on motorized recreationists. It seems that both the BLM and Forest Service are using forest planning and travel management planning as an opportunity to close as many motorized recreational opportunities as fast as possible. We are asking that this project establish a baseline evaluation and address this significant impact.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 5)***

*We request that the Forest Service provide an adequate and fair evaluation of the needs of motorized recreationists and the cumulative impacts of motorized closures.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 8)***

*All forest planning and travel management planning actions must now evaluate all past motorized closures including road and trail obliterations done to mitigate wildlife security concerns as part of timber harvest. It is logical and fair that once the harvest area has been re-vegetated, then the motorized closures must be lifted. Additionally, the cumulative negative impact of these types of closure actions on motorized access*

*and recreation must be adequately evaluated and mitigated by this action.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 33)***

*Subconcern # A*

*If the Forest Service avoids the evaluation of cumulative effects, then motorized recreation will ultimately be removed from the forest. An adequate evaluation of cumulative effects would include all past, current, and reasonably foreseeable actions that have or will produce motorized closures in the State. The environmental analysis must adequately address the human environmental including issues, needs, alternatives, and impacts on the public associated with the reduction or lack of adequate motorized recreation. An adequate analysis would include evaluation of significant social, cultural, historical use, current use, future needs, economic impact, and quality of the human environment issues from the perspective of motorized recreationists.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 13)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Partial list of Current and Immediate Past Actions With Significant Cumulative Impact on Multiple-Use/Motorized Recreation: Kootenai NF Bristow Restoration Project, Kootenai NF McSwede Restoration Project, Kootenai NF Forest Plan Revisions, Lolo NF Forest Plan Revision, Montana State Wolf Plan, USFS Open Space Conservation Strategy and Implementation Plan, USFWS Bull Trout Recovery Plan* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 31)***

*Subconcern # A*

*The impacts of this decision are cumulative with all preceding decisions to amend these forest plans. There is no analysis in this EIS or ROD of the cumulative effects of this amendment decision when added to all previous and foreseeable amendment decisions (PElS, 1-8) in the EIS or Record of Decision on forest plan outputs, costs, environmental effects, opportunity costs, or net public benefits relative to those disclosed in .the original forest plans (NEP A: 40CPER 1508.7, 1508.25(a), 1508.25 (c>. Arbitrary and capricious discussion statements unsupported by any analysis are labeled as "Cumulative Effects" throughout the document which do not meet the integrated cumulative effects analysis required by NFMA regarding the amendment significance finding. (e.g. A Regional Amendment has already banned motorized use of any kind off roads or trails in Montana; the proposed MFMU Appeal, p. 3 rule set effectively mandates destruction of in excess of 500 miles of existing roads that provide pot~ntial access, eliminates existing access on 113,000 suitable acres, imposes rules for additional closures and restriction on existing roads within 1.1 million acres, precludes silvicultural treatments on 32,000 acres, prohibits expanding the road system in suitable timberlands (including inventoried roadless areas) as promise4 in existing forest plans unless more existing roads are destroyed (hydrologically neutral was not defined in the EIS). and the conclusion is reached that "The management direction ofthese amendments, in combination with their timing (shown above to be false), does not significantly alter the long-term relationships between the levels ofgoods 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." (ROD, p. 58). and "Therefore, we do not expect a significant change in motorized access opportunities as a result ofthis amendment. (ROD, p.57-58>. Nothing could be further from the truth and we contend these amendments in combination with other amendments, especially considering their timing, result in an illegal revision of the forest plan.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 17)***

## Public Concern No. 42. The Forest Service should consider grizzly bear delisting under the Reasonably Foreseeable Actions.

**Response:** We are not aware of any USFWS proposal to delist grizzly bear within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones; therefore, grizzly bear delisting was not considered as a reasonably foreseeable action within the analysis.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The current analysis does not adequately consider grizzly bear delisting under the Reasonably Foreseeable actions.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 57)***

### Public Concern No. 43. The Forest Service should include the cumulative effects of additional motorized access from the Montanore and Rock Creek Mine projects.

**Response:** The cumulative effects from the Montanore and Rock Creek Mine projects have been considered in the cumulative effects analysis for the grizzly bear. Each of these projects includes a substantial mitigation plan that addresses multiple risk factors including changes in wheeled motorized vehicle access, potential displacement, attractants, law enforcement, and small grizzly bear population numbers. The mitigations are not expected to provide security levels above those provided for in this decision, but rather are expected to assure achievement of the selected standards, which will result in an improvement over the existing conditions (FSEIS, page 103).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*It is also apparent that little regard has been given to the cumulative effects associated with the increased motorization occurring at a public level and the proposed design of two world-class mines in the most critical segment of the Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone. This very same issue is detailed in CRG's comments regarding the Montanore Project DEIS.* ***(Ltr# 83, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 44. The Forest Service should include a law enforcement strategy to monitor and enforce all closures and restrictions under the final decision.

**Response:** The Forest Service currently monitors and enforces closures and restrictions within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The Forest Service monitors closures throughout the course of the active bear season, often multiple times, to determine extent of any unauthorized use on restricted and barriered roads (USDA Forest Service 2008, 2009, 2010) and financially supports state bear biologists in monitoring and enforcing closures on the Idaho Panhandle portion of the project area. The Forest Service submits annual reports to the USFWS documenting the progress made toward achieving and maintaining the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. In 2009, monitoring of closures/maintenance of habitat within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones included (USDA Forest Service 2010):

- The CNF accomplished road closure enhancements on 17 roads within the Selkirk Recovery Zone. These treatments were mainly intended to block OHVs from illegally driving on closed roads.
- On the IPNFs, closure devices (i.e., gates, guard rails) that were considered ineffective in controlling motorized vehicles were enhanced by boulder placement alongside the closure device, by relocating the closure device to a more defensible location, or constructing new berms or tank traps at 15 sites on the Priest Lake Ranger District, 10 sites on the Sandpoint Ranger District, and 10 sites on the Bonners Ferry Ranger District.
- On the KNF, closure devices on each district were checked and maintained, including signing. In addition, weekend patrols were conducted throughout the hunting season to provide agency presence during the high mortality risk period for grizzly bears. Administrative use of restricted roads was closely monitored.

In 2009, some information, education, and other efforts across the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones included (USDA Forest Service 2010):

- During the hunting season, forest protection officers (FPOs) conducted emphasis patrols in the CNF's portion of the grizzly bear recovery area. These patrols informed/educated hunters about grizzly bear recovery and camping and hunting safely in grizzly bear habitat. Patrollers stopped at every camp and contacted every hunter they encountered. Proper food storage

requirements were discussed, brochures, maps, and other materials were handed out, and other information was provided as requested. Patrollers also checked for compliance with the CNF's food storage order, motor vehicle use map, and other regulations. Over the course of a day, all vehicle descriptions and plate numbers were recorded. Gates and other road closures in the Selkirk Recovery Area were monitored. Typically FPOs will write a number of law enforcement incident reports on each patrol. Occasionally they write citations or assist the district's law enforcement officer (LEO) with investigations. These hunter contact patrols provided an agency "presence" in the recovery area when the mortality risk to bears is highest. Patrollers worked in pairs, are always in uniform, and drive recognizable agency trucks. Patrols mainly occurred on weekend days. The CNF also performed 12 patrols in the recovery area in 2009. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife game agents/biologists assisted with these efforts on two separate patrols and approximately 200 – 300 hunters were contacted.

- On the KNF and IPNFs, districts posted grizzly bear info signs (Hunters Know Your Bears) at trailheads, behind gates and other access points, dispersed sites, and campgrounds. On the Priest Lake Ranger District of the IPNFs, employees conducted approximately 205 visitor contacts to relay information such as the proper storage of bear attractants, sanitation, bear identification, general wildlife information and other rules and regulations. Informative literature, including "Be Bear Aware" and "Living in Bear Country" was disseminated to the public via front desks at the Ranger District and Forest Supervisor offices, brochures and kiosks at Ranger Stations and campgrounds to emphasize the importance of proper bear identification, as well as how residents and recreationists should properly store their food, garbage and other bear attractants while in bear country.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Given the problem with ineffective gates, and a weak definition of Barriered routes, it's important that the FEIS contain a Law Enforcement Strategy to monitor and enforce all closures and restrictions under the final decision. This should include an assessment of the budget and personnel needed to adequately enforce the alternative finally chosen, and an agency commitment to actively seek the appropriations necessary to make the words "effective closure" a reality. In addition, we recommend that the Service make it clear that repeated motorized violations of restricted areas will be linked to temporary or permanent closures of those areas -providing an important incentive for the motorized community to police itself. Wildlands CPR has just published a report on successful ORV enforcement strategies, and we encourage the Forest Service to access this at: http://www. wildlands cpr .org/2009-update-six -strategies-success-web-view.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 19)***

## Plants

### Public Concern No. 45. Alternative D Modified in the DSEIS is biased. The Forest Service should acknowledge that the ecological and economic benefits of having fewer noxious weed infestations far outweighs the slight difficulty caused by administratively, not being allowed to drive to every noxious weed site to find and treat the infestation.

**Response:** This concern, for Alternative D Modified, is partially addressed in the FSEIS on pages 267 - 269. There are ecological and economic benefits of having fewer noxious weed infestations. Restricting all motorized vehicle travel on roads, including road maintenance, would help reduce the spread of noxious weeds and/or their seeds. However, because wind, birds and animals are vectors for seed spread, and because fire increases the potential for establishment, noxious weeds can and will spread regardless of whether administrative use is allowed on a road or not. In addition, most forest roads already have established noxious weeds with a seed bank

established in the ground that can remain viable for many years. For example, spotted knapweed seed is our most common noxious weed, with seeds that can remain viable for up to ten years or more. Established populations usually require multiple years of treatment and monitoring to control. Restricting a road does not automatically guarantee an ecologically or economically beneficial result. In fact, access and cost factors would guarantee that fewer populations would be treated, which in turn could impact native plant and animal populations. Limiting public access while allowing administrative access to locate and treat populations over time would result in ecological benefits that are accomplished in the most efficient and economical way.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Roads open to any form of use are vectors for spreading noxious, invasive weeds. These invaders present the most significant threat today to native plant populations. Native plants are the basis of the food chain on which all wildlife relies, and thus damaging this element of the ecosystem harms all others, including the Grizzly Bear whose recovery this plan is supposed to address.* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 3)***

*P. 219: "The potential for spreading noxious weeds by vehicle or by road maintenance (blading) would decrease, but accessibility for finding and treating infestations as discussed above would also decrease." More telltale bias. The DSEIS fails to point out that, ecologically and economically, the benefits of having fewer noxious weed infestations far outweighs the slight difficulty caused by not being able to drive to every noxious weed site--ironically caused by the roads!* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 35)***

### Public Concern No. 46. The Forest Service should more accurately estimate the impacts on native plant species if Alternative E Updated is adopted because this alternative has fewer closed routes and additional routes are being opened.

**Response:** The 2002 FEIS and the 2011 FSEIS do not specifically discuss the impacts of access management on native plant species, with the exception of those identified as threatened, endangered or sensitive. They were addressed in the FEIS (pages 3-122 and 3-123), and in the FSEIS (pages 263-265). The Vegetation and Timber Management Sections in both documents did address the environmental effects of the alternatives on forest vegetation; however, those discussions were related to changes in administrative access to suitable NFS lands for vegetation management and timber harvest.

Generally, the effects of opening or closing roads on native vegetation are not identified as an issue or concern. Native plants are usually widespread in suitable habitat and those colonizing disturbed road or roadside surfaces are usually common in surrounding areas. If impacts to native plants (other than TES) were of concern, then comparing the effects of alternatives would be based on the number of miles of access changes that would occur. The following table shows the change in access (roads and trails) that could occur for all alternatives to show how Alternative E Updated compares to other alternatives in the number of miles that could be closed or opened. Since administrative access can occur on gated roads, both public and administrative use changes are shown.

**Table 70. Change in types of access by alternative as analyzed in the 2002 FEIS and 2011 FSEIS**

| | **Change in Public Access** | | **Change in Administrative Access** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Type of Change:** | **From access (open) to no access (gated or barriered)** | **From no access (gated or barriered) to access (open)** | **From access (open or gated) to no access (barriered)** | **From no access (barriered) to access (open or gated)** |
| **Alternative A** (2002 FEIS, Table 3-21, pg. 3-59) | 160-161 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Alternative B** (2002 FEIS, | 168-179 | 0 | 139-197 | 0 |

| | **Change in Public Access** | | **Change in Administrative Access** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Type of Change:** | **From access (open) to no access (gated or barriered)** | **From no access (gated or barriered) to access (open)** | **From access (open or gated) to no access (barriered)** | **From no access (barriered) to access (open or gated)** |
| Table 3-23, pg. 3-62) | | | | |
| **Alternative C** (2002 FEIS, Tables 3-25 and 3-26, pgs. 3-64 and 3-65) | 164-231 | 239-520 | 504-709 | 152-287 |
| **Alternative E** (2002 FEIS, Tables 3-28 and 3-29, pgs. 3-67 and 3-68) | 51-70 | 103-316 | 367-514 | 43-132 |
| **Alternative D Modified** (2011 FSEIS, Table 40, page 174) | 880-1,171 | 6-18 | 1,263-1,767 | 8-19 |
| **Alternative E Updated** (2011 FSEIS, Table 42, page 178) [preferred] | 34-102 | 110-330 | 90-270 | 36-108 |

As shown, there is a wide range in the miles of potential road access changes. Theoretically, closing roads could reduce impacts on native plant species, while opening roads could increase impacts, although this would not be true for some species such as those that prefer regularly disturbed soil or those that need an open canopy. Alternative E Updated does have the potential to close fewer roads to public access than any other alternative, but Alternative C would potentially open more roads to the public. Alternatives B and E Updated are similar and would potentially close fewer roads to administrative use than other alternatives, while Alternatives C and E could potentially open more roads to administrative use than Alternative E Updated. These miles of access changes are the only and most accurate way to compare the potential impacts of the alternatives on native plants.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We are unable to accurately estimate the impact on native plants species or their habitats if option E is adopted. Implementation of Option E may very negatively impact native plants if few roads are closed and many opened.* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 47. The Forest Service should acknowledge that lack of monitoring and road maintenance may also have a positive impact on native plant species versus an indicator of negative impacts as cited throughout the DSEIS.

**Response:** Monitoring in the DSEIS and FSEIS generally refers to the practice of surveying forest roads, trails and other disturbed soil areas for the presence of noxious weeds (which are then treated), and checking previously treated areas to re-treat as needed so that populations are controlled or eradicated. Most forest roads are monitored every year or two, therefore, the miles of road that would be restricted to administrative motorized access (refer to the table in Public Concern No.46) would be the best estimate of monitoring that could be curtailed. Some roads may still be monitored by non-motorized methods such as by foot, bicycle, or horses. Most monitoring does not involve site-specific monitoring projects, although there are some locations that are intensely monitored. These are usually where initial new invasive species become established.

Existing native plant species would not be affected by road maintenance activities or by vehicles used to survey, monitor or treat noxious weeds if all motorized access was restricted. In terms of

direct, physical damage to native plants, a lack of monitoring and/or road maintenance would be positive. However, there are negative impacts associated with a lack of monitoring as well, which include new infestations escaping detection and spreading beyond our ability to control when they first become established, existing infestations that continue to spread, and increased cost of controlling larger, more widespread infestations. These impacts are addressed on page 264 of the FSEIS. Road decommissioning or other projects may actually increase the potential for establishment of noxious weeds by providing a disturbed soil bed that can be colonized by wind, bird or animal-borne seeds.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*In several locations this draft appears to cite the potential lack of monitoring of plant species and the lack of road maintenance as negatively impacting native plant species. Because something lacks monitoring does not necessarily render it an indicator of negative impact. The impact is unknown.* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 4)***

*How many monitoring projects are currently planned which might be curtailed? Of particular note, road decommissioning properly done, including culvert removal or modification, reduces introduction of invasives, improves native plant habitat, reduces soil erosion and can enhance wetlands habitat.* ***(Ltr# 14, Cmt# 5)***

## Public Involvement

### Public Concern No. 48. The Forest Service should conduct an open and fair comment period for those persons or organizations that may be interested or affected by the closures, such as a segment of the motorized community who feel they lose every time in the travel planning process.

**Response:** A fair and open comment period for these amendments has been provided (see FEIS Chapter 4 and p. 360 of this FSEIS). This is not a site-specific analysis done under 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose and need for this proposal derived from a need 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). This programmatic environmental analysis and decision will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, a separate public involvement process, under the auspices of NEPA will be conducted.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The public that enjoys motorized access and recreation is not going to participate in a process where they lose every time.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 22)***

*Because of the large number of projects affecting the public (Table 2) and the limited amount of time that individuals have including most working class citizens, agencies can not expect the level of public participation to be high. This does not justify taking recreation opportunities from the public including working class citizens.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 47)***

### Public Concern No. 49. The Forest Service should develop a comment process that is not influenced by politics and/or special interest groups and based on the size or budget of their organization, so as to provide a fair process that benefits the majority of the public and it's needs from the national forest.

**Response:** A comment process that is fair has been provided for these amendments (FEIS,

Chapter 4 and FSEIS, page 360). The Responsible Officials have considered all comments received equally. After consideration of comments, the potential impacts disclosed in this FSEIS, and compliance with laws and regulations, it was determined that Alternative E Updated would best achieve the purpose and need for this proposal, while responding to identified issues, including increased secure habitat for grizzly bears.

This programmatic environmental analysis and decision will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, a separate public involvement process, under the auspices of NEPA will be conducted.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*A forest plan and travel plan should be about identifying and meeting the needs of the public for use of and access to their land. Less than 1% of the visitors to the forest are involved and comment during the plan process. In order to assure a fair and unbiased process it is necessary to separate the true issues and needs of the public from the influence of well-funded special interest groups with a limited-use agenda. We request that the Forest Service develop and implement screening procedures to identify influence groups with annual budgets greater than $100,000. These procedures should also identify all of the different influence mechanisms in use by groups meeting these criteria. We also request that the Forest Service develop procedures that equalize the influence received from groups with annual budgets greater than $100,000 so that this influence does not obscure the needs and benefits of 99% of the public that are less-organized, less-funded, and have a wide diversity of multiple-use interests. The forest plan must reflect the benefits and needs of the public in a fair and even-handed way. The goal of this program would be to assure that the decision produces a wide sharing of resources and life's amenities. These additions to the planning process are needed to restore the basis of public benefit and need to the process and to remove the political influence that has obscured public benefit and needs from the current process.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 19)***

*We also are concerned that this document does not tell our community what roads specifically will be closed and we wish to be kept. informed and be allowed involvement in that process prior to any permanent* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 6)***

**Public Concern No. 50. The Forest Service should clearly identify all proposed site-specific motorized road and trail closures for each alternative utilizing maps, tables, and summaries to provide for adequate public participation and comment and include:**

**A) Disclosing the miles of open roads and miles that would be closed with closure percentages, in the affected ranger districts and the two recovery zones;**

**B) Identifying any potential road closures affecting state or private forest land management so adjacent landowners can adequately assess the impacts of the closure on their management and economic returns;**

**C) Informing Forest Capital Partners as to which roads, if any, will be permanently closed and how these closures will affect their forestland access;**

**D) Disclosing roads that are to be decommissioned.**

**Response:** This is not a site-specific analysis done under 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose and need for this proposal derived from a need 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4).

**(A):** Table 39 (FSEIS, page 167) provides a comparison of the existing condition for miles of road and trail by BMU within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones and Table 40 and Table 42 (FSEIS, pages 174 and 178) display by BMU the estimated change in wheeled motorized vehicle access by alternative within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.

**(B and C):** This programmatic environmental analysis and decision will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, a separate public involvement process, under the auspices of NEPA will be conducted.

**(D):** The DSEIS and FSEIS adequately disclose that barriered roads would be made unusable by the public or forest managers. However, the biological opinion's terms and conditions recognize that emergency situations will periodically occur. In the event of a wildfire, temporarily reopening restricted or barriered/reclaimed roads within a BMU may be necessary for effective fire suppression. Emergency situations such as this will be consulted on with the USFWS. As disclosed in the DSEIS (page 115) and FSEIS (page 161), reclaimed/obliterated and barriered roads are roads that are managed with the long-term intent for no motorized use. These roads have been treated in such a manner to no longer function as a road. An effective means to accomplish this is through one or a combination of several means, including recontouring to original slope, placement of logging, or forest debris, planting shrubs or trees, obliterating/barriering the entrance, etc.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The document and decision must clearly disclose on maps and tables and summaries all existing areas, and existing roads and trails that would be closed to motorized access and motorized recreationists. Summaries should include overall closures percentages. Otherwise public disclosure has not been adequately provided and the public will not be informed and the public including motorized recreationists will not be able to adequately participate and comment.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 40)***

*The maps and figures are not easily understood. There are no identifiable or named features and no road and trail numbers on the maps. It is very difficult for the public to orient themselves and to interpret the proposed action for each specific road and trail. Therefore, the public cannot adequately evaluate the proposal and cannot develop comments with reference to specific roads and trails.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 46)***

*After review of the DSEIS, the Idaho Department of Lands is very concerned about the potential impacts to the State's timber sale program.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 13)***

*Subconcern # A*

*What I would really like to know is: how many miles of open roads are now in the affected ranger districts, how many miles of open road are in the two recovery zones, how many miles in each would be closed and the closure percentages.* ***(Ltr# 27, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Certain parcels of IDL ownership are only accessible via USFS lands' roads. Our access could potentially and significantly be impacted by proposed road closures. It would be helpful to see more specifically which roads are proposed for closure under each of the alternatives. The EIS should specifically identify any potential road closure affecting State or private forest land management. Once these segments are identified, the adjacent landowners can adequately assess the impacts of the closure on their management and economic returns* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # C*

*Forest Capital Partners has permanent, legal access to our intermingled lands (with the USFS and IDL) in*

*the Selkirk and Cabinet Mountains. We would like to be informed as to which roads, if any, will be permanently closed and how these closures will affect our forestland access. We have historically cooperated with federal and state agencies on access issues and we desire no further limitations be placed on our ownership.* ***(Ltr# 72, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # D*

*This DSEIS fails to make adequate disclosure of the roads that will be made unusable by the public, forest managers, and fire suppression crews by barriers and/or culvert removal. The 2002 DEIS discloses 367 to 514 miles of road rip for Alt E. The table on page ii reveals a temporary increase in employment due to road reclamation, but nowhere in this DSEIS is it disclosed how many miles of reclamation may occur. Other statements in this document indicate that some barriered roads will be reclaimed, but there is no disclosure of how many miles or even a range of miles of reclamation that will occur. In fact by reading between the lines we conclude that barriered is a euphemism for decommissioned. It appears that you have made a deliberate decision to not disclose expected culvert removal and reclamation or decommissioning activities. We strongly object to this nefarious obfuscation of your intent to destroy roads built with public funds. This lack of disclosure must be corrected in the FEIS.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 51. The Forest Service should use various methods to work with the public, gather comments, and ensure that the public is sufficiently notified of the comment period, which would include:

#### A) Contacting motorized recreationists directly in the field and at club meetings;

#### B) Collaborative sessions that produces reasonable multiple use outcomes and involves all recreational interests.

**Response:** Chapter 4 of the FEIS (pages 4-1 to 4-7) and the beginning of this appendix (page360) detail the extensive public involvement effort undertaken for this analysis. Public involvement efforts were varied and included ads, mailings, open house public meetings, and presentations to numerous organizations.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Also feels that this project needs to be publicized more. Ad was hidden in the Daily Inter Lake.* ***(Ltr# 86, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Why use so many indirect attempts such as public meetings and open houses to gather feedback from motorized recreationists? Why not just go directly to motorized recreationists in the field and at club meetings and ask them? NEPA encourages direct coordination with the impacted public instead of a process tailor made for special-interest environmental groups.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 48)***

*Subconcern # B*

*We request that the use of public participation in decision-making for this proposed action be monitored to assure that it is does not obscure the needs of all citizens who rely on this area for their recreation and livelihoods. Collaborative sessions are inequitable and a travesty if they do not meet a true cross-section of public needs. The needs of the public are best met by managing public lands for multiple-uses. Multiple-use includes motorized access and motorized recreation. We request that agencies conduct collaborative sessions that produce reasonable multiple-use outcomes.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 61)***

### Public Concern No. 52. The Forest Service should consider the length of the comment period, based on that other Forest Service projects were released for public comment at the same time, and that the comment period is too short

### considering the time taken to develop the DSEIS by the Forest Service.

**Response:** EIS's require a minimum 45-day comment period (40 CFR 1506.10(c)). Because it takes a week or more after EPA receives an EIS to get the notice of availability in the Federal Register, the public is typically given 1-2 weeks longer to review EISs than the required 45-day comment period. For this project, the DSEIS was made available to the public late in the week of April 20th to early in the week of April 27, 2009, which is one to two weeks prior to the Notice of Availability being published in the Federal Register on May 8, 2009. The length of the comment period for this document was sufficient.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*A poignant reminder that 45-days is indeed a very short if not circumscribed time frame for public comment. The USFS has had the benefit of more than a year (if not two) to compile and present this information, yet the public gets the equivalent of a wink and a nod in time to digest and respond. The timing of the documents release is also suspect when one considers that the same agency is responsible for the release of a 1000 page Montanore Mine DEIS with an overlapping 60-day comment period. When thought is given the relevancy of these two documents to each other, one has to wonder if there's a method or a madness behind this intention?* ***(Ltr# 83, Cmt# 1)***

## Recreation

### Public Concern No. 53. The Forest Service should continue motorized access to Lunch Peak, Carr Creek, Roman Nose Recreational Area, Black Mountain, Deer Creek, and Canuk Basin for all types of recreational use, including access for persons with disabilities or the senior citizens.

**Response:** This FSEIS and subsequent ROD would not prescribe site-specific access management decisions within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The decision to change the status of a specific road or trail would be proposed through project-level analyses and decisions. Site-specific decisions on individual roads and trails will be proposed through future project-level planning. These proposals will require public notification and will seek public input for identification of issues and concerns and development of alternative actions. This FSEIS and ROD will not be directly authorizing any specific action; rather, they will identify and select a programmatic action which sets standards for implementation of site-specific proposals.

Alternative D Modified was developed to focus more fully on the issue of increased secure habitat for grizzly bears (FEIS, page 2-18; DSEIS, page 15). To achieve the higher security standards prescribed by this alternative, additional secure habitat would be needed; thereby reducing the opportunity for motorized access to the national forest. Alternative E Updated was developed to address a number of issues, including the ability to respond to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, access to private inholdings, and increased grizzly bear habitat security (FEIS, page 2-15). Therefore, the potential effects of Alternative E Updated upon motorized access are more moderate than those for Alternative D Modified (FSEIS, pages 216-221).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*It has come to my attention that you wish to deny access to public lands in the Roman Nose recreational area, Black Mountain, Deer Creek and the Canuk Basin, possibly more. It is one of my greatest joys in summer and fall to go with my daughter to pick huckleberries and just enjoy the beauty God has given us to enjoy in these beautiful mountain areas. (****Ltr# 19, Cmt# 1)***

*I feel closing trails would be emotionally crippling for many of us who grew up in these mountains. I know if I can not ride my horse, I have no reason to stay here. For many of us the wilderness offers an escape from the stress of our jobs and the influx of people. For the tourists, they have the same thing in mind, and I*

*feel closing off Roman Nose campground would be one of the biggest mistakes you could make. That campground is a great place for those inexperienced in camping to get a little glimpse of what it is like without completely roughing it.* ***(Ltr# 22, Cmt# 3)***

*I would like to protest the closing of the Roman Nose Lake area. One of the attractions in this county is our high lakes. Roman Nose Lake is one of the few in this area that can be reached by raod and for old people, I am 84, it is the only way to visit them.* ***(Ltr# 30, Cmt# 1)***

*Because we have seen grizzlies in Carr Creek will that be next to close?* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 4)***

*The people in this area, for generations, have enjoyed family outings at Roman Nose, Black Mtn and the Canuk Basin. If the grizzly bears need to be recovered please restrict areas that are out of reach of most people, not the areas we all enjoy.* ***(Ltr# 67, Cmt# 2)***

*Not only will myself and my family suffer from the impact of this change but the whole community will be affected. Families with small children will not longer be able to enjoy mountain drives and picnics to places such as the lakes at Roman Nose. The elderly will also be excluded from enjoying the wilderness because most of them will be physically unable to reach their favorite wilderness spots.* ***(Ltr# 71, Cmt# 2)***

**Public Concern No. 54. The Forest Service should provide motorized access to more national forest system (NFS) lands and facilities rather than less (do not lock us out of our NFS lands) because:**

**A) By dispersing the recreational use versus concentrating it in one area, a more quality recreational experience will be realized;**

**B) The population is increasing, thus use is increasing on NFS lands;**

**C) OHV users are increasing and there are less non-motorized users;**

**D) The Forest Service mission is to provide access for multiple use on NFS lands, which includes access for: the senior citizens, persons with disabilities and/or physically impaired, the young, hikers, hunters, fisherman, horseback riders, firewood cutters, berry pickers, snowmobilers etc.;**

**E) You need to consider the social and economic impact of the road closures (we live here for the very reason to get in the woods with our families, it's a way of life);**

**F) The public needs access to NFS lands, just as much as the grizzly bears need NFS lands for security - need to balance public access with providing grizzly bear security.**

**Response:** The purpose and need for action for these Forest Plan amendments originates from the need to include a set of motorized access and security guidelines to meet our responsibilities under the ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears. A range of alternatives have been considered both in the 2002 FEIS and 2010 FSEIS that would work toward achievement of the purpose and need while addressing resource issues, including public access for recreation and social uses (FEIS, page 2-2). Of the alternatives considered in the FSEIS, Alternative D Modified was developed to focus more fully on the issue of increased secure habitat for grizzly bears (FEIS, page 2-18; FSEIS, page 19). As such, it could have greater impacts on other uses of the national forest, including motorized recreation. In contrast, Alternative E Updated balanced public access with providing for increased grizzly bear security (FEIS, page 2-15). Therefore, Alternative E Updated would have potentially less effect on access and motorized recreation use within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.

An analysis of the social and economic impact of the alternatives was included in the DSEIS and FSEIS (pages 227-249). While Alternative D Modified was identified as having the greatest potential to affect the area economy and lifestyle of the residents and visitors to the analysis area, Alternative E Updated had the potential for similar effects, but to a lesser extent (FSEIS, pages 245-248).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Closures of spur roads that do not lead to another intersecting road (i.e., dead ends), and do not access a recreational site or point of particular interest, are the least objectionable closures. However, I oppose any closures whatsoever and recommend opening additional roads already closed for appropriate managed motorized use.* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 4)***

*Accessing our national timberlands is a huge reason many residents live in this region.* ***(Ltr# 12, Cmt# 1)***

*I feel the Forest service is apparently out of sync with the rest of the world and what it is supposed to be doing, which is to manage the forest with good fire control, logging, wood cutting, etc. The forest can't be managed only for the chosen few.* ***(Ltr# 13, Cmt# 3)***

*We have so little forest that is accessable to human activity and now you want to close even more. Not right as far as I am concerned.* ***(Ltr# 21, Cmt# 1)***

*Adequate recreational opportunity for all visitors is the supreme issue that must be addressed by this action. Clearly, the public wants and needs adequate recreational opportunity and this should be the over-arching theme of this evaluation and decision.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 1)***

*The continual loss of motorized recreational opportunities is our primary concern. Because of the significant cumulative effect of motorized closures at this point in time, we feel strongly that there can be no net loss of motorized recreational opportunities with the KLIP Grizzly Bear Access Amendment.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 3)***

*We request that the intention of the final OHV Route Designation rule be followed by the KLIP Grizzly Bear Access Amendment decision and that the rule not be used inappropriately as an action to create wholesale motorized closures and a wholesale conversion of motorized to non-motorized routes.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 26)***

*Congress has designated 5.36% of the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests as wilderness and designated the remaining 94.64% for multiple-uses. The KLIP Grizzly Bear Amendment must not be yet another action that is contrary to the needs of the public and the directions given by congress. Where will all of the motorized closure proposals end? We know the answer and it is permanently eliminated unless the inappropriate direction and actions being pursued are corrected. While the agency's have a responsibility to self-correct, that self-correction is not happening. We request that the correction begin with this action.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 30)***

*Please do not close any more roads, trails, campgrounds, in north Idaho. Idaho already has the largest, roadless, wilderness area in the lower 48 states, we do not need to limit more access.* ***(Ltr# 32, Cmt# 1)***

*Please don't lock us out of places we love and need.* ***(Ltr# 43, Cmt# 4)***

*Some forests are requiring user fees to access the forest, but those forests are being allowed to burn in the summer, and therefore access is further restricted due to the safety concern. It is not very exciting to hike in a burned forest or try to find a safe camp site. Many of the trails become impassable in a few years from downfall and access is further restricted.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 7)***

*One of the comments in the EIS on page 15 indicates there are not enough roads on the forest to close to meet the wildlife standards. Then on page 36 a study was cited that indicated documented mortality rates were 15 times higher for bears using wilderness areas than bears using only multiple-use lands. In reading this information I am not convinced closing more roads will prevent more bears from being killed. There are no easy answers to the issue, but I do not support continuing to close more of the National Forest.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 8)***

*I am very disappointed with many of the Forest Services Policy's in the past decade, by reducing access to many forest roads.* ***(Ltr# 51, Cmt# 1)***

*My comment on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is to totally oppose any and all limits on citizens' access to our land.* ***(Ltr# 54, Cmt# 1)***

*I am sure that you are aware that the majority of Americans do not want to lock up more federal land, and the majority that say they do are misinformed.* ***(Ltr# 55, Cmt# 2)***

*Opening roads to large corporations and not the public is extremely distasteful and will result in further judicial action.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 8)***

*By closing all the federal lands you propose you are severely restricting our access to any of these lands. It is impossible to enjoy this beautiful area without driving to a starting point.* ***(Ltr# 67, Cmt# 1)***

*I am NOT proponent of unlimited motorized access, but just more motorized access than we have now. There are hundreds of gated roads that are a major hindrance to the population of people that actually live near our national forests, people who have very tangible needs, just as the animals do, for the bounty that exists within our forests. Just as many birds make use of standing dead timber for nesting purposes, people also need standing dead timber for firewood. The birds are able to fly easily an extra 200 yards into the timber and locate a snag; the firewood gatherer, on the other hand, is for the most part limited to obtaining firewwod near an open road. Fortunately, the forest naturally provides a continual supply of timber that dies off and becomes excellent firewood, but literally thousands upon thousands of dead trees are made unavailable (because of gated roads) to the local people who need firewood for their winter heat source.* ***(Ltr# 69, Cmt# 3)***

*I am a resident of boundary county and I would kike to express my displeasure over the proposed plan to close more of the forest off to public use in Idaho* ***(Ltr# 73, Cmt# 1)***

*Please don't let these people in Washington DC make policy for our land in the west. There are enough roads closed off in Boundary and Bonner Counties as it is.* ***(Ltr# 73, Cmt# 3)***

*This grizzly plan needs to be reviewed a little more. Feels that the public is getting squeezed off of the public lands. Closing too many roads.* ***(Ltr# 86, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Surely the quality of the forest experience is degraded when the majority of people recreating are concentrated into smaller and smaller accessible areas. As mentioned earlier, hiking a road to get to a trail is a disgrace. The purists who want to essentially eliminate human presence in the forests must be pleased with this neglect of the Forest Service's multiple use requirements in decision making.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 13)***

*Subconcern # A*

*As more roads, trails and recreation areas are closed or blocked, more people are confined to smaller and smaller space which leads to over use, site degradation and more restrictions. It seems like we are in continual pattern of decreasing access.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # B*

*As the population of the country increases, it is more, not less forest that must be available. Surely no one can consider places such as Yellowstone Park or Glacier with their limited city-like camping areas a quality experience. Is this the direction we are headed? What a shame!* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # B*

*If the Forest Service believes it is necessary to lock up more of the forest for use only by the retired, the wealthy, and the predators, then there should be a compensatory increase in acquisition of recreational land by the Forest Service that can be used by the rest of us. There should never be a net loss of land on which the citizens of this nation can enjoy real life outside the city. Instead, we recently saw the Government trying to sell off public lands to pay for its programs. A growing population requires more space to escape the insanity of the cities. A growing population needs more space in which to get away from people and regain a sense of what America was before it is too late. The Forest Service should never gate roads or create roadless areas without FIRST adding the same amount of land that people CAN use.*

***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 15)***

*Subconcern # C*

*The Ravalli County Off-Road Users Association has found that at the end of 2006, there were approximately 2500 stickered OHVs in Ravalli County. For the past five years, the growth rate of stickered OHVs has been about 20% per year. If this growth rate continues, the number of OHVs in the forest will double every four years. On the Bitterroot National Forest there have been no new OHV system routes designated for OHV travel since 1996. History, experience and common sense tell us that when adequate, responsible, sustainable routes with attractive destinations are provided, OHV enthusiasts will ride responsibly. On the Bitterroot National Forest this means more routes, not more restriction? The same analysis must be done for the KLIP Grizzly Bear Access Amendment and it will find the same no growth trend and a lack of an adequate number of existing routes that is further made worse by a lack of new routes to address growth.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 27)***

*Subconcern # C*

*I am in favor of leaving the forest roads as is, no more restrictions. As you know we already have over 50 million Wilderness acres in the lower 48 and another 50 million acres in Alaska. A report I read said that less than 4% of public land users, use Wilderness. As Wilderness use declines, recreational (aka atv, snowmobile) use in steadily increasing. As I understand, the Wilderness Act of 1964, was to include lands that were absent of people and roads. Many of the areas being considered for road closure don't fit this criteria.* ***(Ltr# 51, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # C*

*It would seem that more areas should be opened up for motorized recreation as demand increases.* ***(Ltr# 51, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # D*

*My foremost concern is that the amendment will change the ability to use forest roads for motorized loops through multi-use land.* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I am tired of losing motorized access on national forest multi-use lands I am angry, frustrated and disappointed that special interest environmental groups are forcing me and my family from multi-use lands that I have accessed by vehicle (in an appropriate, legal manner) for many years.* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I depend on roads to get me to trailheads and interesting terrain. We are an aging population and many of us are limited in our physical activities as the years go by, regardless of our motivation and training to continue.* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Since the early 1980's road after road has been gated off preventing reasonable access to an ever expanding area of our public lands. I hope that the forest service doesn't abandon the public under the hysterical screams of the radical envoronmentalists for road closures.* ***(Ltr# 5, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Since I do enjoy opportunities to go camping, hunting, fishing, huckleberry picking, hiking or just going for a scenic drive in the mountains, I would like to see as many roads as possible available for the public's use. This would also make it possible for fire fighting equipment to reach any forest fires. (****Ltr# 12, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I know people, I am one, who cannot physically back pack. We would need a horse. And the lovely drive would be wrong to deny the people, too.* ***(Ltr# 43, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Closing roads to vehicles leaves out those of us who do not own snowmobiles, motorcycles or 4-wheelers, and horses -closing roads to vehicles leaves out those of us unable to ride snow mobiles, motorcycles or 4-wheelers, or horses yet we still can hike-now an extremely long way* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 8)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Hunters rely on this good-safe food supply source. It is the best -yet the government now wants to take it away. There are a number of people that RELY on this nutritious food -not store bought meat.* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 12)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Berry pickers will be affected -again, a source of non contaminated, nutritious food that the government is now taking away or at least making it very difficult for the normal family outing* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 13)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I feel like common sense has been thrown out the window. Who is telling you to do this? We are the people living HERE and utilizing it -doesn't this Federal Land belong to us for multiple use hiking, sightseeing, camping,hunting, fishing, huckleberry picking, seeing wildlife -yes, but being controlled by whom for how many grizzlies vs the impact on us to actually use and respect our land. Yes, there is 'social context to these sentiments' Yes, I feel 'my way of life is being threatened by management decisions that favor wildlife or outside concerns over local ways of life' because IT DOES. These roads TODAY fall into grizzle bear habitat, did they 50 years ago? We were not very excited about the re-introducing of the grizzle bear to the areas up here -little did we think it would culminate in a virtually LOCKED up Federal Land to us outdoor enjoyers/appreciators/users of OUR land.* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Listed in the DSEIS is the change of dates for the opening of gates in the Cabinet-Yaak recovery zone. The later opening of these gates will take land access away from hunters, wood gatherers and other public uses. In this area most roads are impassable by the first of December, at which time the gates would be opened according to the DSEIS.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Fewer Idaho residents and non-residents participate in late summer, fall and late fall hunts for reason of reduced hunting areas and fewer opportunities for road-side camps and trailhead camps (marked or provisional) that are accessible by motor vehicle.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 8)***

*Subconcern # D*

*"Where do the residents of Boundary County get to hunt, fish, recreate and work given the restrictions placed upon them by the federal government's recovery programs in our county for the multiple species protected under the Endangered Act? (Ltr# 60, Cmt# 16)*

*Subconcern # D*

*My family and I use these lands for hunting, fishing, fire wood, camping, huckleberry picking, mining, and many other legal activities. We pay our fees, avoid killing any grizzlies, are good stewards of the land, and have a right to be on and use public lands. We obviously do not displace grizzles from their habitat because we continue to see grizzlies in the same places. Please do not punish us by closing more of our lands to vehicles. This will be counter productive to re-establishing the grizzly bear.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 11)***

*Subconcern # D*

*We live in the Deer Park area north of Spokane, WA, own property in Lincoln County adjacent to the Cabinet Wilderness Area within the Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones. We cherish this land, its creatures, particulary its bears; we rekindle our spirits and connections to our roots in this area, hiking, fishing, berry picking, kayaking in Bull Lake and the surrounding waterways.* ***(Ltr# 68, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I am strongly in favor of more motorized access to the forest and mountains that we who live here love so deeply, and within which we live and move, and experience much of our joy in life, and obtain not only our livelihood financially, but also in which, as the other animals that live in the forest, we obtain the meat, fish, berries, mushrooms, and other edible wild plants and herbs that are in many cases a large percentage of our source of food and nutrition.* ***(Ltr# 69, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I ask that you reconsider closing north idaho's forests to motorized vehicles used by the public. I have grown up hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing in the wilderness you are trying to close off. Many of the areas I enjoy visiting will be impossible or impractical to reach without the use of a motorized vehicle.* ***(Ltr# 71, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # D*

*There are many good reasons to keep our forest roads open. For those who live, hike, hunt and fish locally, they will agree that to close forest roads would be detrimental to our way of life.* ***(Ltr# 74, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I am a mom of 4 and Forest Service land is important to how we raise and educate them. We do a lot of hiking on these roads and as we go, we identify birds, plant life and animals. We get exercise hiking and climbing mountains and back roads. We teach much wood craft and even boy scout skills often things we can't learn in a domestic campsite. If these forest roads were closed and grown over, we would be unable to do these things with the next up-and-coming generation.* ***(Ltr# 74, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # D*

*We use wood for our heat all winter in our home. Collecting it is a family affair which we all enjoy. It is very difficult to impossible to collect firewood and even find it when roads are closed down. A great number of local residents rely on the steady natural supply of dead timber for heating their homes. These harvesters help keep the forest clean and free of blowdowns.* ***(Ltr# 74, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # D*

*A clean forest is good for many reasons. Being relatively free of blow-downs makes for a more pleasant easier hunting experience. Countless hundreds of hunters, tourists, come to our beautiful land to harvest excess animals which helps to manage wildlife. They also bring in much needed out of state revenue for the privilege to harvest wild game here. They also bring in money to our local businesses.* ***(Ltr# 74, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Other wonderful opportunities we have with our open Forest Service roads are that of picking wild berries and mushrooms of all kinds. We and many locals put these up for the winter and are an important staple in our Northwest Montana diets. These wild berries, mushrooms and game are some of the most nutritious foods on this planet. Closed Forest Service roads may limit the health and vitality of our local residents.* ***(Ltr# 74, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I couldn't believe how many hundreds of miles of Forest Service roadways had been shut down in just 13 years. Sadly, only a fraction of that amount were opened up to the public. The local people in these areas depend on these roads to be open for harvesting firewood, our winter meat supply and picking berries of all kinds huckleberries, raspberries, strawberries, elderberries, june berries, etc. We also enjoy the recreational opportunities that are available in our backyards such as hiking, camping, fishing in remote lakes, picking wild mushrooms, snowshoeing, snowmibiling and cross-country skiing, etc. For a lot of local people this is a staple of life that is absolutely necessary and very highly enjoyed. Cutting firewood in the back country not only provides the fuel that heats most homes in this area. It also reduces the fuel supply in our national forsts that can greatly magnify the danger and destruction in a forest fire scenario. The less fuel available, the smaller the fire and the smaller the impact created by a forest fire.* ***(Ltr# 75, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Another concern is the closing of roads and proposed road closures to snowmobilers. The majority of snowmobiling is done in higher elevation country on snow depths of 3 to 10 feet. This does not harm the environment in any way shape or form. Nor does it disturb the grizzly bears that are in hibernation or any other wildlife that are mostly found in lower elevations in their winter feeding range.* ***(Ltr# 75, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Consider some mechanism to allow our citizens to continue the customary and current use of the November gate opening on some roads in the Boulder BMU for firewood gathering and hunting.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 8)***

*Subconcern # D*

*How convenient to continue to restrict human use and resources within our forests. These poor choices presented lack credibility for the highest and best use of our forest management.....multiple use would be far better for the wildlife, the people and our country. The options in the EIS expose a greed and prideful, deceitful desire for more power and control of the populous from afar.* ***(Ltr# 78, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # E*

*I feel closing these trails would impact our education of the next generation. I grew up in these mountains. My dad taught me about wildlife I learned respect for the wild animals and growing plants and I know that the wild animals are dangerous and I accept that responsibility every time I go into the wilderness. I have taught my daughter the same thing and am beginning to teach my grandson. If people are shut out of the woods, then they don't have the chance to learn how to deal with situations like running into a bear or avoiding den entrances.* ***(Ltr# 22, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # E*

*The DSEIS mentions those with concerns for the loss of their lifestyles due to the Grizzly recovery. In my opinion the report patronizes people upset with the death of their lifestyle and does not recognize the true significance of, for all practical purposes, locking up the woods. It is the elite with the funds to own horses who can continue to enjoy the woods behind the gates. While all of us, barring the baby-boomers' increasing mobility issues due to aging, can walk to our favorite spots, the distances may become prohibitive for the "weekend warrior". Hiking a "trail" that is just a gated road is one of the most distasteful forest experiences. Surely the added expense of maintaining trails means that even for those who do venture to their favorite trails, they are likely to find them un-maintained and forgotten. The wealthy and retired can spend the time and money to continue to access their favorite areas. It reminds one of the Kings' forests in good old England from which the commoners were banned. Isn't that the type of thing that sent our founding fathers to America in the first place?* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 11)***

*Subconcern # E*

*There must be an alternative. I grew up on Highland Flats and spent my teenage years (the 1970s) riding my motorcycle all over these mountains. I spent every spare minute in those wonderful mountains. I grew up got married, moved away, had a couple kids. We go back two or three times a year to visit my wife's family, and as sorry as I am to say this, the truth is, I don't plan my visits around family functions, instead I plan day trips to Roman Nose, Dodge Peak, Pack River etc ..... to fish, hunt, pick huckleberries and hike.* ***(Ltr# 36, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # E*

*My husband and I moved to north Idaho over twelve years ago, knowing that we wanted to spend the rest of our lives in the mountains. We became avid snowmobile riders and enjoy taking to the trail on our ATV. Fishing is so relaxing up here and just walking through the woods and enjoying the wildlife is awesome.* ***(Ltr# 38, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # E*

*We spend many happy years in that area around Bonners Ferry, I raised my four boys there. Outdoor recreation that close to home and so loved by so many should not be taken away. People have to have these wilderness areas, and I never seen any harm done. We still go back up there and visit the Roman Nose*

*lakes and area.* ***(Ltr# 43, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # E*

*You cannot take these recreating areas from people, please. Other past times get them in trouble as their desire is to be in the mountains, and we are familiar there too.* ***(Ltr# 43, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # E*

*In the past the forests were able to support the various uses by utilizing the resources that grow on the land. Now it seems the forests cannot be used by anyone. Taxpayers are continually being asked to support more and more of the national forest budget and receive less and less from those dollars.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # E*

*If more areas are closed down to motorized vehicles many people who rely on the national forest will severely be impacted. I was in the area in may and was surprised to see so many people cutting firewood. If roads were closed where would these people cut there wood? Many people get there water from mountain creeks. People use these roads to gain access to hunting areas. Northern Idaho is heavily wooded and has limited roads, the area is not high plains or desert where lots of off road riding is done. We need the roads we have. Many areas are already gated to keep out vehicle traffic.* ***(Ltr# 51, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # E*

*Why are you doing this to us? My family has hiked in these mountains for 50 + years. We have watched road after road be closed (gated/baricaded/not Maintained) these last few years-since logging has decreased & predator protection has increased, turning 3-4 mile hikes into 6-7---limiting access to family hikes-HUGE HUGE. In this nation, we are looking at an increase in video games, degradation of the family, economic problems, etc. Now a limit on FREE hiking -FREE family time****. (Ltr# 52, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # E*

*In your report, I feel like I am made fun of because it is basically stated "blah, blah the people have lived and hiked and hunted -a way of life, blah, blah" --yet it is true. For us, it is a way of life, we have taken our children and now hike with 82 year old grandma.* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # E*

*There is the impact of fewer nice days in the woods experienced by area families and their friends and neighbors.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 11)***

*Subconcern # E*

*Grizzly Bear recovery threatens the very activities, "replacement" industries and economic sectors (local hunting, fishing, trapping, outdoor recreation and the gathering and picking of forest grown food and fuel resources as well as non-resident participation in the aforementioned activities plus tourism) of the greater area's economy that federal government agencies have long touted as being that economic saviors of the very same area****. (Ltr# 60, Cmt# 15)***

*Subconcern # E*

*At no time in our country's history more than the present, do our nation's younger generations need generous supplies of the components of social development and life experiences that the hunt provides. We need more young citizens who have been personally prepared through those experiences and who have an identification with a cultural value system stemming from legal and ethical hunting of herds and populations of game species judged to be adequate and fit to hunt by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Losses to hunting participation brought on by motor vehicle mobility restrictions stemming from Endangered Species Act requirements (in this case Grizzly Bear recovery attempts) has the effect of significantly hindering the personal social development, bonding and cultural grounding with family members and friends, of young people that is so necessary in giving them the confidence and self reliance they need in a modern and often confusing world. A similar case can be made for fishing and, to a lesser degree, trapping.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 17)***

*Subconcern # F*

*While we are fully in favor of protecting grizzlies and their habitat, we strongly object to limiting access and closing many miles of backcountry roads used by our family and friends for hunting, huckleberry picking, snowmobiling and exploring via ATV.* ***(Ltr# 7, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # F*

*I understand that the bears need the roads closed for their health and wellbeing. I think that people need some of the roads left open for their health and wellbeing.* ***(Ltr# 9, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # F*

*People need access to the mountains we can not close the wilderness areas to access. If we do they will just be mountains to look at, not enjoy. There needs to be a balance between habitat for grizzly bears and recreational activity please fight to keep as many roads open as possible.* ***(Ltr# 9, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # F*

*Shutting any MORE roads for the sake of the grizzly is not an acceptable option in my opinion. You are trying to keep us out of the woods so a bear two a year don't get shot. Isn't that what federal and state fish and wildlife agents are for. Aren't they supposed to catch the people that shot a grizzly but accident or on purpose.* ***(Ltr# 11, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # F*

*There is a hunting season right across the border and you want me to believe we need to shut roads down to make it safe for a bears that wander down out of the mountains all the time anyway. They just caught one in Elmira. Are you going to close all the roads down there as well. Quit closing roads. It is needed and it is not for the good of the people of this community. That is who should be the number one priority in your decision.* ***(Ltr# 11, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # F*

*I am against ANY additional road closures in the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. There are already too many areas closed for grizzly bear habitat. I believe a very high percentage of the grizzly bear population can adapt to some human activity.* ***(Ltr# 20, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # F*

*I'm an endurance hiker who spends 200-300 hours hiking into our backcountry in the Panhandle and Kaniksu Forests, and have already had run ins with wolves that have changed my plans on how to recreate up here, I do not want to run into a Grizzly. I already have to leave my dogs at home, and now won't even hike by myself. Friends of mine have had dogs get attacked and killed by these blood thirsty wolves, now more Grizzly. I used to hike above Priest Lake with my dogs into many lakes, now don't hike that direction because of a warning by a biologist who was tracking 7 different Grizzlies that happened to be in a one square mile radius just up the trail from us. I turned around at that point and never been back ...You are ruining what makes north Idaho the best place to live in the world, accessable outdoor resources...* ***(Ltr# 32, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # F*

*Many roads and trails in north Idaho and western Montana have already been closed or blocked for the grizzly habitat. Many trails are now not accessible because the trail heads are miles from the gates and the trails are not maintained.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # F*

*I have lived in the Idaho Panhandle for 66 years and have tried to see it all. Never have I seen a grizzly, sitings are very unlikely especially with the sound of a motor. I have hiked to most of the areas in the Panhandle, snowmobiled and motorcycled-never to see a grizzly, caribou or wolf. Are we not to wear bells while hiking for fear of relocating the bear?* ***(Ltr# 47, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # F*

*It is NOT RIGHT to close these road & trails. WE use them -if the people making these decisions were out hiking here, it couldn't be an issue. In the thousands of hours and hundreds of hikes over the years in the Selkirks and Cabinets, I've see 3 grizzlies -plenty for me! but NO reason to close it. Please -common sense. Let us utilize this beautiful place where we have chosen to live. Don't lock it up for the grizzy or make it difficult for the normal family to use.* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 15)***

*Subconcern # F*

*I would also hate to see the mountain be closed off because i had been able to visit the mountain for both summer time and winter activities for the last twenty five years and have never had an encounter with grizzly bears. I would like the opportunity to share the experiences that the mountain has to offer with my children in the future.* ***(Ltr# 53, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # F*

*He is concerned about predation by grizzly bear on big game species. Predation is his biggest concern. The grizzly bear is at the top of the food chain, if we want more big game, we need to reduce the top of the food chain. If hunters can use some roads so be it.* ***(Ltr# 84, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 55. The Forest Service should develop a complete inventory of all existing and closed routes that will provide for an adequate and fair evaluation of the road and trail system.

**Response:** The Forest Service has compiled an inventory of existing roads and trails within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones for this analysis (see FSEIS, pages 162-168). However, it is important to highlight that this is not a site-specific analysis done according to 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose and need for these amendments 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). This programmatic environmental analysis will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We request that the Forest Service provide an adequate and fair evaluation of all existing routes including those meeting National OHV Rule guidelines and currently closed routes. (****Ltr# 26, Cmt# 9)***

*We request that the Forest Service provide an adequate and fair evaluation of the current imbalance of non-motorized to motorized trails.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 10)***

*We request that the agency not use the existing motorized trail inventory for designating non-motorized trails. Instead, if there is a need for non-motorized trails, then the agency should consider options that do not reduce the existing opportunity for motorized users* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 20)***

### Public Concern No. 56. The Forest Service should manage public lands for those people that visit the national forest and disregard the visitor use data, which is based on a percentage of the total population, thus this adjustment should be made in the evaluation in the Final SEIS.

**Response:** This is not a site-specific analysis done under 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose and need for these amendments 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

ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). This programmatic environmental analysis will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*An important note, agency planning staff has overlooked one important aspect of the visitor use data. The visitor use data cited above is based on a percent of the total population. However, the percent of the total population visiting our public lands is a fraction of the total population. Public lands should be managed for those people that actually visit them. We request that this adjustment be made in this evaluation.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 28)***

### Public Concern No. 57. The Forest Service should consider that the loss of recreational opportunities on NFS lands will likely increase recreational demands on Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) lands and require additional monitoring and enforcement.

**Response:** There could be increased recreational demands upon IDL lands resulting from implementation of either Alternative D Modified or Alternative E Updated. Alternative D Modified has the greatest potential for cumulative effects to recreational opportunities outside the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones because 776 to 995 miles of open road in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and 104 to 176 miles of open road in the Selkirk Recovery Zone could potentially be gated or barriered (FSEIS, pages 217, 220, and 221). As recreational opportunities and participation decreases in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones, users may seek other local areas to recreate. Therefore, more people might use sites and areas already being utilized resulting in overcrowding and a reduction in the quality of the recreational experience. Using a standard of two hours, or approximately 100 miles from home as the local area, the FSEIS estimates that effects could occur on the entire KNF, the IPNFs' north and central zones, most of the LNF and extend to the Bitterroot, Flathead, and Colville National Forests.

For Alternative E Updated, which is the preferred alternative, an estimated 34 to 102 miles of road would be changed from open to gated or barriered. The majority of the change would occur within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone, particularly BMUs 7 (Silver Butte) and 21 (Mt. Headley; FSEIS, page 220). Subsequently, at the project level, where specific roads or motorized trails would be proposed for a change in access status, the potential for loss of recreational opportunities on NFS lands would likely be an issue addressed in the environmental analysis process if impacts to the recreation resource were identified.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*By closing additional roads on USFS lands, there will be fewer recreational opportunities for the public; it is also likely that recreational access on IDL lands will increase. This increase in recreational access will likely require additional monitoring and enforcement on the part of IDL from what is currently in place.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 58. The Forest Service should consider allowing the current use of the November gate opening on some roads in the Boulder Bear Management Unit for hunting and firewood gathering.

**Response:** Impacts to female grizzly bears have been a critical measurement, because of their reproductive contribution to a species with a low reproductive rate. The April 1 through November 15 "bear year" definition did not line up well with the updated information on den entry for female grizzly bears within the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. While a date at the end of the

first week of December would be in line with 95 percent of the female den entry dates, using the date of November 30 would provide protection during the hunting season when mortality risk would be higher. That date matches well with hunting season and the current start date (December 1) for use of snow machines on roads otherwise closed to motorized vehicles. This change would provide additional protection from disturbance for an estimate 44 percent more female den entrance dates (a total of 77 percent of the known den entrance dates would be covered (Johnson et al. 2008).

The den entrance dates cover a wide range of weather conditions, including extremes from virtually no snow (den entrance dates extending into December due to availability of food sources) to several feet by mid-November (early entrance dates as no food sources available). An "average" bear year that contributes to reducing mortality risk is desired.

The USFWS began considering November 30 as the end of the bear year in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem for administrative use purposes in 1996 (McMaster 1996). The Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide ecosystems use November 30 as the ending date for their bear year. Using this ending date would make it consistent across three ecosystems.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Consider some mechanism to allow our citizens to continue the customary and current use of the November gate opening on some roads in the Boulder BMU for firewood gathering and hunting.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 8)***

### Public Concern No. 59. The Forest Service should designate their trails closed for motorized use unless specifically designated as open.

**Response:** This FSEIS and accompanying ROD do not prescribe site-specific access management decisions within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The analysis examines the effects of setting various levels of human access within the recovery zones. The decision to change the status of a specific road or trail would be proposed at a later date through project-level analyses and decisions (FSEIS, page 1).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The trails that are designated for motorized usage, need to be few and well policed. The system needs to establish that only trails specifically marked for ORV use are allowed, rather than a system that allows motors on any trail not so marked.* ***(Ltr# 80, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 61. The Forest Service should protect the nonmotorized recreational opportunities in the Blacktail Roadless Area.

**Response:** The overall purpose of this proposal is to amend the three Forest Plans to include a set of motorized access and security guidelines to meet our responsibilities under the ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The Blacktail Roadless Area, located on the IPNFs, is not located within either the Selkirk Recovery Zone or Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone; therefore, it would not be affected by this proposal. The Blacktail Roadless Area would continue to be managed as provided for in the Idaho Roadless Rule and the IPNFs LRMP.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*In my opinion the Blacktail Roadless Area is an opportunity for world class non-motorized recreation. It is the only roadless area adjacent to the Pend Orielle Lake. The community of Sandpoint is a growing tourist destination with a population that values roadless experience over the destructive motorized thrill seeking. The opportunity of non-motorized recreation within walking or bicycling distance of Sandpoint and Couer*

*d'Alene is too valuable to valuable to waste.* ***(Ltr# 80, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 75. The Forest Service should provide less access to national forest system (NFS) lands for berry pickers, thus reducing the number of people picking berries on NFS lands.

**Response:** In order to achieve the proposed security standards of Alternative D Modified, about 598 to 768 miles of open road would need to be barriered (FSEIS, page 174). Barriered roads by definition do not provide for wheeled motorized use (FSEIS, page 279).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*If you want to reduce traffic you could close the area to berry pickers. I think this would cut traffic by seventy percent or more.* ***(Ltr# 30, Cmt# 2)***

## Roads

### Public Concern No. 62. The Forest Service should use the Forest Service Roads Analysis Manual (FS-643) to evaluate the social, economic, cultural, and traditional values that motorized roads and trails provide for the public.

**Response:** Travel analysis (formerly known as Roads Analysis) is typically conducted to inform decisions related to identification of the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of NFS lands per 36 CFR 212.5(b)(1) or designation of roads, trails and areas for motor vehicle use per 36 CFR 212.51 [FSH 7709.55(20)]. This programmatic environmental analysis and decision does not identify specific routes for motorized use; rather it identifies a set of wheeled motorized vehicle access and security guidelines that meet the agency's responsibilities under the ESA. Future analyses conducted at the site-specific or project level will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, a roads analysis would typically be used to inform any decision(s) regarding the social, economic, cultural, and traditional values that motorized roads and trails provide for the public.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We request that FS-643 be used in this evaluation to determine the specific values of each motorized road and trail. We request full use of the FS-643 Roads Analysis Manual in order to adequately account for the social, economic, cultural, and traditional values that motorized roads and trails provide to the public.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 65)***

### Public Concern No. 63. The Forest Service should disclose the quantitative economic benefits from not having to maintain, repair, and mitigate the ecological damage of so many roads that might be decommissioned.

**Response:** Please see the Social and Economic section of the FSEIS. The Cost Efficiency discussion beginning on page 248 provides information on the cost of implementing Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated, including road maintenance savings costs. The potential road maintenance savings have been included in the overall cost of each alternative.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS fails to provide any disclosure of the quantitative economic benefits of not having to maintain, repair, and mitigate the ecological damage of so many roads that might be decommissioned.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 32)***

**Public Concern No. 64. The Forest Service should use temporary barriers for road closures, should not decommission roads or place them in intermittent status, and administrative access should be allowed on barriered roads because:**

**A) Access is needed for fire suppression efforts, future forest management projects, and recreational uses;**

**B) It is costly to build roads just to turn around and close them and reopen them;**

**C) When roads are decommissioned, more sediment is released into streams, therefore the solution is to leave the road and just remove the culverts;**

**D) When grizzly bears are recovered and no longer a listed species, if a temporary barrier is used it would be easier to reopen these roads for public access.**

**Response:** This programmatic analysis does not propose to put any specific road or trail into intermittent stored service. The analysis and accompanying decision only identify a set of wheeled motorized vehicle access and security guidelines for incorporation into the respective forest plans. Limited administrative access will still be available under either alternative, on any road where the traffic control device is a gate. On roads where the traffic control device is an earth berm, there will still be the option for use in the case of an emergency. The biological opinion's terms and conditions recognize that emergency situations will periodically occur. In the event of a wildfire, temporarily reopening gated or barriered roads within a BMU may be necessary for effective fire suppression. Emergency situations such as this will be consulted on with the USFWS.

The responsible officials have selected Alternative E Updated for implementation. Potential impacts to motorized access that may be needed for fire suppression, future forest management, or recreation under Alternative E Updated are more moderate in their magnitude than those for Alternative D Modified (FSEIS, see Table 8, page 34). This alternative would provide sufficient amounts of habitat for grizzly bear security while providing greater access for fire suppression (FSEIS, page 255), timber management (FSEIS, pages 207-209), and recreation (FSEIS, pages 220-221) when compared to Alternative D Modified.

Core areas do not include any gated or restricted roads but may contain roads that are impassible due to vegetation or barriers. The terms and conditions in the biological opinion require that roads closed to create core area subsequent to this decision be put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for at least 10 years (FSEIS, page 28). This could involve removal of culverts or recontouring of unstable fill material depending upon the site-specific conditions. The terms and conditions further prescribe that until such closed roads are placed in the above-described condition, they will not be considered as contributing to core area. Future project level analyses and decisions implementing these amendments would address closure methods, whether to decommission, and/or the need to remove culverts from individual road segments. Such analyses would also identify and provide a more detailed assessment of the effects and opportunities with respect to the site-specific specific resources.

The treatments of barriered roads do pose a short-term negative impact but there are also long-term beneficial effects to the watershed and associated fisheries habitat (FSEIS, page 194). Short-term effects are associated with sediment generated in close proximity to active channel stream crossings. The greatest short-term effects are associated with removing culverts in live stream crossings. After treatments, negative effects from sediment would be reduced as disturbed areas are revegetated. When revegetation occurs prior to fall rains, associated sediment generation is usually negligible (FSEIS page 194). Benefits include restoration of the stream channel and fish

habitat from removing culverts and reconstructing the stream channels where the culverts were located (FSEIS, page 194).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Road Closures: Any roads that must be closed seasonally or permanently to motorized used should remain in existence and with the road prisms intact. Please do not decommission roads or place them in intermittent status. Removal of the culverts on these roads or the complete decommissioning will make them impassible for fire engines and crews during suppression efforts when those areas are in need of it and inhibit future management of those areas. Please use temporary obstructions such as gates or earthberms for these roads. (**Ltr# 48, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # A*

*I am concerned about road access for forest management of our local national forests. With increasing restrictions on forest management activities for wildlife habitat protection, and wilderness additions, thousands of acres of forests are dead and dying from disease and insect infestations. Silvicultural strategies to thin, sanitize, salvage, and selectively harvest timber stands improve the health of the forest, creating a variety of stand and habitat conditions. A forest of dead and dying trees will eventually burn in some catastrophic fire. Historically, that is what happened before man's influence on the forest landscape. But what a waste of a precious natural resource! **(Ltr# 41, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Please do not permanently close or decommission any road that is deemed necessary for restricted access; retain the road prisms, cut & fill slopes, and culverts in place. Obliterating access roads only demonstrates a short term management planning strategy by the USFS in regards to fire protection, forest management, and diverse recreational uses. **(Ltr# 59, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Although the decision is a programmatic decision, the FEIS claims to know in advance of site-specific analysis the physical attributes of the roads to be obliterated currently are blocked by brush, windfalls, etc. (FEIS, p. 117), and "Therefore, this change in access would not affect motorized dispersed summer activities." The FEIS p.3-152-153 predict MFMU Appeal, p. 4 possible severe adverse effects regarding increased probability of catastrophic fire. increased cost of fire suppression, reduced opportunity to conduct high hazard fuel management, yet the ROD. p. 51 concludes with irrational arbitrary and capricious conclusions, " .. . any potential increases in fire fighting costs will be minimal and can be mitigated by the specific decisions on which roads to restrict and which roads to decommission with the specific project analyses. " and ..... we expect that existing amounts of access will continue to be provided in these areas. " **(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 21)***

*Subconcern # A*

*He is in favor of roads for firefighters and access for management **(Ltr# 84, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Once closed, not maintained and little possibility of re-opening it (it will cost too much to open it). Huge cost to close these roads $5,000 -$7,000 per mile! **(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 6**)*

*Subconcern # B C*

*What about the costs of decommissioning roads? It costs more than it did to build them in the first place. Why not leave them, pull the culverts if needed, and have them accessible for fire fighting or future timber sales? **(Ltr# 55, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # C*

*How about we leave the roads in so everyone can enjoy them do the aged and handicapped have no rights in our public lands? How about the sediment involved in this? Since I have decommissioned roads, I believe there is more sediment leached into our streams by doing this than when roads are built because there are no erosion control measures. There is certainly more sediment than leaving the roads and maybe*

*just pulling the culverts.* ***(Ltr# 55, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # D*

*We would request that any road that is allowed to have its status changed not be obliterated, so when the Grizzly Bear is recovered there will be opportunity for the public to access these roads again.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 65. The Forest Service should consider the objectives and agreements in the August 2005 Road Closure Supplement, Priest Lake and Kootenai Valley Areas document between the Idaho Department of Lands Priest Lake and Kootenai Valley Supervisory Areas, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for the purpose of protecting, conserving, and managing fish and wildlife resources of the State of Idaho within the ownership of state endowment lands.

**Response:** The Road Closure Supplement for the Priest Lake and Kootenai Valley Areas has been considered as appropriate within the cumulative effects analysis of the FSEIS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The Road Closure Supplement, Priest Lake and Kootenai Valley Areas, was created in August 2005, between the Idaho Department of Lands Priest Lake and Kootenai Valley Supervisory Areas (Areas) and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Panhandle Region (Region) for the purpose of protecting, conserving and managing fish and wildlife resources of the State of Idaho within the ownership of state endowment lands. According to Idaho Code Section 361 04 (b)(10), the Idaho Department of Fish and Game is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements to enforce road closures for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat on state lands that lie within or adjacent to the proclaimed boundaries of the national forest. Objectives of this agreement are:*

*- Reduce road erosion caused by hunters, fishermen and other recreationists.*

*- Enhance security of wildlife.*

*- Assist the Region and the Area in achieving management goals and objectives.*

*- Reduce human caused grizzly bear mortality.*

*In order to accomplish the above objectives, all parties agree to the following efforts:*

*- A road closure map that includes gate locations and the types of associated road closures will be updated annually by concurrence of the Region and the Areas.*

*- Administrative access will be limited based upon this document.*

*- Signing of gates will be accomplished and maintained according to specifications in section 36-104 (b)(10) Idaho Code by the Areas.*

*-All public notification procedures will be developed and handled cooperatively by the Areas and the Region.*

*- Meetings will be held as needed between the Areas and the Region to discuss problems and review/ modify this agreement.*

*This agreement can be expected to benefit grizzly bears in a number of ways, including decreasing bear human interactions and direct human caused grizzly bear mortality.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 8)***

### Public Concern No. 66. The Forest Service should clarify if they really mean they are committed to not using barriered roads for firelines or other firefighting access in the event of a wildfire, as discussed on page 29 of the DSEIS.

**Response:** This inconsistency has been corrected in the FSEIS. The decision to use a road that is gated or bermed, when emergency response conditions arise is an option that is available. This will depend upon the nature of the emergency and the values at risk. The biological opinion's terms and conditions recognize that emergency situations will periodically occur. In the event of a wildfire, temporarily reopening gated or barriered roads within a BMU may be necessary for effective fire suppression. Emergency situations such as this will be consulted on with the USFWS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*"...changing a road from an open status to a gated status ...versus changing a road from an open or gated status to a barriered status (i.e., where no wheeled motorized vehicle access, even for administrative resource management such as fire suppression, could occur)."... Is the Forest Service really committing to no use of these roads for firelines or other firefighting access, in the event of wildfire?* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 18)***

*We would request that any road that is allowed to have its status changed not be obliterated, so when the Grizzly Bear is recovered there will be opportunity for the public to access these roads again.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 67. The Forest Service should use multiple closure devices for barriered routes to be most effective, otherwise most of the miles claimed to be closed will be phantom closures.

**Response:** The type of traffic control device used on roads will vary. The effectiveness of the different traffic control devices is dependent upon multiple factors. One hundred percent effectiveness cannot be guaranteed. The Forest Service uses the prudent operator principle in the operation and management of NFS roads. When it comes to traffic control devices and their effectiveness the prudent operator will not violate any legal prohibitions nor act in an illegal manner. When violations or vandalism do occur, appropriate law enforcement or repair actions are initiated.

The Forest Service currently monitors and enforces closures and restrictions within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. The Forest Service monitors closures throughout the course of the active bear season, often multiple times, to determine extent of any unauthorized use on restricted and bermed roads (USDA Forest Service 2008, 2009, 2010). The Forest Service submits annual reports to the USFWS documenting the progress made toward achieving and maintaining the standards for core area, OMRD, and TMRD within the recovery zones. Based upon available monitoring data, closures have been found to be effective (USDA Forest Service 2010, pages 65 to 67).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*we note that up to 300 miles of claimed security-enhancing closures under Alternative E Updated depend on "Barriered" routes, which the SDEIS defines (P: 241) as, " ...restricted with a physical barrier such as a rock barrier or dirt berm/ditch in order to prohibit all motorized use ..." Virtually everyone who has walked such "closed" routes will tell you that very few are actually closed if they rely on one closure device. Therefore, unless the Service modifies this definition to require barriered routes to employ multiple closure devices (boulders, guardrails, berms/ditches, and/or recontouring) we would suggest that most of these claimed miles will be phantom closures.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 18)***

### Public Concern No. 68. The Forest Service should improve the accuracy of the roads inventory and their status within the recovery zones.

**Response:** The Forest Service road management program continues to improve the completeness and accuracy of the road inventory. The GIS and tabular data are corrected and updated on a

regular basis as verification efforts are completed by field going personnel.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Consider improving the accuracy of the inventory of roads, and their status within the recovery zones.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 3)***

*Recommend stronger accountability in the management, updates and accuracy of data, maps and Geographical Information System (GIS) of the USFS road systems.* ***(Ltr# 79, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 69. The Forest Service should disclose the need for further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and any additional changes to access beyond that represented in the DSEIS.

**Response:** Given the programmatic nature of this document, it is not possible to disclose site-specific changes in motorized access in the FSEIS. However, maximum changes in miles of road open for public access is displayed for each of the Action Alternatives A through C (FEIS, pages 3-59, 3-60, 3-62, 3-63,3-65, and 3-66) and Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated (FSEIS, pages 173-181). Subsequent site-specific activities planned within the framework of the selected action will be subject to a separate NEPA review and documentation and further consultation with the USFWS (FEIS, page 1-2; FSEIS, page 1).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Our major concern is that those that have presented us with the data and the effects of the additional road closures still will need to consult with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and that there will be changes to access beyond what was represented to us.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 5)***

### Public Concern No. 70. The Forest Service should consult with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concerning Homeland Security access in this DSEIS because:

**A) There are security risks involved with border security and the requirements for effective monitoring and response to threats identified in the border regions and it's critical that access be maintained and in a few locations improved for the security of the nation;**

**B) The Forest Service needs to recognize national security activities within the international border regions, within and around wilderness boundaries where road closures are contemplated, and request that the national security activities be included in Alternative E management flexibility;**

**C) The Forest Service needs to recognize the statutorily mandated functions DHS deploys in the wilderness and incorporate it into new wilderness legislation;**

**D) Without consultation with DHS, there is potential for unacceptable risk to the efficacy of DHS operations;**

**E) They should consult, however it should be separate from the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan.**

**Response:** Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is included in the review of management flexibility for Alternative E Updated, i.e., "management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access (including DHS), economics, access to private inholdings" (FSEIS, page 24). More specifically, requests for access by the DHS will be taken into

consideration for site-specific roads in individual BMUs for future evaluation and consultation with the USFWS. Administrative use of restricted roads currently accommodates DHS motorized access and will be included in the FSEIS document and project record documentation. All other requests for changes in access-related recovery standards will be accomplished through direct discussions with the USFWS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We would like to see the necessary and vital access requested from Homeland Security be exempted from any negative impact to the recovery standards, as the security of the United States of America is vital. We suggest that this be accomplished with direct consultation between the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Homeland Security in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan rather than in the Forest Plan.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 2)***

*Consider other mechanisms to address Homeland Security Issues associated with access on Forest Lands (i.e. consultation between Homeland Security and U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan rather that through the Forest Plan).* ***(Ltr# 79, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Current consideration of road closures or new wilderness along the Northern Border of the United States must include modifications to the land and resource management paradigms which existed prior to September 11, 2001. Appropriate consideration of security risks faced by the United States clearly must include border security and the requirements for effective monitoring and response to threats identified in border regions. In mountainous, forested, remote regions of the Northern Border, routes of egress (roads) are often limited in number. This is one (and only one) point at which a violator can be funneled into the intelligence pipeline. To accomplish appropriate border security specific access is required for law enforcement operations. Much is accomplished through alliances between appropriate agencies, governments, and communities, however it remains absolutely necessary that access be maintained, and in a few locations improved, so that critical security functions take place when and where they must to provide for the security of the nation.* ***(Ltr# 81, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (supplemental to the 2002 Final Environmental Impact Statement for Forest Plan Amendments for Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones) should include recognition of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) activities within the international border regions and the potential impacts of the proposed alternatives in relation to those DHS activities. The ability of DHS personnel to identify and react to cross border crime is vital to national security, thus DHS should be included in any discussions of Federal roads closures and road/land status designation. Additional consideration may prove necessary to support DHS activities within and around proposed wilderness boundaries outside of immediate border areas, especially where road closures are contemplated. As roads and lands continue to be reclassified in the vital effort to protect natural resources and wild areas so valued by the American people and depended upon for our future generations, DHS endeavors to work as a partner with land and resource management agencies. The development of strategies to augment land and resource managers, thus providing additional protection to the resources while minimizing any detrimental impacts is a tangible way in which mission overlap can be exploited to benefit the nation. Alternative E includes "management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, and access to private inholdings". DHS requests that national security activities be included in this statement". The document needs to assure briefing of Core Areas and Bear Management Units to DHS to ensure that future critical road access is maintained for purposes of national security.* ***(Ltr# 81, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # C*

*Road closures and wilderness law developed without appropriate consideration for national security may be detrimental to DHS operations as well as technology and infrastructure deployments. Roads allow necessary, though in many areas minimal levels of access, and wilderness imposes restrictions to all installations and to mechanized travel. In most wilderness areas, aircraft flight is limited to 2000' above ground or higher and landing is prohibited within wilderness. The performance of these practices by DHS is occasionally necessary, so must be taken into account as a part of the statutory requirements under*

*which DHS functions. There will be occasions where DHS activities can fit within the "emergency" and administrative exceptions to the Wilderness Act. However, those two exceptions may not cover all the necessary law enforcement activities. As law enforcement proactively addresses security issues, it mitigates risk to the nation. Thus, to the extent new wilderness areas are designated, it is extremely important that DHS' statutorily mandated functions be appropriately incorporated into new wilderness legislation. For example, when Congress created the Otay Mountain Wilderness Area and designated new wilderness in the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge-two areas where there is a need for a border security law enforcement presence-it included language in both public laws allowing for continued operational activities. See the Otay Mountain Wilderness Act of 1999 (Pub. L. 106145); The Arizona Desert Wilderness Act (Pub. L. 101-628, Secs. 301 (a)-(f) (1990), 16 U.S.C. 1132 note). Exceptions of this type would allow new wilderness law to harmoniously protect wilderness areas and the people of the United States.* ***(Ltr# 81, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # D*

*Without adequate review and engagement with DHS concerning the proposed reclassification of roads as well as development of wilderness legislation, there exists potential for unacceptable risk to the efficacy of DHS operations.* ***(Ltr# 81, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # E*

*Homeland Security access issues should be separate from the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan.* ***(Ltr# 76, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 71. The Forest Service should include the "Tribe" under the Administrative Use definition in the DSEIS, thus the definition should read "...can be accessed by agency, Tribe, or other authorized personnel."

**Response:** The administrative use definition is directly taken from the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) Taskforce Report language. Specifically, that motorized administrative use by personnel of resource management agencies includes "contractors and permittees in additional to agency employees". This 1998 document is included in the literature cited for the FEIS (page B-3) and FSEIS (page 294). Resource management agencies are considered to be those agencies which have direct authority to oversee or implement resource management actions on NFS lands located behind restricted points of access. However, guidance on tribal consultation directs the Forest Service to involve tribes in the decision-making process in the areas where our decisions affect tribes and their treaty rights and interests. The Forests are required by law to consult with all federally recognized tribes that had or continue to have traditional uses within the Forests' boundaries. 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 (FSEIS, page 44).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Currently the term Administrative Use is defined as "Usually refers to roads that are restricted to public use by a gate or other restrictive device, but that can be accessed by agency or other authorized personnel specifically for performance of administrative duties. These roads are outside of grizzly bear Core Areas, and receive low levels of use. Administrative use also includes contractors and permittees." The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho recommends the following changes to Administrative Use: "Usually refers to roads that are restricted to public use by a gate or other restrictive device, but that can be accessed by agency, Tribe, or other authorized personnel specifically for performance of administrative duties. These roads are outside of grizzly bear Core Areas, and receive low levels of use. Administrative use also includes contractors and permittees."* ***(Ltr# 42, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 72. The proposed standard for administrative use has no basis in grizzly bear science, but rather represents manager preference. The Forest Service should use the best available science to determine the amount of administrative use allowed on gated/barriered roads (see page 7 of the DSEIS).

**Response:** There are no trip limits on roads used in OMRD calculations ("open" roads). For those roads counted toward TMRD, but not OMRD ("restricted" or "gated" roads), the scientific basis for administrative use limits is summarized in the project record (Wakkinen and Kasworm Administrative Use Levels). This approach follows the Mace et al. (1996) definition of "Class 1 roads" averaging less than 1 pass per day with a median near zero. The researchers calculated that using a median value of zero and a mean of 0.5 vehicle passes per day, a total of 57 round trips per year would be available, divided proportionately among the grizzly bear spring, summer and fall, using the April 1-November 15 "bear year". If the bear year is extended to November 30, as is proposed for the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, the total number of round trips is raised to 60 per year.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*P: 7 of the DSEIS reports that "Administrative use would be restricted to an average of no more than one trip per day on gated roads ..." Since the previous -and already weak -standard was <1 trip per day, this new definition represents a further weakening of security standards. Thus, the current Administrative Use standards for restricted roads is 57 round trips, divided by season for the SYRZ, and 60 round trips per season for the CYRZ, where Kasworm et al (2007) reports a 94% probability of a downward population trend. Clearly, this has no basis in grizzly bear science, but rather represents manager preferences. In the 1998 Interim Access Management Rule, the Forest Service attempted to use 115 trips as the standard -also with no scientific grounding -claiming it was based on the South Fork Flathead Grizzly Bear Study. However, South Fork researcher Rick Mace has said that vehicle use on his restricted roads was "virtually zero". Now the Service has cut the original 115 trip number in half. But half of an unscientific number is still a number pulled out of thin air, rather than representing "best available science" as required by law.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 21)***

### Public Concern No. 73. The Forest Service should consider any routes proposed for closure and in existence before 1976 as having RS-2477 rights-of-way to provide citizens access to public lands.

**Response:** This programmatic analysis and decision only include a set of wheeled motorized vehicle access and security guidelines that provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. The amendments do not identify any specific roads for changes in access. Future project level analyses and decisions implementing these amendments would address RS-2477 rights as applicable, because it is those site-specific analyses that would identify specific roads for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, a separate public involvement process, under the auspices of NEPA would be conducted. Currently, Congress has put a moratorium on any efforts for assertion of rights under RS-2477.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We request that any routes proposed for closure and in existence before 1976 be considered as having RS 2477 rights-of-way in order to provide citizens with access to public lands.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 49)***

### Public Concern No. 74. The Forest Service should consider the needs of persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and physically impaired in closing access to the NFS lands and clarify the balance between resource protection and accessibility.

**Response:** Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated represent programmatic actions that would guide future decisions about specific activities and projects, and therefore, would have no direct effects on recreation. The effects to recreation identified in the analysis are based on assumptions about implementing future project and levels of future uses that might occur under various projects. While these future actions and their effect are uncertain, the analysis is useful for a relative comparison of the alternatives.

The needs of persons with disabilities and senior citizens have been considered in the design of the alternatives. The alternatives considered would provide for a range of recreational opportunities within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. Alternative D Modified was developed to focus more fully on the issue of increased secure habitat for grizzly bears (FEIS, page 2-18; FSEIS, page 19). An alternative that is designed to only address one issue, in this case maximum grizzly bear security, without any other considerations, can have substantial impacts on other uses of the national forest. Alternative E is a more balanced alternative because it was developed to address a number of issues, including management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, access to private inholdings, and increased grizzly bear habitat security (FEIS, page 2-15). Therefore, the potential effects of Alternative E Updated upon motorized access and recreation are going to be more moderate than those for Alternative D Modified (FSEIS, pages 216-221).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Many handicapped, elderly, or physically impaired citizens can only access and recreate on public lands by using motorized roads and trails. The needs of these citizens should be adequately considered.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 62)***

*The Study prepared to address P.L. 105-359 (Improving Access to Outdoor Recreational Activities on Federal Land, prepared by Wilderness Inquiry, June 27, 2000) found and recommended the following areas of action: -Agencies must re-dedicate their efforts to achieve the goal of equal opportunities for access to outdoor recreation by persons with disabilities; Agencies should conduct baseline assessments of existing facility and programmatic accessibility, and develop and implement transition plans for facilities and programs that are not now accessible to bring them into compliance; Increase accessibility related awareness and educational opportunities for agency personnel, service providers, and partners; Increase funding to federal land management agencies for accessibility; Increase accountability and oversight in implementing accessibility initiatives; Improve communications about opportunities for outdoor recreation to persons with disabilities; Clarify the balance between resource protection and accessibility.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 63)***

*We request that the proposed action adequately address and comply with the recommendations of the Study conducted to address P.L. 105-359 including items 1 and 7.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 64)***

## Public Concern No. 76. The Forest Service should maintain access to private inholdings for logging and mining activities.

**Response:** Reasonable rights of access to private in holdings are addressed under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). According to ANILCA, 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. Alternative E Updated was developed in response to issues related to public and administrative access, including access to private inholdings. In determining the effects of the habitat security standards, scenarios were modeled that did not change existing access to private lands.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*I've read where the restricted areas can be opened up for logging which is only right. Mining claims are*

*located in some areas also so will they be given the same consideration to access for assessment work (as required by law) as well as exploration and eventually mining.* ***(Ltr# 35, Cmt# 2)***

## Social Economic

### Public Concern No. 77. The Forest Service should evaluate social and economic issues per the Social Impact Analysis Principles and Procedures Training Course 1900-03 and Environmental Justice issued per Departmental regulation 5600-2 to assess the impacts from motorized recreational closures.

**Response:** Social and economic impacts have been evaluated for all of the alternatives (FSEIS, pages 245-249). These effects will be taken into consideration by the decisionmakers when selecting the preferred alternative and making the decision. The ROD will document this consideration. Environmental Justice is part of the regulatory framework for this project and was considered in the development and analysis of alternatives. Results are documented on page 272 of the FSEIS. The impacts of the alternatives do not have a disproportionate affect on any minority or low-income populations.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Social issues must be adequately evaluated per the Social Impact Analysis (SIA): Principles and Procedures Training Course (1900-03) and Environmental Justice issued per Departmental Regulation 5600-2. The evaluation and resulting decision must adequately consider and address all of the social and economic impacts associated with the significant motorized access and motorized recreational closures.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 43)***

### Public Concern No. 78. The Forest Service should fully analyze the negative economic impacts to jobs and income caused by the proposed motorized access closures especially in Alternative D Modified, and these closures need to be supported by acceptable levels of scientific data.

**Response:** The impacts to jobs and income was analyzed and discussed by resource. The relative difference in alternatives and their impact on jobs and income is described in the FSEIS, (pages 245-248). The best available scientific information regarding wheeled motorized vehicle access management in grizzly bear habitat is considered to include sources from two areas. The first 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. It also resulted in development of the moving windows computer technique for assessing OMRD and TMRD. The second source is research from local bear populations that applies the South Fork technology to the recovery zones (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997). This second source is considered the best science to be applied directly to the recovery zones (Allen et al 2011; FSEIS Appendix C).

The IGBC recommended that in individual BMUs with greater than 75 percent federal ownership, the Forests are to: 1) attain 55 percent core habitat; 2) have less than 33 percent of each BMU with open motorized route densities exceeding 1 mi/mi$^2$; and 3) have less than 26 percent of each BMU with total motorized route densities exceeding 2 mi/mi$^2$. These parameters were based on the best available science of the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm study.

Alternative D Modified primarily focuses on the biological needs of the grizzly bear; without consideration of social, valuational and institutional needs. Alternative D Modified is designed to provide OMRD, TMRD, and core area standards by individual bear management unit (BMU) that

achieve the highest security parameters for bears (where possible), as identified in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997). The basis for these parameters comes from the 1989-1991 home range data of a single 20-year-old female grizzly bear.

Alternative E Updated integrates the biological, social, valuational, and institutional forces by considering the IGBC recommendations, inherent capabilities of each BMU including important habitat features, private land and roads, and important recreational areas. The recommendations were based on an average of conditions used by grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones. This implies some bears required less secure habitat and some bears required more security. The BMU-specific standards in this alternative apply similar conditions across the landscape as required by individual bears within the population. In some BMUs that exceed the recommendations, standards for the proposed action have been set slightly lower than the existing condition. This will provide for the needs of grizzly bears while allowing some flexibility for forest management activities.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*In addition, many of our friends and acquaintances have jobs in the recreation and timber industries. The plan known as Alternate D Modified would have a very negative impact on their employment, as well as on the entire economy in the Priest Lake area where we live.* ***(Ltr# 7, Cmt# 2)***

*I think the closure of trails would be financially devastating for some families in North Idaho. Many people rely on hunting, fishing, and berry picking to supplement their food stores. Many families cannot afford meat, so they hunt. Berry picking is a source of income for some during the summer. Also, the beauty of the area pulls many people in for camping, hiking and snowmobiling. The income generated by these recreational enthusiasts helps support our community.* ***(Ltr# 22, Cmt# 1)***

*The economic impact of the Grizzly Bear Recovery on users of the forest is totally ignored. Obviously with hunters forced to find new areas to hunt, berry pickers forced to find new patches, and the additional trips to the woods that will be needed to relocate favorite areas, there is a large expense.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 8)***

*Area Economy -Timber Jobs & Income: Both alternatives show that timber jobs and income will decrease due to either of these decisions. The timber industry is already struggling with current market conditions and timber availability. The amount of timber actually sold from the Panhandle, Kootenai and Lolo National Forests. is depressing in relation to the suitable timber base, growth and mortality of trees on those forests. Both of these alternatives will only further complicate the problem and restrict even more timber products from being sold from these forests. Alternative E will have less of an impact to timber jobs and those that make depend on incomes from those jobs. Alternative D could have catastrophic effects to the industry.* ***(Ltr# 48, Cmt# 2)***

*Motor fuel sales related to hunting decline in the area of the Upper Idaho Panhandle (UIP) from in and around the 1-90 corridor, North to the Canada Border: Camp grocery and stock feed sales to hunters decline in the UIP; Hunting related, camping, saddle and tack sales decline in the UIP; Hunting rifle, muzzle-loader and hunting bow sales to hunters decline as do sales of ammunition, ammunition components, arrows and optics as well as other related supplies and equipment in the UIp);Specialty and seasonal hunting clothing and footwear sales to hunters decline in the UIP; Taxidermy services and game meat processing services to hunters decline in the UIP; Lodging and restaurant/bar patronage by hunters decline in the UIP; hunting outfitter services decline in the UIP; Ferrier services to hunters decline in the UIP; Charter and general aviation services used by hunters decline in the UIP; US Forest Service fees paid for hunter outfitter service days decline in the UIP; Idaho Fish and Game resident and non-resident hunting license, tag and fee revenues decline from lost hunter participation in the UIP; the economic impacts briefly outlined above can be supplemented by multiple tiers of other impacts such as the full range of hunter utilized four and two wheeled drive vehicles, their regular maintenance as well as spare parts and consumable components such as tires and batteries.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 9)***

*Similar economic impacts can be attributed to reduced participation in fishing and to a lesser degree trapping. Add to those impacts the similar impacts of reduced participation in snowmobiling, firewood gathering as well as mushroom and berry picking. (****Ltr# 60, Cmt# 10)***

*It is interesting that the US Forest Service (USFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have, in great detail listed the most up to date needs of Grizzly Bears from the most recent science they can produce but continue to rely upon archaic and incomplete surveys and cliches to obscure the true and complete economic losses to the UIP brought about by the desire to recover those same bears. Both agencies have failed the citizens of the UIP by ignoring the need to produce focused, accurate and up to date reliable social science data related to economic loss in the area caused by Grizzly Bears.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 12)***

*It Boundary and Bonner Counties presently have unemployment rates of 11.1% and 8.6% respectively. The present administration in Washington DC is spending trillions of tax dollars in a stimulus program to save and create jobs. The USFS and the USFWS seem to be engaged in programs that are taking jobs away from the citizens of the UIP. It seems that those agencies continue to verify what a majority of area residents hold to be true. "Grizzly Bears are more important than the economic well-being of the people in Northern Bonner County and of Boundary County".* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 13)***

*As the chief elected officials of Lincoln County, which essentially is encompassed by the Kootenai National Forest, we are highly cognizant of how hugely dependent the vitality and stability of our social and economic processes are on your actions and decisions. Future access management practices based on potential amendments to the KNF Forest Plan that may result from decisions contingent upon this document have a possibility of significantly affecting the socio-economic structure and culture of our communities, and are of critical importance to us and our constituents.* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 1)***

*As the chief elected officials of Lincoln County, which essentially is encompassed by the Kootenai National Forest, we are highly cognizant of how hugely dependent the vitality and stability of our social and economic processes are on your actions and decisions. Future access management practices based on potential amendments to the KNF Forest Plan that may result from decisions contingent upon this document have a possibility of significantly affecting the socio-economic structure and culture of our communities, and are of critical importance to us and our constituents.* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 1)***

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Decrease in recreation jobs and income* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 15)***

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Decrease in timber jobs and income* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 16)***

### Public Concern No. 79. The Forest Service should use actual local data versus economic models to determine the true economic and social impact of proposed motorized access closures on the public because economic models can be manipulated to predict any result.

**Response:** The use of IMPLAN is accurate for describing the tradeoff to jobs and income by alternatives. The model used contained the most recent data available. Local data is used in generating the information used by IMPLAN. No data or models were manipulated in predicting the results in the DSEIS or FSEIS.

IMPLAN is the best science available for estimating impacts on jobs and income and is an input-output modeling system. The system was first developed by the Forest Service in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the BLM during the late 1970s. The system includes both data and software. In 1987, data generation for IMPLAN was provided by the University of Minnesota. In 1993, the Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. was formed to privatize the development of IMPLAN data and software.

IMPLAN datasets are prepared annually using the latest economic data that are publicly available and includes local data. Unique datasets are available by county for the entire United States (U.S.). Data from a variety of Federal sources are reconciled to provide a consistent set of estimates that can be aggregated to state and national levels. Proprietary techniques are used to estimate data that cannot be disclosed because of Federal confidentiality requirements, allowing users to publish detailed study results. Proprietary estimates of trade flows for 440 commodities

between all U.S. counties are key to the creation of credible, local models.

IMPLAN has gone from a system employed by a few Federal agencies to one that is embraced by economists throughout the U.S. IMPLAN has been used by over 250 academic institutions across the country, including Yale, Stanford, Duke, University of Michigan, and University of California-Berkeley. Over 200 Federal, state, and local government agencies have used IMPLAN. By adding private firms and non-profit organizations, the IMPLAN client list exceeds 600. Hundreds of publications have referenced IMPLAN, ranging from peer-reviewed academic journals to local economic development newsletters. The Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. hosts a conference for IMPLAN users every other year in conjunction with the annual conference for the Mid-Continent Regional Science Association. Proceedings are available at www.implan.com.

In recent years, IMPLAN has expanded its datasets to other countries. In response to requests from academic and government economists outside the U.S., IMPLAN has produced national data sets for several countries, including Italy, Egypt, and China.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The different management plans being developed by the BLM and Forest Service are using generated, estimated and inadequate data to forward an agenda of eliminating access and motorized recreation from public lands. The economic impact of these closures will be devastating to small communities throughout the West. Models can be manipulated to predict any result. Economic models such as Implan should not be used when the input data is estimated and not factual or actual. Adequate effort must be exercised by the agencies to gather true on the ground data from businesses and individuals that use our public lands. We request that the economic analysis use actual local data to determine the true economic and social impact of proposed motorized access and closures on the public.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 36)***

*The USFS and the USFWS have paid little to no attention to the economic social and cultural losses that have and will be suffered by adults and younger generations of non-tribal citizens and their families related to the motorized vehicle restrictions stemming from Grizzly Bear recovery efforts in the Northern UIP. Neither agency has attempted to measure those important impacts. The obvious lack of supporting empirical data related to economic/social/cultural conditions of citizens attempting to carry out commerce and to live normal lives in the UIP make the EIS alternatives incomplete regarding those economic, social and cultural losses and their effect on local citizens.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 18)***

### Public Concern No. 80. The Forest Service should quantify and compare the impact of private residences' permanent encroachments to the relatively minor impact that mechanized forest visitors have on wildlife habitat.

**Response:** The impacts of development on private lands on grizzly bears are discussed on pages 101-103 of the FSEIS. While the Forests have worked cooperatively with adjacent landowners to improve sanitation efforts on these ownerships, the Forest Service has no authority to restrict or regulate use on adjacent private lands.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The encroachment of residences into the forest is often the most significant factor contributing to the loss of summer and/or winter wildlife habitat. First, we request that the impact of these permanent encroachments be quantified and compared to the relatively minor impact that mechanized forest visitors have on wildlife habitat. Secondly, public land visitors should not have to pay the price in the form of motorized closures required to offset the impact of permanent encroachments by private residences. Proper assignment of restrictions would rest on those private individuals who permanently encroached on the natural habitat.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 58)***

### Public Concern No. 81. The Forest Service should consider management practices that occur on state, corporate, and private lands (i.e., access, habituation, mortality levels) and mitigate for private land conditions on public land, where uses must be more balanced for rare wildlife.

**Response:** The cumulative effects of motorized access on private and state lands within the 29 individual BMUs was considered in the development of the existing condition and effects analysis in both the FEIS and FSEIS (FEIS, Tables 2-2 and 2-3, pages 2-11 and 2-14; FSEIS, Table 5 and Table 6, pages 25and 32). For each action alternative (i.e., C, D Modified, and E Updated) access parameters would be met within an individual BMU via changes in available motorized access on NFS lands. This includes providing adequate access to private land inholdings within the national forests (i.e., ANILCA; FSEIS, page 172).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*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". (P. 45.) Even "limited value, "(if that is indeed an accurate statement) would be valuable for such endangered populations. If anything, this indicates that both private and public land issues are important, and argues that we must mitigate for private land conditions on public land, where uses must be more balanced for rare wildlife.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 22)***

*On DSEIS P: 63 the Service, in discussing state, corporate, and private lands states the following: " Decisions made by these landowners regarding management on their lands could potentially result in cumulative disturbance or displacement effects to grizzly bears. In many cases, the USFS would ultimately mitigate for these effects through additional wheeled motorized vehicle access management on NFS lands". To us, this seems to be a better approach than trying to deny access management's effectiveness, or blame ones partners for mortalities.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 37)***

### Public Concern No. 82. The Forest Service's proposed action should correct the disproportionate significant adverse impacts to motorized recreationists by complying with the:

#### A) Forest Service Departmental Regulation 5600-2 and the requirements as initiated by EO 12898;

#### B) EPA's Office of Environmental Justice.

**Response:** Environmental Justice is part of the regulatory framework for this project and was considered in the development and analysis of alternatives and the results are documented on page 270 of the FSEIS. The impacts of the alternatives do not have a disproportionate affect on any minority or low-income populations.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # A*

*We believe that federal environmental justice compliance requirements as initiated by Executive Order 12898 should be applied immediately to correct the disproportionately significant and adverse impacts that motorized recreationists have been subjected to. In order to accomplish this we request that this proposed action comply with U.S. Forest Service Departmental Regulation 5600-2.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 44)***

*Subconcern # B*

*In order to correct the disproportionately significant and adverse impacts that motorized recreationists have been subjected to we request that the proposed action comply with EPA's Office of Environmental Justice.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 45)***

## Soils

### Public Concern No. 83. Motorized access has already done a lot of damage to the soil, and water pollution would increase as ruts are dug into the existing roads. The roads need to be "rested", to heal the years of logging that made the roads possible. The Forest Service should analyze the damage to soil and water from motorized access.

**Response:** There is no doubt that roads and motorized access on all three Forests have had some negative effects to soils and water resources. However, ruts are only a small culprit for water quality decline since it is the drainage, location, parent material, engineering, and maintenance etc. that determine proper road function.

The necessity of a road or road system is usually determined during project-level analysis where individual sections are identified to remain, be treated, removed, or "rested" at various levels. As stated on page 1 of the FSEIS, this document supplies a programmatic environmental analysis that will "provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project-level" and applies to "all future site-specific decisions regarding wheeled motorized vehicle use in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones (as described in the analysis area)". In other words, the site-specific damage to soil and water from motorized access will be addressed as part of future projects and their associated NEPA analyses.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Motorized access is already doing a lot of damage to the soil and water pollution would increase as ruts are dug into the existing roads. The roads need to be "rested", so to speak, to heal the years of logging that made the roads possible. Will we never learn how long it takes to heal what man has done to hurt the environment?* ***(Ltr# 25, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 84. The Forest Service should examine road closures based on sediment indicators and the magnitude of the sediment yield should be compared to naturally occurring conditions such as fire, where thousands of cubic yards of sediment are discharged into the streams, which is greater than the effects from all motorized routes.

**Response:** Roads are important as they provide access not only for resource administration but also for recreation and tactical fire management. Closures of roads are only as effective as the long-term planning that is associated with them is since "the greatest long-term risk to the soil resource would arise when roads are closed and put into intermittent stored service without having critical areas . . . stabilized prior to the road status change" (FSEIS, page 259). Roads are attributed as being one of the greatest contributors to sediment movement (Cacek 1989; Elliot et al. 1999; Luce and Wemple 2001; Reid et al. 1994) (FSEIS, page 260). The generally short-term pulses of sediment mobilization after a fire are no reason to disregard the long time continuous sediment supply that may arise from a non-functioning road system.

The FSEIS supplies a programmatic environmental analysis meaning that the site-specific damage to soil and water from motorized access will be addressed as part of future projects and their associated NEPA analyses. Closures of roads are usually closely reviewed, discussed in a interdisciplinary team setting, are based on overall need, function, and maintenance requirements, and do not solely rely on whether they produce a certain amount of sediments.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*A sense of magnitude must be used when making decisions about road closures based on indicators such as sediment production. For example, a route should not be closed because it is estimated to produce 10 cubic*

*yards less sediment. The sediment yield must be compared to naturally occurring conditions which includes fires. The recent fires in the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests discharged thousands of cubic yards of sediment to the area streams which is more than all of the motorized routes in the project area for the next 100 years.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 24)***

## Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species

### Public Concern No. 85. The Forest Service should limit motorized access within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones.

**Response:** The intent of the Forest Plan Amendments for Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones is to set new access standards within these recovery areas (FEIS, pages 1-5; FSEIS, page12). Implementation of any of the Action Alternatives (Alternatives C, D Modified, and E Updated) would result in less motorized access than is currently available to the public. Alternative E Updated is the preferred alternative (FSEIS, page 24).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The grizzly bear is in trouble in all of the above areas. That alone makes it hard for me to get excited about motorized vehicles.* ***(Ltr# 10, Cmt# 1)***

*At this day and age when more and more recreational users are enjoying our limited National Forests we are putting additional stress on our threatened and endangered species, especially grizzly bears, from increased human interactions. Adding to this threat to wildlife is the massive invasion of motorized vehicles on our public lands.* ***(Ltr# 18, Cmt# 1)***

*There have been too many human caused deaths to Grizzly bears not to close roads****. (Ltr# 34, Cmt# 5)***

### Public Concern No. 86. The Forest Service should enforce closures by patrolling the area because signs and closures (i.e., gates, earthern berms etc.) alone are not effective in managing fragmentation of grizzly bear habitat.

**Response:** Disclosure and enforcement of road closures (including restricted and barriered) is aided through distribution of travel maps (available at district offices, local stores, and on the World Wide Web) and their associated closure orders, signing, law enforcement patrols, and gate and barrier monitoring. Monitoring of existing closures and subsequent repairs/improvement to fix ineffective closures is provided in reports to the USFWS on an annual basis and included in Forest Monitoring Reports (citations USDA). Annual reports submitted to the USFWS and the IGBC Selkirk-Cabinet Yaak ecosystem subcommittee provides additional details of these efforts (e.g.USDA Forest Service 2009, 2010, 2011).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Fragmenting the grizzly bear's habitat will not help the grizzly bear to recover. I know in the Forest Service Book that I received, it said that it would close the areas at critical times for the bear. Who is going to police these areas and just putting up a sign won't keep them out.* ***(Ltr# 10, Cmt# 2)***

*The problem with motorized vehicles is they can reach further in the back country then man use to. So now the grizzly bear is running out of space. With the changing times, loss of habitat, human encroachment and fluctuating food sources, the grizzly bear needs all the protection it can get.* ***(Ltr# 10, Cmt# 3)***

*P.49: "(S)ince 1987 the IPNFs has established approximately 50 closure devices (gates, guardrail barricades, and earthen berms) that have limited wheeled motorized public vehicle access within the IPNFs portion of the CYRZ." What is the effectiveness data for those closures?* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 24)***

### Public Concern No. 87. The Forest Service should incorporate the conservation recommendation from Appendix B of the 2004 Record of Decision regarding use of information signs to properly identify grizzly bears from black bears to help reduce human-caused bear mortalities in and around the recovery zones.

**Response:** The KNF and IPNFs have developed and installed grizzly bear information signs at locations throughout both ecosystems since the early 1990s. Information and education topics have included the following: bear identification, public notification that they are traveling in grizzly country, bears and sanitation, and avoiding confrontations in bear country. This has been part of a larger, interagency effort involving numerous state and federal entities to educate the public about grizzly bears through the use of signs, presentations, interpretive kiosks, window clings, and coloring books. The most recent Forest Service-specific efforts have been documented in annual reports submitted to the USFWS and the IGBC Selkirk-Cabinet Yaak ecosystem subcommittee (e.g.USDA Forest Service 2009, 2010, 2011).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The last I heard Idaho was going to implement a program for bear identification like Montana's. That should help alleviate some of the problem.* ***(Ltr# 11, Cmt# 2)***

*Grizzly Bear Information Signs: According to Table 9 in the DSEIS ten grizzly bear mortalities within the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones(CYRZ and SRZ) between 1982 and 2008 were caused by self defense and human error in identifying bear species and another eight mortalities resulted from unknown human causes. Taken together these human-caused mortalities represent 50% of the known mortalities over the 26 year time period. We appreciate that both alternatives are rated "high" for "Level of mitigation for grizzly bear mortality risk" and believe that further conservation opportunities exist. One such opportunity -which is consistent with the conclusions detailed on pages 45-53 of the DSEIS (e.g., that an effective grizzly bear recovery program involves many elements) -is to combine grizzly bear information signs with project level access management actions. Recommendation We recommend that the Final SEIS consider the potential benefits of incorporating the following Conservation Recommendation from Appendix B of the Forest Service's 2004 Record of Decision as a programmatic Design Element. The Service's Conservation Recommendation reads as follows, "The Forests install grizzly bear information signs at major access points advising the public of grizzly bear presence, proper sanitation and food storage techniques, and providing information on distinguishing characteristics between grizzly bears and black bears." Incorporating this recommendation into any final compliance strategy may help to reduce human caused bear mortalities in and around the recovery zones.* ***(Ltr# 57, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 88. A recent population analysis determined that there were at least three times more grizzly bears than there were thought to be. The Forest Service should evaluate if grizzly bears need continued protection.

**Response:** The USFWS, not the Forest Service, is the agency responsible for reviewing the status and need for continuing protection of a species listed under the ESA. In addition, USFWS takes the lead in developing recovery plan goals and objectives that would determine the types of protection necessary for a listed species.

A population analysis of the North Continental Divide ecosystem was completed in 2009 by Kate Kendall and others (Kendall et al. 1009). In that study, the noninvasive genetic sampling effort conducted in 2004 showed an overall estimated population of 765 bears, which was 2.5 times larger than the recovery program estimate. The 2002 FEIS and FSEIS considered motorized access for populations of bears in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems. These recovery zones and populations are much smaller than the North Continental Divide ecosystem, with current population estimates for the Selkirk ecosystem of approximately 46 bears in 1999, and a minimum population estimate of 42 bears in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem in 2009 (FSEIS, page 54). Even if populations are grossly underestimated, it is unlikely that either ecosystem would

meet all recovery criteria set forth in the Recovery Plan, and continued protection would still be warranted.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*It was either the state or the feds who recently did a population analysis and figured out that there were at least three times more bears than you thought there were. So do you know how any bears are actually there. Do they really need protection?* ***(Ltr# 11, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 89. The Forest Service should consider that motorized use on existing trails has little or no substantiated effect on big game and does not create a significant impact on wildlife.

**Response:** The purpose of this Forest Plan Amendment is to address motorized access for the threatened grizzly bear within-and-around the Selkirk or Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery areas. Specifically, the scope of the analysis pertains to access standards for wheeled motorized vehicle use during the active bear year (FSEIS, page 2). Research has consistently shown that grizzly bears can be adversely affected by human use of roads (Mace and Manley 1993, Mace and Waller 1997, Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997, among others). Human use of motorized roads and trails within occupied grizzly bear habitat may produce or facilitate several kinds of adverse effects to grizzly bears including the following: (1) shooting mortality; (2) displacement from preferred habitat by human disturbance associated with road use and resultant reduction in habitat availability; (3) habituation to humans and motor vehicles via an increase in human and pet foods, as well as garbage, which may result in them being destroyed (FEIS, page 3-16; FSEIS, page 91). Additional research on the effects of motorized use on big game species is provided on pages149-153 of the FSEIS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*It appears that the disturbance of wildlife by OHV issue including wildlife corridors is being exaggerated to further the conversion of multiple-use lands to non-motorized lands. The agency is encouraged to avoid road and trail closures based on wildlife concerns except where negative wildlife impact can be specifically identified and documented. Motorized use on existing trails has little or no verified effect on game animal welfare (see additional references provided in later sections). In fact, areas that have been more intensely visited by motorized visitors have experienced significant increases in wildlife populations; further substantiating the fact that motorized recreation does not create a significant impact on wildlife.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 34)***

### Public Concern No. 90. The Forest Service should consider that road closures and obliteration are not reasonable or productive and that grizzly bears can coexist at a reasonable population density with multiple use recreation.

**Response:** Your concern is understood, however, we disagree with your assertion that road closures and obliteration are not reasonable or productive in assisting with grizzly bear recovery. Research has consistently shown that grizzly bears can be adversely affected by human use of roads (Mace and Manley 1993, Mace and Waller 1997, Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997, among others). Human use of motorized roads and trails within occupied grizzly bear habitat may produce or facilitate several kinds of adverse effects to grizzly bears including the following: (1) shooting mortality; (2) displacement from preferred habitat by human disturbance associated with road use and resultant reduction in habitat availability; (3) habituation to humans and motor vehicles via an increase in human and pet foods, as well as garbage, which may result in them being destroyed (FEIS, page 3-16; FSEIS, page 91). This impact of roads on grizzly bear recovery was recognized in the original 1983 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. Therefore, measures

of habitat security were incorporated into the Forest Plans for the Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, and Lolo National Forests (USDA 1985 and USDA 1986) or were applied as a result of consultation with USFWS after the release of these Plans (i.e., linear open road density, habitat security, and limitations on administrative use of restricted roads (FEIS, page 3-13 to 3-15; FSEIS, pages 74). Beginning in the early 1990s, road closures and installation of roads to restrict motorized use began to be implemented to achieve these early access standards (FSEIS, pages 75-80).

Furthermore, unlike the population situation in the North Continental Divide ecosystem (i.e., the Kendall et al. 2009 research), the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak populations are not considered to have achieved a "reasonable population density" by any of the researchers or agencies that have been studying these two populations for years. Current population estimates for the Selkirk ecosystem are approximately 46 bears in 1999, and a minimum population estimate of 42 bears in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem in 2009 (FSEIS, page 54).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*All indications are that grizzly bear habitat is fully occupied and that additional road closures and obliteration will not produce any more bears and, therefore, motorized closures are not reasonable or productive. Therefore, grizzly bears can coexist at reasonable population densities with multiple-use recreation and there is no compelling reason to close roads and trails to motorized recreationists to increase grizzly populations because the most significant constraint is their need for so many acres between other grizzly bears. (**Ltr# 26, Cmt# 53)***

*Roads and trails have already severely been reduced for the grizzly bear. Tell us about the miles of restricted access that already has taken place over the last 20 years. **(Ltr# 47, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 91. The Forest Service should consider the findings of Katherine Kendall's Greater Glacier Bear DNA study done for the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem recovery zone, which indicates that bear populations far exceed the recovery goal and should be delisted; and/or further research be completed to establish sustainable bear numbers and:

**A) Complete a similar study for the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones before further restrictions are placed on motorized use;**

**B) Consider that more research is needed to establish habitat needed for sustainable bear numbers per Bear Management Unit;**

**C) Consider that more research is needed before further restrictions are placed on motorized use, however use a different method than placing collars on bears as this method is not a true representation of bear's habits.**

**Response:** The purpose of this Forest Plan Amendment is to address motorized access for the threatened grizzly bear within-and-around the Selkirk or Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery areas. Specifically, the scope of the analysis pertains to setting access standards for wheeled motorized vehicle use during the active bear year (FEIS, page 2; FSEIS, page 2). The 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm research regarding female grizzly use of habitats in relation to roads in these recovery zones is considered the best available science by the Forest Service and USFWS and was used in development of the action alternatives for this effort (FEIS, pages 1-4 to 1-5; and 2-9 to 2-14 - Alternatives B and C; FSEIS, pages 19-32 - Alternatives D Modified and E Updated). While additional research aimed at determining population estimates and trends, seasonal habitat use and distribution, and habitat use in relation to differing access situations would be helpful to the recovery and management of these grizzly populations, these analysis are beyond the scope of this Forest Plan amendment effort.

At this point, evidence does not indicate that grizzly bear habitat is "fully occupied" in either ecosystem. In the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, only 12 BMUs were occupied by females with young in 2009 based on a running 6-year sum of verified evidence (the Recovery Plan calls for 18 of 22 BMUs to be occupied); and only 4 Selkirk BMUs were considered occupied during this same time period (Recovery Plan objective is 7 of 10 BMUs).

A number of grizzly bear DNA research projects have been implemented within the Selkirk and Cabinet Yaak ecosystems since 1999 (Kasworm 2009, Proctor et al. 2007, Wakkinen and Johnson 2006, Wakkinen et al. 2008, IGBC 2009). In addition, habitat use modeling by the USFWS and IDFG research biologists is underway (IGBC 2009). Alternatives B, C, D Modified, and E Updated include the intention to pursue habitat-based access management when information becomes available to do so.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Kate Kendall's Greater Glacier Bear DNA study (includes all the North Fork of Flathead), which identified 367 unique individual bears with one years data not yet analyzed. The recovered population target was 600 bears for the entire Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, so there is already known that about 2/3 of that target exist on about 1/4 of the habitat. Completion of DNA study of the rest of the ecosystem is certain to show that bear populations far exceed the recovery goal and should be de-listed. The study was released in December 2006 and indeed did confirm that there was more than 545 bears in the ecosystem. Furthermore, a study released in September 2008 found that there were at least 765 grizzly bears. It is clear that the grizzly bear populations are healthy and that motorized recreationists should no longer be shut out of grizzly bear habitat.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 54)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Bear Studies: The recent study and publication by Katherine Kendall, et all: Demography and Genetic Structure of a Recovering Grizzly Bear Population has some interesting findings. This study has found that approximately twice as many grizzly bears are present than were estimated prior to .the study in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem recovery zone. This suggests that the grizzly bear is recovering better than originally thought even without these extra restrictions. I would argue that it is quite possible that there are far more grizzly bears currently in the SelkirklCabinet-Yaak recovery zone then current estimations. I would like to see a similar study to the one done on the NCDE recovery zone before further restricting more areas to motorized use. I was present a Kootenai Forest Stakeholders meeting when this idea was mentioned. The large costs involved with the study were of concern to many within the Forest Service. Please keep in mind the funding for the study would be a fraction of the cost that these restrictions would have on those working in the forest products industry and those who recreate on National Forests.* ***(Ltr# 48, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*I would strongly suggest a population study(s) be conducted for both the Selkirks & the Cabinet-Yaak similar to the DNA hair sample analysis just completed in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE). It would only make sense to use solid scientific evidence as a basis to make management decisions such as the access closures being recommended in this DSEIS. It is quite possible that such a study might reveal there are significantly more bears, better reproductive capabilities, broader diversity of age classes, spread across a much wider geographical area (both within and outside the defined recovery area), and have genetic diversity far greater than ever estimated, as was discovered from the recent study done in the NCDE. I would think the present would be an excellent time to secure potential stimulus funding for such a project, as well as a perfect time to gain broad public support to have substantiated information available.* ***(Ltr# 59, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*None of the alternatives take into account the actual number of bears in the recovery zone. A study on the flathead shows that their were significantly far more bears than they estimated. Until a DNA study identifies the actual bear numbers there should be no change in the recovery zone restrictions.* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Closing off more of the forest without using scientific data (DNA testing) is poor method of bear management.* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # A*

*The recovery zone needs to have a method to remove restrictions in every alternative when the scientific data shows recovery populations are in any BMU, so the forest can once again be managed, and recreated in again. Once the recovery approaches the estimates identified for recovery that should trigger a change in the management and recreation opportunities in the recovery zones. Failure to do this will keep the current standards in place, which will offer no change to the amendment; it will keep management activities hamstrung, and severely restrict motorized access. This in turn will negatively impact the economies of the affected areas. The purpose of this amendment is to promote recovery, not to permanently lock up the forest.* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # B*

*In talking with highly respected biologists, including Dr. Charles Kay of Utah State University, I have been told that more research is needed on sustainable bear numbers per BMU. It appears with the current land management practices implemented on our federal lands within these BMU's there is not enough habitat to support the numbers that the USFWS is trying to obtain in the timeframe in which it is trying to obtain the numbers.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # C*

*The main methods for determining Grizzly populations for management come from DNA testing, public sightings and radio collars. Further forest closures will only reduce the number of sightings and blind studies to true grizzly bear activity and populations.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # C*

*The collared grizzly bear movement studies were skewed by the studies. They did not take into account that grizzly bears learned from their experiences. Most (if not all) of the bears that were collared were trapped in large traps that have to be moved by vehicle and were close to roads. The collared bears were handled, tagged, collared, poked, drugged, bloodied, and generally abused by humans in order to study them. They have a collar around their neck to remind them of the experience and that they do not like humans or human activity. The studies only track the animals that have collars and the activists claim that all grizzly bears avoid roads, humans, and human activity. This simply is not true. Of the grizzly bears I have seen most were near (within 500 yards) a road. I have never seen a collared bear near a road but I have seen collared bears in "back country areas". To scientifically claim that grizzly bears need human-free habitat to repopulate is obscene. The studies do not support this kind of a conclusion****. (Ltr# 62, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # C*

*By creating vast areas where bears would repopulate without human activity is a disservice to the Grizzlies. They would mature in a human free environment and as the populations grow and migrate they will not understand humans and are sure to become victims of conflict again. If these bears were to mature in the presence of humans and human activity they will continue to avoid human contact and carry that behavior into future generations so that as the grizzlies repopulate and migrate they will have a natural sense to avoid humans.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 92. The Forest Service should develop new management guidelines that reflect the habitat most critical for bears as one that is harvested (timber), prescribed burned, and roaded per the findings of the Swan Valley study in Montana.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges that the early seral conditions produced by timber harvest, prescribed burning, and wildfire can produce seasonal habitats that may be used by grizzly bears. However, we disagree with your assertion that road conditions in harvested areas

provide the best habitat for grizzly bears.

Research has consistently shown that grizzly bears can be adversely affected by human use of roads (Mace and Manley 1993, Mace and Waller 1997, Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997, among others). Indeed, the 2007 Proctor et al. research for the grizzly bear populations in the Selkirk and Yaak mountains north of the international border provided additional evidence of grizzly bear aversion to use of early seral harvest units situated near roads.

Human use of motorized roads and trails within occupied grizzly bear habitat may produce or facilitate several kinds of adverse effects to grizzly bears including the following: (1) shooting mortality; (2) displacement from preferred habitat by human disturbance associated with road use and resultant reduction in habitat availability; (3) habituation to humans and motor vehicles via an increase in human and pet foods, as well as garbage, which may result in them being destroyed (FEIS, page 3-38 to 3-46; FSEIS, pages 91-91).

In 2005, Dr. C. Servheen presented GPS collar monitoring data collected from 11 grizzly bears living in the Swan Valley. Unlike the bears observed in the Mace and Waller (1997) study, these bears apparently spent the majority of their time in the valley. These bears were observed on private property as well as Plum Creek commercial forest lands. Dr. Servheen noted that the researchers did not have a representative sample of bears at that time to drawn conclusions concerning bear response to roads at night or changes in bear behavior or cub production (Servheen 2005). Therefore, these preliminary results should not be used to form the basis of any kind of change in access management for this population. There are no similar studies for the Cabinet-Yaak or Selkirk population of grizzly bears. Rather, the Forest Service and USFWS consider the 1997 Wakkinen and Kasworm research regarding female grizzly use of habitats in relation to roads in these recovery zones as the best available science and it was used in development of the action alternatives for this effort (FEIS, pages 1-4 to 1-5; and 2-9 to 2-14 - Alternatives B & C); FSEIS, pages 19-32 - Alternatives D Modified and E Updated).

It is our intent to incorporate all seasonal habitats within core where possible, per the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC 1998) recommendations. Alternatives B, C, D Modified, and E Updated also include intent to pursue habitat-based access management when information becomes available to do so.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*A recent Grizzly Bear study in the Swan Valley of Montana found that 99 percent of the bears spent 99 percent of their time on Plum Creek property. This property has been heavily logged resulting in undergrowth plant species that support bears. Thick and overgrown timber does not allow for adequate undergrowth. As we now see by this study, critical bear habitat is quite different than what was once assumed and this new information must be incorporated into this evaluation. The Forest Service should discard the original road density guidelines and develop new guidelines that reflect the habitat most critical for bears as one that is timber harvested and roaded. Old outdated science formulated by assumptions should not be used when true science and actual data is now available.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 56)***

*Management practices to create habitat should include timber harvest and controlled burns thereby creating habitat that will grow vegetation to support an ungulate prey base which may include deer, elk, moose and wooland caribou, as well as vegetation to sustain and grow Grizzly Bear numbers.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 2)***

**Public Concern No. 93. The Forest Service should acknowledge the efforts of local communities that work in proactive ways to assist in recovery through implementation of techniques and education to increase human safety and decrease the likelihood of bear-human conflicts.**

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges that there has been an interagency effort involving numerous state and federal entities to help educate the public about grizzly bears as well as providing support for sanitation efforts within-and-around the recovery zone boundary. Annual reports by the IGBC Selkirk-Cabinet Yaak Ecosystem Subcommittee provide details of these interagency efforts (e.g. IGBC 2009b and 2010b, Wakkinen et al. 2010).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Acknowledge the efforts of local communities that work in a proactive way to assist grizzly bear recovery. Many local communities have implemented effective actions and techniques to increase human safety and decrease the likelihood of bear-human conflicts (i.e., Boundary County in coordination with others has fenced numerous county refuse disposal sites to reduce bear problems). To improve coordination and collaboration of local, state, federal and Tribal natural resource activities, community organizations like the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRl) established working groups (i.e., grizzly bear sub-committee) that have produced information and educational tools (http://www.kootenai.orgldocuments/ GrizzBear Brochure.pdf). Moreover, these local endeavors have assisted in recovery efforts and in the Idaho portion of the IPNF, no grizzly mortalities have occurred in recent years.* ***(Ltr# 42, Cmt# 3)***

*While not specific to the access amendment, significant gains have been made regarding sanitation in and around the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems. This in conjunction with educational efforts, has and will continue to benefit grizzly bears.* ***(Ltr# 50, Cmt# 5)***

*I believe that more can be done to improve the recovery of the grizzly bear by educating the people that use these lands. If mortality occurs the punishment should not be a fine but mandatory volunteer activities in education of the public or helping in programs designed to re-establish grizzlies. Most people want to do the right thing but will get very emotional and defensive if you lock us out of our habitat. Grizzlies have a place in our forests but no right to a human free habitat.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 9)***

*Acknowledge the efforts of local communities that work in a proactive way to assist grizzly bear recovery. Many local communities have implemented effective actions and techniques to increase human safety and decrease the likelihood of bear-human conflicts (Le., Boundary County in coordination with others has fenced numerous county refuse disposal sites to reduce bear problems). The Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) has established working groups (Le., grizzly bear sub-committee) that have produced information and educational tools (http://www.kootenai.orgldocuments/GrlzzBear Brochure.pdf). Moreover, these local endeavors have assisted in recovery efforts and in the Idaho portion of the IPNF, has no grizzly mortalities recorded in 2008.* ***(Ltr# 79, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 94. Due to the biases contained in the DSEIS, the Forest Service should acknowledge the DSEIS is inadequate for accomplishing grizzly bear recovery as mandated by the Endangered Species Act, and complete another DSEIS.

**Response:** Your concern is understood, however, we disagree with your assertion that the document is biased and inadequate for meeting the stated objective of setting access standards that should help facilitate grizzly bear recovery in these two ecosystems.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*In sum, the DSEIS is quite inadequate for accomplishing the job of recovery, as mandated by the Endangered Species Act, for the grizzly bear populations of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Areas, and in its bias leaves the agency in danger of missing a great opportunity to make huge progress on so many other forest management issues. Please go back and make a sincere effort.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 36)***

*The Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly populations are in trouble. In 1999, the US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) found that the small size of and threats to the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly populations warranted them for uplisting from threatened to endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).*

*However, the uplisting was precluded by the USFWS' need to fulfill other obligations. USFWS estimates that the grizzly population in the CYE is 30-40 bears and the estimate for the SE is 40-50.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 1)***

*In a study co-authored by the USFWS grizzly bear recovery coordinator, scientists used biological models to estimate that isolated grizzly populations of 30 individuals are, on average, likely to become extinct in 69 years; populations of 40 persist for only an average of 79 years before vanishing completely.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 95. The Forest Service should recognize that an insufficient number of roads exist under Forest Service jurisdiction to adequately reduce access in order to meet grizzly bear standards and that the DSEIS does not adequately disprove the initial recommended road density standards.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledged that there are an insufficient number of roads under Forest Service jurisdiction in some BMUs to meet the standards of Alternative D, and therefore Alternative D Modified was developed. As described on page 19 of the FSEIS, Alternative D Modified was designed to best meet Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) highest levels of secure habitat (OMRD of less than or equal to 17 percent, TMRD of less than or equal to 14 percent, and core area of greater than or equal to 72 percent in each BMU). In BMUs where the standards (OMRD of less than or equal to 17 percent, TMRD of less than or equal to 14 percent, and core area of greater than or equal to 72 percent in each BMU) could not be achieved, habitat parameters were set at the highest level possible. The standards (OMRD of less than or equal to 17 percent, TMRD of less than or equal to 14 percent, and core area of greater than or equal to 72 percent in each BMU) were utilized in those BMUs where the standards could be met.

The 2002 FEIS, 2009 DSEIS, and the 2011 FSEIS examined a range of alternatives that set OMRD, TMRD, and core area at varying levels (see Table 2 and Table 3 on pages 16-18 in the FSEIS). Alternative D Modified was designed to best meet the highest levels of secure habitat based on the habitat needs of one bear (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997). In Alternative E Updated, standards for individual BMUs were developed to provide increased grizzly bear habitat security based on the average needs of six bears while allowing management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, and access and potential development of private inholdings. These standards were determined through consultation with USFWS and grizzly bear research scientists, and reflect the unique biological features and social factors (e.g. seasonal bear habitats and use, highways, recreational sites, residential development, private inholdings) found within specific BMUs (Kaiser 2003).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Alternative D was originally dropped from the 2002 FEIS since an insufficient number of roads exist under US Forest Service jurisdiction to adequately reduce access to meet the standards. The jurisdiction over public access has not changed since the 2002 FEIS or the 2004 ROD, nor has the DSEIS adequately proven that the initial road density standard recommended by the grizzly bear biologists, the IGBC or the Access Management Task Group inadequate to "conserve and contribute to the recovery" of grizzly bears.* ***(Ltr# 49, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 96. The Forest Service should consider that Wakkinen and Kasworm failed to assess whether areas with lower road densities and larger core area were available to the female bears in the study area, or whether the levels were the best, most secure habitat that was available to them; and it is not

**possible to determine whether the averages derived from W/K 1997 (33-26-55) represent optimal habitat or minimum security needs of reproducing females because:**

**A) this unpublished report, not subjected to peer review report, disregards extensive literature and draws inappropriate conclusions.**

**Response:** Your concern is understood, however the fact of the matter is that nearly all of the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) "deficiencies" cited in comments also exist in research conducted in the South Fork Swan River held up as a model to emulate. The FSEIS includes additional discussion about the shortcomings of the Wakkinen and Kasworm report and also discusses the consideration of other reports (FSEIS pages 45-52; FSEIS Appendix C).

The Forest Service developed Alternative D Modified in response to public comments to establish security at the highest levels reported for bears in the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study. The proposed standards and potential effects of this alternative are discussed in the FSEIS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The Forest Service Response to Deficiencies in the 2004 FEIS is Insufficient. In an effort to address and explain away the four deficiencies in the 2004 Access Management FEIS NEPA analysis identified by the District Court, the Forest Service appears to have adopted a position that contradicts the results, of grizzly bear research in published scientific literature over the last 20 years. The deficiencies identified by the court include the fact that Wakkinen and Kasworm failed to assess whether areas with lower road densities and larger core area were available to the female bears in the study area, or whether the levels were the best, most secure habitat that was available to them. Because of this gap in information, the Forest Service admits that it is not possible to determine whether the averages derived from W/K 1997 (33-26-55) represent optimal habitat. It is also not possible to determine whether they would meet the minimum security needs of reproducing females. Therefore there is no scientific basis for the conclusion that achieving the standards in Alt. E would provide sufficient security to ensure the long term survival and recovery of the Cabinet -Yaak and Selkirk grizzly bears.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 28)***

*The DSEIS attempts to downplay the uncertainty factor in the effectiveness of the W/K derived standards with the argument that "it can be reasonably concluded that areas of lower road densities or providing higher amounts of Core Area does not necessarily guarantee lower mortality rates." DSEIS at 36. The Forest Service goes on to discuss the fact that bears have died in secure areas, and even Wilderness areas, far away from roads and that many mortalities occur on private land, over which the Forest Service has no control.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 29)***

*Subconcern # A*

*The four factors discussed above all lead to overestimation by Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997, Tables 5,11,13] of the levels of roading and disturbance that characterize suitable grizzly bear habitat. That may explain why, as those authors recognized [p.24, Table 16], the mean levels of security in the home ranges of their females were lower [i.e. higher road densities and lower core values] than in the South Fork of the Flathead River Study [mean percentages of 19, 19 and 68 compared with 33,25 and 55].Ake et al. [1998] and Wittinger et al. [2001] attempted to derive road density standards from the lower road densities in home ranges reported from the South Fork Study [Mace and Manley, 1993; Mace and Waller, 1997 ] but even those recommendations should not be accepted as sufficient security for grizzly bear recovery [Metzgar, 1998,2001; McLellan et aI., 2000). Clearly, the selective use by DEIS of Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997, an unpublished report never subjected to peer review] and the disregard by DEIS of extensive literature regarding grizzly bear habitat and security needs has led to serious errors, inappropriate conclusions and damaging recommendations.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 47)***

*Subconcern # A*

*The results reported in Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] do provide some suggestions regarding appropriate levels of road densities in grizzly bear habitat. A precautionary approach might start with the levels of security that appeared acceptable to all bears studied: the lowest obs'erved levels of road*

*densities, the largest observed level of core and the characteristics of roadless areas for which the animals showed positive selection. Under that approach, managers would begin formulating security standards with the following values:*

*-No more than 17% of each BMU with OMRD >lmi./sq.mi. [*Table 11, p.19).*

*-No more than 14% of each BMU with TMRD >2mi./sq.mi. [*Table 9, p.18].*

*-At least 72% of each BMU in secure "core" [*Table 13, p.2l].*

*-Blocks of "core" at least 8 sq.mi. [*Table 15, p.22].*

*-Core areas defined as farther than 1.9 km. from open roads and 0.6 km. from trails** .*

*Because of the four biases in Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] noted earlier, even these levels of security should not be accepted as sufficient for grizzly bear recovery; scientifically responsible standards will be lower. *Tables and pages in Wakkinen and Kasworm, 1997 from which these numbers derive. **Value derives from Kasworm et Al., 1994 . DEIS examined a plan with three of these standards [17, 14,72%] as Alternative D. The review team dismissed that plan [p.2-18] after " ... discovering that it was not feasible to meet these standards within several BMUs." That statement is the precise equivalent of discovering that our national forests do not find it "feasible" to meet their statutory obligations to recover grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 48)***

## Public Concern No. 97. The Forest Service should consider the science that proves grizzly bears are displaced and repelled from habitat that occurs near roads, independent of traffic volume.

**Response:** The FEIS (page 3-6) and FSEIS (pages 13 and 70) considered the research regarding how access management in grizzly bear habitat affects grizzly bears. More specifically, human use of motorized roads and trails within occupied grizzly bear habitat may produce or facilitate several kinds of adverse effects to grizzly bears including the following: (1) shooting mortality; (2) displacement from preferred habitat by human disturbance associated with road use and resultant reduction in habitat availability; (3) habituation to humans and motor vehicles via an increase in human and pet foods, as well as garbage, which may result in them being destroyed (FEIS, page 3-38 to 3-46; FSEIS, page 91).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The detrimental impacts of both open and closed roads on bears have been documented over and over again in the scientific literature as well as in USFWS section 7 consultation documents. There are several ways in which roads in grizzly habitat are detrimental to bears and indirectly cause bear mortalities: Most bears avoid roads for significant distances, especially when there is human activity associated with the roads. Grizzlies are thus displaced from high value habitat that may occur near roads. As a result, bears can suffer from poorer nutrition, as well as lower reproduction and survival rates. In addition, grizzlies are repelled even when road use occurs at extremely low levels.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 36)***

*As the Forest Service is well aware, published research regarding the impacts of roads on grizzlies is extensive: Kasworm and Manley. 1988. Grizzly Bear and Black Bear Ecology in the Cabinet Mountains of Northwest Montana. "Areas within 500m of a road received significantly less use by grizzly bears than expected." McLellan and Shackleton. 1988. "Bears used habitat within 100m of a road less than expected. Bears used habitat 250m to 1000m from a road greater than expected ...The bears avoidance of roads was independent of traffic volume; even a few vehicles was sufficient to displace bears." Aune and Kasworm. 1989. Final Report, East Front Grizzly Bear Project. "Sixty three percent (63%) of known, human-caused grizzly bear deaths on the east front of the Rocky Mountains occurred within 1 km of a road, including ten of eleven known female deaths. Kasworm and Manley. 1991. Road and Trail Influences on Grizzly Bears and Black Bears in Northwest Montana. "Grizzly Bears used habitat within 914m from an open road less than expected, and habitat within 122m of a trailless than expected." Mattson and Knight. 1991. Effects of Access on Human-Caused Mortality of Yellowstone Grizzly Bears. " .. .increased access facilitates*

*increased bear-human encounters, which usually has negative consequences for bears ...Areas impacted by secondary roads have roughly 5 times the mortality rate of the Yellowstone Park backcountry ... habituated bears are killed 3.1 times as often as non-habituated bears." Mace and Manley. 1993. The Effects of Roads on Grizzly Bears ..... .if unroaded habitats are reduced in quantity or size, the number of adult females will eventually decline." USDI. 1993. Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. "Roads probably pose the most imminent threat to grizzly habitat today .... It is strongly recommended that road management be given the highest priority within all recovery zones."* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 39)***

### Public Concern No. 98. The Forest Service should consider that habitat standards cannot be established from the mean results of Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997 as proposed in the DSEIS, managing for conditions occupied by the studied females will not allow population recovery, and no management decisions should be made based on the presumption of the demographic health of these populations.

**Response:** The IGBC has directed the Forest Service to develop ecosystem-specific guidelines using local data, where possible, for each grizzly bear ecosystem (IGBC 1994). The Forest Service maintains that the recommendations reported in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) represent the best available scientific data for the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, for reasons discussed the FSEIS (pages 45-52) and summarized in a white paper located in the project record and in Appendix C of the FSEIS (Allen et al 2011).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Habitat standards cannot be established from the mean results of Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] as proposed in DEIS. In the absence of compelling evidence that populations are increasing in the Cabinet-Yaak and the Selkirk Ecosystems, we cannot presume that managing for conditions occupied by the studied females would allow population recovery. In fact, as shown below, we have reason to believe that these ecosystems are not sufficiently secure to sustain grizzly bear populations and that habitats like these are population sinks. Cabinet-Yaak Population. As shown by Metzgar and Patterson [2001, attached as Appendix A], managers should conclude that the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem grizzly bear population declined through the period 1983-2000 and that the decline has recently accelerated. Selkirk Population. Using data from 1983-1998, USFWS [1999] estimated a 2.3% average annual rate of increase and this estimate diminished to 1.3 and 1.5% in 1999 and 2000 [Wakkinen and Johnson, 1999,2001]. At the time of the highest estimate, [USFWS, 1999], researchers observed that only one additional subadult female death would result in an estimated 2.6% rate of decline for the Selkirk population. Two facts lead to the conclusion that the Selkirk population is likely in decline: First, researchers trapped and studied bears in areas " ... believed to hold the highest densities of bears .... "[USFWS, 1999]. Because those high densities would be associated with higher reproductive and/or survival rates than would pertain to the whole population, we should interpret the reported values as overestimations of population trend. Second, since the 1999 report, at least one collared female has been killed [Wakkinen, 2001]. This adult would have at least as much "reproductive value" as a subadult and, even in the absence of the bias noted above, reanalyses that incorporate her death will reveal a high probability of population decline. Both Populations. In all of the estimates of population trend noted above, the 95% confidence limits range from about 9% decline to about 11 % increase. Given that level of uncertainty, a precautionary approach would rule out any management decisions based on the presumption of demographic health of these populations.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 43)***

*Habitat standards cannot be established from the mean results ofWakkinen and Kasworm [1997] as proposed in DEIS. Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997, p.24-5] recognized that, at the time of their study, the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Ecosystems may have been so heavily roaded that the bears were unable to express through selection the habitat qualities that they require. As they state, a "first order selection" study would be required to investigate that issue and that analysis was not done. In the absence of such a study, we must conclude that the animals may well have been forced into unacceptable habitats by virtue of the heavy exploitation and development of preferred habitats.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 44)***

*Habitat standards cannot be established from the mean results of Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] as*

*proposed in DEIS. The inclusion of at least one bear in the analyses of Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] constitutes an error that leads to overestimation of allowable road densities. As recognized by those authors [p.23], " ... much of the data ... " for Yaak female 206 come from her immature period of home range establishment and her home range size and use would have changed with maturity. Those data do not come from a stable home range of a productive female, do not provide insight into environments that can support grizzlies and inflate the bears' apparent toleration of areas near roads. (**Ltr# 56, Cmt# 45)***

*Habitat standards cannot be established from the mean results of Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] as proposed in DEIS. The home ranges of five of the six grizzly bears used in the analyses of Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] lay partly in Canada [bears 206, and all four of the Selkirk bears as shown in Kasworm et aI., 2000, p.27 and in Wakkinen maps provided to Sedler, Dec., 2001]. In those Canada data, closed and open roads were treated equivalently due to lack of data [Wakkinen and Kasworm, 1997, p.9). Consequently, bear use of closed roads appears in the analyses as use of "roaded" areas and inflates apparent activity near roads. **(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 46)***

### Public Concern No. 99. The Forest Service should establish standards for grizzly bear spring habitat and its spatial relationships to other seasonal habitats to insure adequate access for recovered grizzly bear populations.

**Response:** It is our intent to incorporate all seasonal habitats within core area, where possible. Alternatives B, C, D Modified, and E Updated also include intent to pursue habitat-based access management when information becomes available to do so.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Grizzly bear spring habitat is critical, rare and limited. This fact has been recognized repeatedly for the Cabinet portion of these recovery zones by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Forest Service [see, for example: USFWS 1993a, pp.8,9,24; USFWS 1998, pp.24,34; USFWS 2000, pp.34,50; USFS 2000, p.IO]. Given agency recognition of the rarity of spring habitat, the omission of standards for this critical habitat type is incomprehensible. In these recovery zones, responsible landscape design will insure adequate access to secure spring range for recovered populations of bears. **(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 52)***

*Young grizzly bears learn home range use from their mothers and daughters often establish home ranges near their mothers' [USFWS, 2000, pp.58,60]. To accommodate those behaviors, BMUs [designed to approximate the size of an adult female home range] must each contain sufficient secure spring range to support an adult female, at least one mature daughter with an overlapping home range and the several males that might reasonable be expected to occur. While the required amount of such habitat will vary among BMUs, any acceptable standards will include BMU-specific analyses of secure spring range and its spatial relationships to other seasonal habitats. **(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 53)***

### Public Concern No. 100. The Forest Service should include a discussion in the Final SEIS of the potential effects from climate change on grizzly bear recovery and the potential effects from increased bark beetle and wildfire risk associated with climate change.

**Response:** Thank you, your comment is noted. Within the scope of this proposal, which is related to selecting a set of forest plan standards for motorized access management within the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Recovery Zones, there is no nexus between the selected standards and potential effects to grizzly bear recovery resulting from climate change and its potential for increased bark beetle and wildfire risk.

Recent agency guidance on land management plan revision includes the recognition that climate change information should be integrated in appropriate sections of the plan, the environmental impact statement and the planning record. Ongoing forest plan revision efforts on the three forests are expected to address climate change. It is anticipated that most of the focus of the evaluation

of climate change for plan revision would be to understand how climate change is affecting the planning unit and to determine if parts of the plan need to be changed to maintain sustainability.

From the USFWS Biological Opinion (2011) on these amendments:

> "Climate change trends in the Pacific Northwest region will be important to grizzly bears with respect to how these trends may affect denning behavior, foraging habitat availability, and fire-regimes.
>
> Predicted decreases in snowpack levels may shorten the denning season as foods are available later in the fall and earlier in the spring. Spring and fall encounters between grizzly bears and hunters and/or recreationists would therefore likely increase; escalating the mortality risk to bears during these times.
>
> An additional effect of climate change could be changes in the availability of and distribution of foraging areas due to increasing temperatures and seasonal changes in precipitation. The extent and rate to which plant species and communities would be affected is difficult to predict. Changes in vegetative distributions may also influence other mammal distributions, including prey species like ungulates.
>
> As described earlier, grizzly bears are opportunistic feeders and will consume almost any available food. Because grizzly bears are such successful omnivores, climate-induced vegetative changes may not have detectable, negative effects on grizzly bear populations in the lower 48 States.
>
> An indirect effect of climate change may be an increase in wildfires that may result in reductions in forest cover and some types of foraging habitat, while potentially creating other types of foraging habitat, e.g. shrub, berry, and grassland forage areas. Increasing insect outbreaks may result in more decadence and die-outs of whitebark pine stands, thus, reducing a potential food source for grizzly bears. However, whitebark pine is not a key food source of grizzly bears in the SE or CYE.
>
> <u>Summary of climate change effects to grizzly bears</u>
>
> It is difficult to predict how this large, wide-ranging species would respond to environmental changes associated with climate change. At this time, the scope and scale of such changes are unknown, and the effects (positive or negative) on grizzly bears would likely be variable across the landscape.
>
> Through the Forests' significant participation in the IGBC, the Forests are made aware of new findings relative to grizzly bears in the action area. If a causal relationship can be established between climate change and changes in habitat relationships that may be affected by motorized access in a manner not considered here, it may be addressed by future federal action or reinitiation of formal consultation in an effort to offset some of the effects of climate change."

Impacts to whitebark pine from white pine blister rust and mountain pine beetle outbreaks are already occurring within the recovery zones. Over the past several decades in the Selkirk Mountains, thousands of whitebark pine trees have died from this disease (USDA Forest Service 2004a, page 10). However, even with the relatively high levels of mortality caused by the blister rust fungus an adequate number of healthy trees have persisted, due to natural resistance to this disease. In turn, these healthy trees have provided a seed source for potentially blister rust resistant seedlings and continued natural regeneration of whitebark pine.

Recently, mountain pine beetle infestations have been killing whitebark pines in the Selkirk Mountains. Aerial surveys in 1999 discovered a major mountain pine beetle outbreak. Ground surveys in 2001 and 2002 showed that the outbreak was very large, and growing; killing a high percentage of whitebark pine trees in some areas. These disturbance factors are expected to continue for the foreseeable future. However, the selected standards in this amendment would not have an impact or influence this ongoing trend within either ecosystem.

Within, the Selkirk Recovery Zone, the Idaho Panhandle National Forests has recently undertaken an effort to maintain the presence of white bark pine within the Selkirk Mountains. The Whitebark Pine Restoration project (2004) has treated approximately 1,730 acres of white bark pine habitat utilizing slashing and prescribed burning and release cuttings for the purposes of

returning whitebark pine stocking levels to those within the historic range of variability; reintroducing the role of fire into the ecosystem, and providing for wildlife habitat diversity.

From a wildland fire perspective, a warmer climate is expected to lead to more frequent fires, possibly more severe fires, and a longer fire season here in the Western United States. As discussed by the USFWS in the biological opinion for the Idaho Roadless Rule (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2008d):

> "Fire in grizzly bear habitat can be beneficial or detrimental depending on when and where it occurs, and the scale (number of acres burned) at which it occurs. In general, fire is thought to have a positive effect on grizzly bear habitat, and the decline of grizzly bear populations has been attributed to fire suppression (Willard and Herman 1977; Tirmenstein 1983; Contreras and Evans 1986). Grizzly bears are opportunistic species with large home ranges, and their populations change little in response to fire (Smith 2000). Fires promote and maintain many important berry-producing shrubs and forbs and provide a medium for insects and carrion (primarily in the instance of very large fires). However, fire can also affect other food sources, such as whitebark pine nuts. Although grizzly bears generally benefit from periodic burns because of improved habitat quality, a very large burn could destroy a large percentage of available habitats resulting in habitat fragmentation.
>
> As for most species, the effects of fire on grizzly bears are highly dependent on numerous factors that are difficult to predict for this analysis. It is generally agreed that historically wildfire was the primary disturbance factor in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. In the past, fire has destroyed grizzly bear cover and food and has altered habitat. Although such disturbances may not have a major impact when a large acreage of habitat is available, in the present conditions of limited, fragmented habitat, a fire could burn a large percentage of the remaining available habitat. This potential effect can be minimized by implementing projects designed to prevent stand-replacing and uncontrollable wildfires."

Sterling Miller, a senior wildlife biologist with the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula Montana recently wrote (January 1, 2010) about the Yellowstone grizzly bear population in a Missoulian newspaper guest column:

> "As the climate warms because of increasing accumulation of greenhouse gases, habitats for many wildlife species will change. The species most at risk from these changes will be specialist species that require specific habitats or food (e.g. moose, mountain goats, wolverine, polar bears, etc.). Grizzly bears, in contrast, live in the widest habitat range of any bear species. As adaptable generalists, grizzly bears are low on the list of species threatened by global warming. The real threats to grizzly bears are excessive killing and fragmentation and destruction of habitat by roads and subdivisions. Although these are far from trivial problems, they are problems that people have managed and can continue to manage if we have the will. To address the threats to wildlife posed by climate change, we need to focus on real problems and not highly speculative or unlikely ones."

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Climate Change: Likely impacts from an increased number of warm days and changes in the amounts and seasonal distributions of rainfall and snowpack include: altered water quantity and quality (e.g. temperature);timing of flow; spatial and temporal shifts of vegetative communities and wildlife habitat; increased frequency and intensity of wildfires; increased potential for bark beetles and other insects; potential increases for invasive species resistance to mitigation measures; and increased opportunities for warm weather recreation. Recommendation EPA recommends that the FSEIS discuss the potential effects of climate change on grizzly bear recovery. We are particularly interested in potential effects from the increased bark beetle and wildfire risk associated with climate change.*

*Suggested Climate Change Reference:*

*EPA understands that many questions surrounding climate change remain unanswered, including what effects climate change might have on grizzly bear recovery in the CYRZ, SRZ and Bears Outside Recovery Zones. We believe the following resources, and especially those from the USFS's Climate Change Resource*

*Center, provide useful background for a climate change discussion.*

*Botkin, D.B. et aI., 2007. Forecasting the effects of global warming on biodiversity. Bioscience 57,227-236*

*Grace, J., Berninger, F., Nagy, L., 2002. hnpacts ofclimate change on the tree line. Annals of Botany 90, 537-544 .*

*Morin, x., Thuiller, W. 2009. Comparing niche-and process-based models to reduce prediction uncertainty in species range shifts under climate change. Ecology, 90(5), 1301-1313*

*Opdam, P., Wascher, D., 2004. Climate change meets habitat fragmentation: linking landscapes and biogeographical scale levels in research and conservation. Biological Conservation 117,285297*

*Peterson, David L., McKenzie, Don. 2008. Wildland Fire and Climate Change. (May 20, 2008).U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Climate Change Resource Center. http://www.fs.fed.uslccrc/topics/wildland-frre.shtml*

*Ruggiero, Len; McKelvey, Kevin; Squires, John; Block, William. 2008. Wildlife and Climate Change. (May 20, 2008). U.S. Department ofAgriculture, Forest Service, Climate Change Resource Center. http://www.fs.fed.uslccrc/topics/wildlife.shtml*

*SAP 4.4. Adaptation Options for Climate-Sensitive Ecosystems and Resources INational Forests. http://WW.f../.climatescience.govlLibrary/sap/sap4-4/fmal-reportlsap4-4-fmal-report-Ch3-. Forests.pd* ***(Ltr# 57, Cmt# 5)***

### Public Concern No. 101. The Forest Service should base road and trail management on site-specific evaluations of habitat and bear use by season and not precise standards spread across large landscapes.

**Response:** Road density and core standards were developed from data that did not include information on seasonal habitats. In the absence of this information, the Forests must base motorized access management on the best available science found in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997). Additionally, many motorized routes traverse several seasonal habitats or areas that may receive concentrated bear use at different times of the year. It would be difficult and time-consuming, and beyond the scope of this proposal, to attempt to implement seasonal or site-specific closures at this time. In addition, see responses to public concern statements 136 and 137 for clarification of general misrepresentation of the Mace and Waller (1997) report regarding non-motorized use.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*There is no basis for the assumption that motorized use is harmful to bears and other modes of human use are not. In the same 1997 Mace and Waller Final Report, they disclose and discuss analysis of their data relative to effects of trails closed to all mechanical and even horse use in Jewel Basin. They found grizzly bears were significantly further from available habitat next to non-motorized trails (Av. 813 to 1129 meters) and lakes with camping (1378 to 2031 meters) JMace and Waller, 1997. p76-771. The documented displacements of bear habitat use from 1/2 to over 1 mile is strictly due to non-motorized human use and it exceeds any significant displacement next to roads with less than 60 vehicles/day. The bottom line is that road and trail management should be based on site-specific evaluations of habitat and bear use by season, not precise standards spread across large landscapes. Finally bears that avoid humans are not "harmed". Instead, the instinct to avoid humans taught by mother bears keeps wild bear populations alive and healthy, not habituated like overprotected Park bears.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 11)***

### Public Concern No. 103. The Forest Service should consider the study conducted by Michael Proctor in 2004 for grizzly movement across British Columbia Highway 3 regarding declines in population and the findings of the Selkirk Recovery Zone as a female habitat island.

**Response:** Since the Proctor (2004) study was published, at least one female that was originally sampled north of Highway 3 has turned up in the U.S. portion of the recovery zone during DNA sampling (Wakkinen et al. 2010). In addition, a young female grizzly bear that was captured east of the Myrtle Creek BMU and released in the Idaho Department of Lands BMU in the spring of 2009 traveled north into Canada and across Highway 3. She was subsequently killed as she attempted to recross Highway 3 in the summer of 2010. It is possible that the South Selkirks are less of a "female habitat island" than originally thought.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*A DNA study conducted by Michael Proctor (2004) to test for grizzly movement across BC Highway 3 north of the CYRZ and SRZ sampled 104 bears and found that 5 males and no females crossed the highway. He further found that the entire grizzly population south of Hwy. 3, was only 40-50 individuals, and was declining at 3.7% per year. This same research also found that the SRZ was already a "Female habitat island."* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 104. The Forest Service should recognize that the Cabinet-Yaak and the Selkirk Recovery Zones do not meet the three standards set forth in the 1993 Grizzly Recovery Plan for grizzly bears to reach viability and recovery.

**Response:** This information is included in the FSEIS (pages 66-67) and the Biological Assessment for this project.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The 1993 Grizzly Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993) sets out three specific criteria that must be met for the CYRZ and SRZ grizzlies to reach viability and recovery. These standards are: (a) an average of six females with cubs of the year (FCOY); (b) 18 of22 Bear Management Units (BMU's) occupied over a six year period (CYRZ) and 7 of 10 in the SRZ; and (c) mortality levels not to exceed 4% of the minimum population, of which, no more than 30% can be female. Neither ecosystem meets any of these standards.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 105. The Forest Service should consider that 22 percent of the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem and 31 percent of its grizzly bears would be cut off if both the Montanore and Rock Creek Mines operate at the same time, leaving too small a population to remain viable.

**Response:** It is recognized in the cumulative effects discussion of the FSEIS that major mining activities, such as the Rock Creek and Montanore, are active or planned within the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone (FSEIS, page 103). Consideration of project impacts on grizzly habitat and viability resulting from the Rock Creek and Montanore mines will be dealt with in separate project-specific consultation with the USFWS. Each of these projects includes a substantial mitigation plan that addresses multiple risk factors including changes in wheeled motorized vehicle access, potential displacement, attractants, law enforcement, and small population numbers. These changes are not expected to provide security levels above those proposed in the decision for this FSEIS, but rather are expected to assure achievement of the selected standards, which would result in an improvement over existing conditions.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*In the CYRZ, both the Rock Creek and Montanore Mine projects continue to be pursued, as usual with quick approvals by the Kootenai National Forest. In its 2006 Biological Opinion on the Rock Creek Mine, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service noted that if both mines operated at the same time, it would cut off 22 % of the ecosystem and 31 % of its grizzlies, leaving too small a population to remain viable (USDI 2006).* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 9)***

**Public Concern No. 106. The Forest Service should clarify and correct the following statements found in the DSEIS regarding access management, road densities, and grizzly bear mortality because they seem to contradict one another even though nothing can "guarantee" lower mortality rates:**

> *** On page 36 of the DSEIS it states, "Despite the uncertainty as to why individual bears in these studies selected the habitat they did, it can be reasonably concluded that areas of lower road density or providing higher amounts of core area does not necessarily guarantee lower mortality rates"; and**
>
> *** On page 61 of the DSEIS it states, "In 1995, the USFWS determined that road densities are 'impairing essential behavioral patterns, increasing mortality risk, and resulting in significantly less use of habitat than expected' on the KNF (USDI 1995). These conditions were determined to contribute to incidental take of grizzly bears."**

**Response:** The Forest Service is aware of the body of research and scientific studies regarding the negative direct and indirect effects that roads have on grizzly bears and have summarized those effects in the FSEIS (page 91) and the Biological Assessment. Specifically, human use of motorized roads and trails within occupied grizzly bear habitat may produce or facilitate several kinds of adverse effects to grizzly bears including the following: (1) shooting mortality; (2) displacement from preferred habitat by human disturbance associated with road use and resultant reduction in habitat availability; (3) habituation to humans and motor vehicles via an increase in human and pet foods, as well as garbage, which may result in them being destroyed (FEIS, pages 3-46 to 3-38; FSEIS, page 91). This impact of roads on grizzly bear recovery was recognized in the original 1983 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. Therefore, measures of habitat security were incorporated into the Forest Plans for the KNF, LNF and IPNFs (USDA 1985 and USDA 1986) or were applied as a result of consultation with USFWS after the release of these Plans (i.e., linear open road density, habitat security, and limitations on administrative use of restricted roads (FEIS, pages 3-13 to 3-15; FSEIS, pages 70-71). Beginning in the early 1990s, road closures and installation of roads to restrict motorized use began to be implemented to achieve these early access standards (FSEIS, pages 75-79).

The document does not claim that lower road densities and higher core would have little to no benefit to individual grizzly bears, but does seek to clarify that lower mortality rates would not be guaranteed through additional motorized access closures on NFS lands. This is because grizzly bear mortality is associated with other factors than just motorized road density in-and-around recovery zones on NFS lands. This includes factors such as the proximity of key seasonal habitats to urban areas, state hunting regulations in the area, and sanitation on private, state, and public lands. To date, grizzly bears continue to die both in areas outside of NFS land, as well as on NFS lands that are not near motorized roads and trails. The data in Table 11 through Table 13 (FSEIS, pages 57-63) speaks for itself. Mortalities can and will continue to occur on private in-holdings, in British Columbia, areas beyond the recovery zone boundaries, and even areas that are located away from motorized roads and trails. The November 2, 2009 mortality of a sow (who had two cubs) in the CYE provides an excellent example of this point as she was shot in a self-defense killing in identified core habitat in the St. Paul BMU (SCYE IGBC 2009; Annis and Allen 2009, Dueker and Allen 2010). Furthermore, these same data indicate that access management efforts by the Forest Service to reduce motorized access have helped reduce the incidence of grizzly bear mortality on NFS lands since implementation began in the early 1990s.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Having failed in this most basic obligation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) the DSEIS seeks to*

*cover the oversight by claiming that lower road densities and higher core are no big deal, as follows: "Despite the uncertainty as to why individual bears in these studies selected the habitat they did, it can be reasonably concluded that areas of lower road density or providing higher amounts of Core Area does not necessarily guarantee lower mortality rates." This would come as news to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) which the DSEIS P: 61 references as follows: "In 1995, the USFWS determined that road densities are 'impairing essential behavioral patterns, increasing mortality risk, and resulting in significantly less use of habitat than expected' on the KNF (USDI 1995). These conditions were determined to contribute to incidental take of grizzly bears." While nothing "guarantees" lower mortality rates, the Forest Service is well aware that scientifically based access management, properly implemented, dramatically lowers mortality risk. Its statement is clearly intended to imply that access management doesn't work and therefore, the Service shouldn't be held to a higher standard than that presented in the Preferred Alternative.*

*In addition, focusing exclusively on grizzly mortality tied directly to roads (poaching, road-kill, mistaken ID) ignores what every bear manager knows -that excessive road densities kill grizzlies in many indirect ways as follows:*

*- Bears become habituated to people and food conditioned around roads. If this learned behavior is taken into the wildland-urban interface, it results in a "nuisance" bear and management removal.*

*- Because bears are repelled significant distances from roads, and roads often occur in key habitat, grizzlies displaced by roads can suffer from poorer nutrition, as well as lower cub production and survival. In addition, grizzlies are repelled even when road use occurs at extremely low levels.*

*- Bears which choose to ignore the presence of roads and the developments they serve die at disproportionately high rates.*

*- Excessive road densities fragment otherwise large blocks of secure habitat into smaller and smaller habitat "islands" which may be insufficient to maintain viability. Road networks lower the carrying capacity of an area.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 30)***

### Public Concern No. 107. The Forest Service should re-evaluate the habitat parameters of road density standards, core area size, and administrative use as they do not correlate to the standards found in Mace et al. 1996, which resulted in Amendment 19 to the Flathead National Forest Plan.

**Response:** In the DSEIS, the “results were consistent” is being taken much too literally. This assertion comes from a passage in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) page 24: “A similar moving window, univariate analysis of road density and grizzly bear use patterns was conducted in the South Fork of the Flathead River (Mace and Manley 1993). Their analysis resulted in similar patterns of grizzly bear distribution in relation to road densities. As in this study, they found less than expected use of total road densities in excess of 2 mi/mi$^2$ of total roads and less than expected use of open road densities in excess of 1 mi/mi$^2$ of open roads by adult female grizzly bears.”

Additionally, we suggest this comment “bends the facts” by implying that the 19/19/68 standards and core block size come directly from Mace et al. (1996). In fact, the motorized access standards in the Flathead National Forest Amendment 19 were derived from a subset of adult female grizzly bears used in the preliminary Mace and Manley (1993) report on the South Fork Flathead River research effort (USDA 1994a, 1994b). The 68 percent core area result from this separate analysis differs markedly from the 56 percent “roadless area”[2] depiction of female

[2] Mace et al. (1996) reported “roadless areas”(road densities of 0 km/km$^2$) rather than core habitat. A cursory analysis of three Selkirk ecosystem BMUs using ARCInfo and a square window revealed that the amount of BMU within the 0 km/km$^2$ category underestimates core by approximately five percent on average (page 3, Appendix C).

grizzly bear home ranges in the afore-mentioned peer review publication (i.e. Mace et al. 1996). In addition, there are a number of differences in the analysis and study area land ownership patterns between the two research efforts, as well as significant differences in the size of the two population's home ranges that make direct comparison between results of Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) the South Fork Flathead River study (Mace and Manley 1993, USDA 1994a, USDA 1994b, and Mace et al. 1996) inappropriate (FSEIS, pages 45-52 and FSEIS Appendix C). Furthermore, a minimum core block size was never established in any of the South Fork Flathead River research reports or publications, although the minimum core size recommendation of 2,500 acres used in the Flathead National Forest Amendment 19 appears to have some connection with the preliminary radio-telemetry findings from that study as of 1993 (FSEIS, Appendix C) (also see response to public concern statement 127). The process that established administrative use levels is summarized in Wakkinen and Kasworm (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1999). In addition, see the response to public concern statement 131.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*In setting aside the USFS access management plan, "The District Court also found that the NEPA analysis should consider the findings of other studies measuring habitat parameters in other ecosystems" specifically the work of Mace et al. 1996, which resulted in Amendment 19 to the Flathead National Forest Plan. Here the results were based on 9, 14, and 11 female grizzlies (compared to 6 in the SCYRZ) and resulted in far more protective OMRD/TMRD/ Core standards of 19%/19%/68%. From the DSEIS response to the District Court's directive, it's clear the Service wants nothing to do with adopting these more protective standards, and is willing to bend the facts to achieve that objective.*

*First, in an effort to answer criticisms of the small sample size used in the SCYE study, the Forest Service claims the two studies "results were consistent." Nothing could be further from the truth. A road density standard of 33%/26%/55%, no minimum Core size, and 57-60 days of administrative use in no way correlates to a standard of 19%/19%/68%, a minimum of 2500 acre Core, and minimal administrative use.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 38)***

### Public Concern No. 108. The Forest Service should consult and collaborate with researchers from the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem (NCDE) and Selkirk-Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems (SCYE) to examine ways in which the NCDE findings may result in better SCYE standards. This would then indicate that the DSEIS should be based on connectivity rather than divisions between the recovery zones in regards to food sources and movement.

**Response:** The Forest Service does not "deny the possibility of a relationship between the North Continental Divide ecosystem and Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem," but stresses that the standards that have been developed in the different ecosystems are not directly comparable for a variety of reasons as summarized in the FSEIS (pages 45–52) and in a white paper located in Appendix C of this FSEIS (Allen et al 2011).

The Forest Service has determined and the U.S. District Court upheld (*AWR vs. USFWS*), that the issue of maintaining linkage between the two ecosystems is not part of the stated purpose and need for this project. Nonetheless, the Forest Service has identified and developed standards for the Tobacco and West Kootenai BORZ areas based in part on the possibility that they may serve as linkage areas between the North Continental Divide ecosystem and the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. Additionally, the Forest Service refers to the findings of Servheen et al. (2001) in regards to the issue of linkage. This document states that "the primary causes of grizzly bear habitat fragmentation are human activities such as road building; and residential, recreational, and commercial developments." The authors go on to discuss "habitat fracture zones" that are generally caused by human developments in "linear fashion along valley floors." Human developments along highways and major river valleys, in all likelihood, do far more to disrupt

linkage than forest roads in otherwise undeveloped NFS lands.

The DSEIS may have overstated the importance of whitebark pine seeds and army cutworm moths in the North Continental Divide ecosystem, and at this point in time, most bears in all three recovery zones may rely on essentially the same plant foods. However, it is not accurate to say that whitebark pine was "functionally gone from the NCDE for 20 years" at the time Mace and Manley acquired data from studied bears (1990-1994). Whitebark pine nuts were historically an important part of East Front grizzly bear diets in the North Continental Divide ecosystem (Mace and Jonkel 1986) (while there is no evidence that it was ever an important dietary component in the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem) and continued to be in portions of the ecosystem into the 1980s. It is possible that some of the sampled North Continental Divide ecosystem bears had learned to utilize this resource before widespread whitebark pine mortality took place and continued this behavior for several years, despite the shrinking food supply. Similarly, while army cutworm moths may only be present in a few areas of the North Continental Divide ecosystem, these areas tend to draw aggregations of bears from considerable distances and are nutritionally important to the bears that use them.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS tries to suggest that the NCDE and SCYE are dramatically different with the following statement: "In addition, food sources differ between the ecosystems. The NCDE provides army cutworms and whitebark pine seeds, which are two food sources either not present or not found in large quantity in the SCYE." In fact, army cutworm moths are only present and commonly used in a few areas of the NCDE such as the Mission Mountain Wilderness, and whitebark pine has been functionally gone from the NCDE for 20 years due to an outbreak of white pine blister rust. In reality, grizzlies in all three recovery areas rely on many of the same plant foods, and fall berry crops are critical to survival and reproduction.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 39)***

*In referring to the NCDE study of Mace and Waller (1997) the DSEIS says, "...their data emphasized that habitats were used primarily because of their attractiveness as a food source and that displacement from roads occurred as a subsidiary element of grizzly bear habitat use (e.g spring habitat selection near roads ...). Unfortunately, this is yet another misrepresentation of the Mace research. While researchers did find that grizzlies had a higher tolerance for roads in spring when first emerging from dens and needing to replace lost weight, their overall conclusion was that bears were more likely to select for unroaded areas, or areas with closed roads, as follows: "The female composite home range was negatively associated with increasing values of road density ...RSF (Resource Selection Function) values for the temperate zone demonstrated the selection in this elevation zone was greatest at a road density of zero for all cover types. As road density increased, RSF values declined ...Female grizzly bears occupied ranges having lower total road densities than unused areas ...Selection was greatest for unroaded cover types and declined as road densities increased.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 40)***

*Rather than continuing to deny any possibility of a relationship between the NCDE and SCYE, we would suggest the researchers from both areas get together to examine ways in which the NCDE findings may result in better SCYE standards. In addition, state and federal bear managers from these ecosystems have been reporting an increasing movement of grizzlies 1 into the "gap" between the NCDE and the CYRZ, suggesting that a long lost linkage may be in the early stages ofre-forming. And finally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently completing a 5 year status review which could potentially decide that the NCDE, CYE, and SE are one Distinct Population Segment (DPS) and therefore should be managed as a unit. All of this suggests that a DSEIS based on considering connections, rather than looking for divisions may be the way to go.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 41)***

**Public Concern No. 109. This EIS focuses on creating core habitat with little or no attention on improving the quality or availability of habitat. The Forest Service should consider timber harvest and prescribed burning in their plans to enhance existing grizzly bear habitat.**

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges that the early seral conditions produced by timber harvest, prescribed burning, and wildfire can produce seasonal habitats that may be used by grizzly bears. It is our intent to incorporate all seasonal habitats within core where possible, per the IGBC (1998) recommendations. Alternatives B, C, D Modified, and E Updated also include intent to pursue habitat-based access management when information becomes available to do so. Site-specific projects addressing vegetation conditions would be completed under separate NEPA and USFWS consultation.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Forest Capital Partners (FCP) is a large private forestland owner in Boundary and Bonner County. We, as well as our predecessor company, have been historically progressive in regards to grizzly bear recovery as we manage our lands in these two northern counties of Idaho. FCP stewardship measures implemented to protect grizzly bears and enhance grizzly bear habitat have for many years been part of our active forest management and are now part of our SFI certification program. FCP has also entered into pending agreements with the Nature Conservancy to establish conservation easements on our McArthur Lake ownership in southern Boundary County, as well as our Boundary Creek ownership along the US/Canada border. With the current road closure program on Federal and State lands, as well as the many positive stewardship practices occurring on our private forestlands, the grizzly bear population in the Selkirk/Cabinet Yaak ecosystem has been steadily increasing for the past 10 years. Any decision made by the USFS stipulating further road closures sends the wrong message to the public. It is unfortunate that the lawsuit that prompted this EIS has placed the grizzly bear in such a negative light concerning any type of public relations. The grizzly bear article in the Spokesman Review a few weeks ago was very misleading and for the most part iniquitous.* ***(Ltr# 72, Cmt# 1)***

*One additional note, it appears that USFS grizzly bear mitigation efforts with this EIS focuses on increasing "core" habitat with little or no attention on improving the quality or availability of forage. I would be interested to know if you have considered any plans to enhance existing grizzly bear habitat through proven management practices such as timber harvesting and prescribed burning.* ***(Ltr# 72, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 110. The Forest Service needs to include security guidelines, which address non-wheeled motorized use within the proposed forest plan amendments regardless of seasonal distinction.

**Response:** The original purpose and need for this EIS is to amend the three Forest Plans to include a set of motorized access and security guidelines for the active bear year (i.e., April 1 through November 15) based on more recent research and interagency direction regarding grizzly bear habitat use in relation to motorized routes (FEIS, pages 1-4 and 1-5). It was not designed to address management direction for winter motorized recreation (FSEIS, page 2). However, the effects of the alternatives on winter motorized use by vehicles such as snowmobiles are considered in this analysis (FSEIS, page 102). In addition, the IPNFs is currently in the process of completing a Winter Travel Plan that addresses the Selkirk Mountain Range.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*If the overall purpose and need for the Grizzly Bear Motorized Access Management Action is to amend three Forest Plans regarding motorized vehicle access and security guidelines to meet the agency's responsibilities under ESA to conserve and contribute to the recovery of grizzly bears, then the way the USFS has bifurcated the issue of motorized access between wheeled access and non-wheeled (winter/snowmobile) does a disservice to the overall issue of grizzly bear recovery. This is critically important, when one considers that impacts to grizzly bears are then no longer buffered by the denning season. This point is even more critical in the case of the Montanore Mine, which is proposed for location in the heart of one of the Kootenai National Forest's primary winter motorized recreation areas. A motorized impact is a motorized impact regardless of seasonal distinction, and perhaps more-so to grizzly bears, coming in winter.* ***(Ltr# 83, Cmt# 4)***

**Public Concern No. 111. The Forest Service should consider varying perceptions of grizzly bears, in regards to management of the grizzly bear, such as:**

**A) Take no action and let the grizzly bears adapt like the black bears; however hunting should not be allowed;**

**B) Humans matter more than grizzly bears, thus don't reduce our access for the grizzly bears;**

**C) Humans and grizzly bears can coexist in the woods, with people using common sense when around grizzly bears;**

**D) Grizzly bears in Yellowstone are not bothered by human encounters, so why is it different for this area;**

**E) If the forest is closed, it should be closed to everyone including the Forest Service;**

**F) Frustrations as a result of more road closures will cause detrimental effects to the grizzly bears;**

**G) The grizzly bear population is thriving, thus no need for more road closures;**

**H) Maximize or limit motorized use restrictions in and near grizzly bear habitat and it will improve habitat;**

**I) Access is not the issue, it is all about uninformed hunters that endanger the grizzly bears;**

**J) Grizzly bears are a plains animal, therefore do not close any more roads and open the gates;**

**K) Do not manage multiple-use lands like wilderness, just for the grizzly bears;**

**L) As the world population increases, grizzly bears need to be socialized to minimize mortality;**

**M) Educate the public about the benefits of hunting as a population management tool;**

**N) Post warning signs in grizzly bear areas indicating the threat to human life;**

**O) the cost of self-defense items against grizzly bear attacks are a costly burden on the user;**

**P) Some roads could be closed to limit motorized access, however leave the popular areas open;**

**Q) It is short-sighted to hamper opportunities to improve: forest conditions through timber management, community economic stability through renewable energy development and forest products, enhance recreation, and reduce fire suppression costs;**

**R) Consider the effects of the Eastern British Columbia hunting seasons and those effects on the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone in the United States;**

**S) Augmentation of the grizzly bears that have been removed will be needed to obtain goal of delisting.**

**Response (A):** The Forest Service did analyze a No Action Alternative (Alternative A), which

would maintain grizzly bear access management as of 11/30/98, before the Interim Access Rule Set.

**(B):** The ESA of 1973 declares that all Federal agencies … " utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered species and threatened species listed pursuant to section 4 of this Act." In other words, the Forest Service is legally required to participate in the conservation and recovery of the grizzly bear. However, it may be possible to conserve and recover grizzly bears while still meeting the demand for other uses of NFS lands. For example, in Alternative E Updated, standards for individual BMUs were developed to provide increased grizzly bear habitat security while allowing management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, and access and potential development of private inholdings.

**(C):** An important component of grizzly recovery is the ability and willingness of humans to share the landscape. Human actions, such as proper storage of food and garbage when camping, are very important in minimizing the chance of human-bear conflicts. However, grizzly bears can be disturbed by human activities and can be displaced from otherwise good habitat. Roads tend to be focal points of human presence. Local information (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997) also shows that bears prefer areas where road densities are low.

**(D):** Grizzlies are more numerous in Yellowstone than in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. As with any species, individuals' tolerances to disturbance can vary, and some individuals can become habituated to human presence. However, in general, grizzlies are sensitive to human disturbance, particularly near roads. Additionally, Yellowstone has a tremendous amount of unroaded backcountry. Yellowstone covers 3,472 $mi^2$, but only has 466 miles of road (information found at http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/factsheets.htm, accessed on 11/10/10). Compare that to the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones that combined cover 4,560 $mi^2$ (FSEIS, page 2) but had a combined 4,333 total miles of motorized routes in 2009 (FSEIS, Table 39, page 167). Additionally, in Yellowstone there is approximately 1,000 miles of backcountry trails but a very small percentage of the annual visitors venture off of the roads and into the backcountry. For example, in 2009 there were 3,295,187 visitors but only 39,736 backcountry overnight "stays." (http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/park.cfm?parkid=421, accessed on 11/10/10). In other words, most of Yellowstone has very little human visitation compared to the roads in Yellowstone.

**(E):** "The Forest" is not being closed, only some motorized routes. The public is welcome to use NFS lands; however nonmotorized methods may be necessary to reach some areas. Forest Service motorized access is also being restricted. Table 3 (page 18) in the FSEIS describes how much administrative use is allowed on gated roads by alternative. Also, if a road is closed via a berm, then even the Forest Service would not have motorized access to those roads.

**(F):** Sadly, there are some people that would risk a prison sentence and a hefty fine to illegally kill a grizzly bear because of their personal negative attitudes towards grizzlies. On page 102 of the FSEIS, the Forest Service describes the possibility that the negative attitudes towards grizzly bears of some people may increase if more roads are closed and those negative attitudes may lead some people to illegally kill bears.

**(G):** Table 14-Table 17 in the FSEIS (pages 66-67) summarizes information provided in Kasworm et al. (2009) and Wakkinen et al. (2009). These show how far below delisting targets both recovery zones are as of 2009. This indicates that there is still work to be done to get grizzly populations in these two recovery zones to the point of delisting.

**(H):** Alternative D Modified was crafted to analyze the highest level of secure habitat for grizzlies based on the habitat needs of one of the six study bears using the least roaded conditions

from the Wakkinen and Kasworm study (1997).

**(I):** Page 102 of the FSEIS addresses the concern over grizzly bear mortality due to hunting. Hunting for black bears may contribute to grizzly bear mortality through mistaken identity, self-defense, or opportunistic poaching. Changes in access availability with implementation of the Access Amendment would influence grizzly habitat use and attendant mortality risk by reducing access within the United States portion of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones. This would result in a net cumulative decrease in mortality risk throughout the recovery zones.

**(J):** Grizzlies are habitat generalists. They were indeed once found on the Great Plains, among a variety of other habitats in North America. As they were killed off, only those populations in remote or protected areas were able to hang on. Roads and motorized trails facilitate easy human travel, and human disturbance can lead to grizzlies underutilizing otherwise good habitat and increase bear mortality risk. As described in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997), grizzlies preferred areas with lower road densities.

**(K):** Although Wilderness makes up a portion of both recovery zones, those areas outside of Wilderness are not managed as Wilderness. Although motorized routes may be closed to enhance grizzly habitat, those old road beds may still allow mechanized use (e.g. game carts during hunting season), or even snowmobile use. Wilderness does not allow any mechanized use. Land management activities may still occur in those areas outside of Wilderness (e.g. fuels reduction), and they are not allowed in Wilderness. These lands may still be available for many uses, it's just the means of access to conduct those activities that may be restricted. Additionally, there are lands within and outside of the recovery zones where all the current uses would continue, including the means of access to conduct those uses. Multiple use does not necessarily mean every acre is available for every type of use, it means that NFS lands as a whole, provide for a variety of uses.

**(L):** As previously discussed, grizzlies generally prefer areas with lower road densities (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997). As with any species, there may be individuals that can tolerate more disturbance than the average grizzly. The world human population is undoubtedly increasing, and it is the education of peopleon how to coexist with grizzlies that will reduce grizzly mortality, rather than attempting to "socialize" grizzly bears. Human behavior is a key to reducing grizzly-human conflicts (e.g., making garbage and food unavailable to bears), as is ensuring grizzlies have enough habitat away from roads.

**(M):** Legal hunting is one tool to manage healthy wildlife populations. The Forest Service does not set hunting regulations as it is outside of our jurisdiction. It is better that the agencies that manage hunting seasons inform the public about the role of hunting in wildlife population management.

**(N):** There are signs along some of the more heavily used roads indicating that this is bear country. In cases where a bear, either black or a grizzly, poses a safety concern, the Forest Service has then taken action to notify the public and limit public access until the problem has been remedied (e.g. closing a campground until a bear can be captured).

**(O):** It is a personal choice to carry "self-defense" items, not a requirement.

**(P):** In Alternative E Updated, standards for individual BMUs were developed to provide increased grizzly bear habitat security while allowing management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, and access and potential development of private inholdings. These standards were determined through consultation with USFWS and grizzly bear research scientists, and reflect the unique biological features and social factors (e.g. seasonal bear habitats and use, highways, recreational sites, residential development, private inholdings) found within specific BMUs (Kaiser 2003).

**(Q):** Again, in Alternative E Updated, standards for individual BMUs were 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 and potential development of private inholdings.

**(R):** Table 10 in the FSEIS (page 56) displays the number of grizzly mortalities in the British Columbia portion of the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone, including hunting mortalities. More information on grizzly mortalities in Canada can be found on the pages following that table, as well as the next few tables. Additionally, this topic is discussed again on page 102 as a cumulative effect.

**(S):** Augmentation has been occurring since 1990 (FSEIS, page 55) in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and continued into 2010. Augmentation is one tool that can be used to move a population towards delisting. The success of the augmentation program is reflected in the increase in the estimated population within the CYRZ since the early 1990s.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*It seems to me that instead of locking up more woods, we need to spend time and money educating the bears. The bears need to learn that the sound of engines, human voices, and the repetitive stomp of human travel are all sounds to flee. They need to learn that the smell of human food is not worth the consequences of investigation. Surely, for far fewer dollars than the proposed options will cost, we can hire people to live in the woods from April to November training the bears. Working Monday -Friday, these "trainers" could make the woods far safer for the weekend recreationalists who are unaware of the dangers they face. For a reasonable contract, I would jump at the opportunity to participate in making the forests safer. (Ltr# 23, Cmt# 5)*

*Subconcern # A*

*Take no action. The purpose of this country is not to provide a comfortable habitat for grizzly bear. Grizzlies can adapt, as black bear have. If they can't adapt, they can migrate to Canada. Prohibit hunting them and let them take their chances.* ***(Ltr# 3, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # A*

*I would like the people who want grizzly bears left alone to understand that grizzly bears have been in the Sandpoint area for a long time. I remember seeing grizzly tracks when I was a kid, long before they transplanted them here. Grizzly will survive wherever they choose. With more people living up high in the mountains there are bound to be more grizzlylhuman encounters. The one grizzly I know of that was shot was shot because he was making a trail down Priest Lake killing livestock. This was a bear who had been transplanted several times for being a menace. I have to question if this is the kind of wildlife we want to be prolific in our neighborhood?* ***(Ltr# 22, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # A*

*A few cars driving up to the lake won't bother bears. There are some rough side roads that might be closed.* ***(Ltr# 30, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Animals come and go, they move to new territories, new habitats. Please let the bears figure out where they want to live instead of manipulating their movements and habitat.* ***(Ltr# 67, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # A*

*Everything that comes out seems to get more and more restrictive. If these plans pass, then we'd better shut down Glacier and Yellowstone Parks as well as all the railroads. Of course in time that will come I'm sure. Why must you keep taking away our freedoms bit by bit, peice by piece?* ***(Ltr# 85, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Human beings matter. Taxpayers matter. So go back to providing us with services, instead of spending*

*scarce resources developing multi-megabyte studies.* ***(Ltr# 3, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # C*

*I imagine grizzly bears have roamed this region for a long, long time. I have seen bears, probably black but possibly grizzly, as well as other wildlife many times when I've been out in the woods. I've never seen any problem with us sharing the woods, of course with using common sense.* ***(Ltr# 12, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # C*

*Well, it appears the inmates are finally running the asylum, first the wolves, now Grizzly's. We already have grizzly bear in our backyards! I encountered a Grizzly in the Stewart Creek drainage back in the mid-90's. The owner of the Babin's Store saw the Fish & Game trap a Grizzly back in the 60's. You want to shut down more roads and prohibit or deny access without any legal or moral reason why except for succumbing to the wishes of the environmental crackpot minority? Have you people finally lost your minds? I'm sick of hearing the absolutely disgusting and unjustified proposals from you idiots who are obviously bored, have lost all common sense, and are merely trying to justify your beaurocratic existence. Just once, do what's right -the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, including the Elk and Deer populations. Just once, do what's right for a change and quit cowering to special interest environmentalist tree-hugging liberal morons.* ***(Ltr# 31, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # C*

*It doesn't make sense to spend one more dollar on research, implementation or the physical work to "re-introduce" an animal that already calls this territory home...They are here, we don't need more. Let Seattle "re-introduce" them in Washington, or N. California where they once roamed as well! Enough is Enough, first the wolves, now grizzly, next the Iynx ... ldaho is not a melting pot for the nations extreme environmentalists.* ***(Ltr# 32, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # C*

*If the U.S. Forest Service's presentation ofthe Draft: Supplemental Environment Impact Statement (DSEIS) is approved, you will basically be destroying the lifestyle that we all enjoy in Boundary County. Man and animal have lived together for millennia and both have not only survived but thrived. Every time government gets involved with Mother Nature, things go wrong. You don;t have to leave our region or think back too far, to remember the fIascos revolving around Canadian Caribou, the Lynx, and our current problems because of the introduction ofwolves as an endangered species to Idaho; and the list goes on. It would be wonderful ifthe states took over the US Forest Service and administered our public lands at the state level. Since that is not likely to happen, we can only hope that the US Forest Service recognizes the importance that our forests have for us.* ***(Ltr# 38, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # C*

*I am opposed to the sacred cow status enjoyed by the grizzly bear, in this day and time. To think that a grizzly bear is going to wither up and die if he hears a chainsaw running, or a truck driving by, is just more evidence of human absurdity. I'm not opposed to grizzly bears living in the same area that I live in, but I do not believe we the people should be restricted from access to the mountains that we love because there are grizzly bears that inhabit the same environment.* ***(Ltr# 69, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # C*

*People and wildlife are living together alright now in North Idaho, Western Montana and many other places. How can you say bears need more privacy when parks like Yellowstone have a million people a year pour through bear county.* ***(Ltr# 73, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # C D*

*It appears from the research cited, that the grizzly bear does not, by itself, require larger roadless areas in its habitat. It appears instead that: the bears do learn to recognize the presence of humans and leave the immediate area. Clearly, the evidence from Yellowstone and my own encounters with Grizzlies outside the recovery area in the Idaho panhandle make it clear that the bear can exist comfortably around human activity and is recovering and expanding its home range. Focusing research in the recovery area may well give a false sense of the recovery of the bear. I have camped and hunted for nearly 40 years in two of the*

*marked recovery areas without seeing a single evidence of Grizzly bear presence. Since the Grizzly areas were created, I have had multiple incidences with Grizzlies outside any of the recovery areas. Could it be that the bears just don't like the habitat you have found for them and they are expanding into better habitat and off of your "radar."? There is no question in my mind that there are enough Grizzlies already, they just don't happen to live in the habitat the Forest Service set aside for them. If they are expanding outside the Grizzly Recovery areas anyway, why do they need more protection to live in a place they don't like in the first place***? (Ltr# 23, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # D*

*I read your article in the local newspapers stating your "plan to Save Selkirk grizzlies." What a bunch of garbage. I am an outdoor enthusiast; I have been hiking, hunting, berry picking, fishing high lakes, and taking Sunday drives in the hills since I was big enough to walk. I have NEVER encountered a grizzly or a caribou or a wolf. The only grizzly I ever saw was in Yellowstone Park, where they encounter plenty of people, cars and noise. If these so-called environmentalist groups feel these animals are threatened, then they are the ones doing it. You can't be sitting behind a desk claiming this truthfully. You would have to be out where the animals are-harassing them.* ***(Ltr# 13, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # D*

*In all the time I've been up in these mountains I have never seen a grizzly bear, thankfully; and the only time I hear of one is when they choose to corne down to someone's orchard or to rummage through garbage on someone's property. Not only that, but Yellowstone and other National Parks are horne to grizzlies where motorists constantly travel so I feel that your desire to "protect" them from motorists is ludicrous since it is often the bear who comes to humans.Please reconsider plans.* ***(Ltr# 19, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # D G*

*There is no need whatsoever to close down any additional Forest Service roads for the grizzly bears protection or for nay other reason. Grizzly bears are thriving in Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, despite the heavy volumes of vehicle and foot traffic that is seen there. Vehicle and foot traffic is miniscule by comparison in our NW Montana/Northern Idaho Forest Service areas. Furthermore, our Forest Service roads are not maintined well enough to promote high rates of speed that could kill jay-walking grizzly bears.* ***(Ltr# 75, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # E*

*How can you keep people from enjoying "God's Greatest Gift." With the economy the way it is, why are you wasting time and money on this stupid project? You should be doing more so families can still have family time together doing good clean fun. I am proud to say I am not an overeducated, simple-minded person who has nothing better to do than cause heartache and misery to the majority of people. If you close the forest, that means you should close it for everybody, including the environmentalists and the Forest Service.* ***(Ltr# 13, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # F*

*The environmentalists keep trying to lock up more and more of the national forest, so that the old people like me can not use it. I am over 80 years old with bad knees, but I still like to get out and pick berries, hunt birds, and big game, but I find more and more of my favorite roads gated. Now the wolves are decimating the big game in this area. If the federal government refused to do anything. The hunters will start to poison and shoot them.* ***(Ltr# 15, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # F*

*P. 61: "It is possible that increased restrictions on access may make it more difficult to find and kill bears, even for those people who set out to intentionally do so. However, some level of illegal human-caused mortality may always occur, simply because some individuals do not accept grizzly bears under any circumstances. Therefore, it is possible that those alternatives which result in the greatest restriction of wheeled motorized vehicle access may result in a higher risk of illegal shooting mortalities." In other words, it's better to proactively cater to extortionists, right, instead of considering stronger steps to punish killing endangered species?* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 27)***

*Subconcern # F*

*Further access restrictions could very well backfire. There is a bitterness out there that you are not hearing. I had a weathered, backwoodsmen get in my face to point blank tell me, "if I ever see one of those G. D. sons's a bitch-----I'II shoot it, cover my tracks & you will not even know about it./I I witnessed another elk hunter on horseback miles from a road in the Clearwater National Forest who boosted of seeing 14 bear and shot as many as he could.* ***(Ltr# 47, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # F*

*Grizzlies may be taking a greater hit by depriving us of further restrictions. It's very annoying to witness road closures, tank trapped back farther and farther from the trail head. Hiking up a road is not a wilderness experience.* ***(Ltr# 47, Cmt# 5)***

*Subconcern # F*

*A war for habitat is being waged. This war has been a one sided victory for the humans until 1982 when portions of land were preserved for recovery of the Grizzlies. At that point many citizens of the regions affected realized that what was happening to the Grizzlies was a terrible thing and modified our behavior. We also realized that environmental activists were going to attempt to close all lands that had arty Grizzlies left, and the Shoot Shovel and Shut Up policy was adopted in an attempt to keep humans in our habitat. I personally have never participated in the Shoot or Shovel portion, but the shut up portion I exercised continually. I have seen many many Grizzlies over a period of about 35 years. I couldn't tell you if they were the same grizzlies multiple times but I never report sightings for fear of further closures. Any further closures to the public are going to escalate this war and the only victims will be the Grizzlies. Many of the studies have indicated that many of the poaching, self-defense and misidentification mortalities of Grizzly bears are motivated by anti-closure behavior and I agree.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # G*

*I came to Libby in 1974. The move to this area was based on the recreational opportunities that the surrounding national forest offered the average person. At that time there were no road closures. When the USFS began implementing the idea of road access closures, it was a needed implementation to protect game species and the overall forest environment. The Forest Service continued with additional closures until the early 90's. Again, a good idea which most of the public accepted knowing it was a necessary program. Today on the Kootenai National Forest the animal population seems to be thriving, including an all time high number of wolves and grizzly bears. There have been numerous sightings by knowledgeable local recreationists including one notable cell phone photo I was shown of two grizzlies feeding on clover on an open road in the Wolf Creek area. I, therefore, cannot understand the need to close more access.* ***(Ltr# 16, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # G*

*Why is it that the bears and wolves are getting so much special treatment while your mule deer herd just keeps going down the toilet You are using the tax payer dollars to fund these programs and then you are shouting out the tax payer from enjoy the public land I think that is wrong. The western states as a whole need to stop catering to the tree hugging liberals. The hunters and outdoor sportsmen that use all those roads and trails every year that's who's dollars fund those states not the tree hugging liberal. I have no problem with the bears but Idaho already has bears in it so why do you need to block off a bunch of land to put something back that is already there. And then once you got them back to more bears than the land can hold you will miss manage them just like you do the wolves that you got started and don't control now. The people that want to have the wolves and bears back to there native land are not the same people that use and enjoy that land each and every year. So I guess in 20 to 30 year when you have no mule deer you will block off a bunch of land for them to.* ***(Ltr# 33, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # G*

*Over the years the Forest Service has spent thousands of tax payer dollars maintaining roads, trails and putting in recreation sites, and I thank them for that, but now you want to abandon these roads and recreation sites, and maybe worse spend taxpayer money taking them out. We like the improvements, don't take this from us. Grizzly Bears don't care where they live and we have already set aside road less areas,*

*1,340,502 acres in the Selway-Bitteroot Wilderness, in the Frank Church Wilderness 2.4 million acres, relocate the Grizzly here where their contact with man would be minimal at best. This is just one use of many that this land was set aside for. The way I understand it the Grizzly numbers are improving in the Selkirk's, great, but if there are one or two men illegally killing these bears then punish them, not the rest of us.* ***(Ltr# 36, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # G*

*If we get cut off from our public lands, our children and grandchildren will not have the opportunity to snowmobile, ride an ATV or horse, camp, hunt, fish, or even gather huckleberries in our national forests, all under the guise ofprotecting the Grizzly, knowing that the extreme environmentalist agenda is to shut us out completely. They do not understand the premise ofcompromise and common sense. Those of us that use the forest are conservationists at heart. We know that to do otherwise would be killing the goose that lays the golden egg. It is the goal ofthe extreme environmentalists to promote their own agendas and self interests to the detriment ofall ofus and our way oflife. As PJ. O'Rourke said, "People with a mission to save the earth want the earth to seem worse than it is so their mission will look more important."* ***(Ltr# 38, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # G*

*I am concerned about the impact of more closures on a major national investment -the network of forest roads. I have noted many roads on the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forests "put to bed" - culverts pulled out, and the road recontoured to its former state. These roads are no longer accessible for fire protection, forest management activities, and recreational uses. Wildlife habitat protection is an important aspect of the multiple use of our forests. (Wildlife viewing is a very enjoyable part of our recreational activities.) But it should not be the only aspect, to the exclusion of others. According to page 15 of the draft plan, standards for bear management units cannot be met in all areas, "since an insufficient number of roads existed under USFS jurisdiction .. , to adequately reduce access to meet ... standards." That suggests that county roads in north Idaho and northwest Montana, perhaps even Highway 2, might have to be closed, to adequately reduce roaded access, to meet standards. Apparently, too many people have already populated some areas of north Idaho and northwest Montana, adjacent to the national forests, to coexist with grizzly bears, and provide adequate habitat. Do we remove people and their aSSOCiated development, to protect grizzly bears?* ***(Ltr# 41, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # G*

*The City of Anchorage has over 600 bears within its city limits. Maybe grizzlies like the metropolitan environment better than the wilderness. Bears are not an endangered species. Go take a hike :into this beautiful backcountry of ours.* ***(Ltr# 47, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # G*

*In my opinion the Bears have more that enough space to be free from human contact. The road system on the mountain is very limited as well as the off road activities due to the thick trees and brush in the area. The primary use in the summer time is to visit the lakes which is a very small part of the Sq mileage that is proposed to be shut down and winter time activities include snowmobiling and show shoeing at which time the bears are hibernating under several feet of snow and far from areas where they could be bothered by people.* ***(Ltr# 53, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # G*

*The Forest Service has proven it can not be trusted to put grizzlies in my back yard. Survey them into the Forest Service headquarters' gounds and we the people will enjoy our lands.* ***(Ltr# 54, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # G*

*I have reviewed many of the studies allegedly involved in the recovery of Grizzlies in the lower 48 states and find that what little information is available is being misinterpreted or analyzed with bias. We have very little ability to even determine the actual population of grizzlies or if the populations are expanding or contracting or why? It should be clear to most people that this is a political decision to appease the environmental activists that continually litigate against the US Forest Service and Fish and Game to further their agenda .. These groups will not be satisfied until all federal land is designated wilderness and*

*all human activity is removed.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # G*

*Our grizzly bear population is doing well despite our open roads for all these years. Scientists have been pleasantly surprised by how they and their offspring have been thriving. So to sum up, please keep our Forest Service roads open, and consider opening more.* ***(Ltr# 74, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # G*

*Let me say that grizzly bears do no great service to our area economically, ecologically or even scientifically. I say let the grizzly bears that are here reproduce on their own, without bringing in any new ones. We have enough!* ***(Ltr# 75, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # H*

*If nothing is changed, the bears will hear the "whing ding" of ORVs and the roar of unmuffled trucks. This will frighten the bears and ruin the experience for your human recreational users. I strongly favor maximum motorized use restrictions in and near occupied grizzly bear habitat.* ***(Ltr# 17, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # H*

*As a avid outdoorsman, who has hiked and skied on the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forestes, I strongly believe that limiting motorized access will improve habitat security for these magnificent animals, which tend to avoid areas of highest human use.* ***(Ltr# 18, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # H*

*I strongly urge you to Nix (or at least, severely limit) ORV access to this world heritage, crown jewels, rare, wilderness area! These precious areas are already severely threatened from habitat 'fragmentation' (destruction!).Give threatened species a break today! Predators are vital to ecosystem balance. Do your job -Protect Our Public lands, waters & wildlife!* ***(Ltr# 28, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # I*

*I think these vast forest areas should be open to human activities, including mineral development and even logging in some cases. Previous forest plans whereby activities could be scheduled and rotated throughout the forests in advance were much more reasonable. I see no valid reason why grizzly bears should have these vast areas totally to themselves. It is not access to these areas that kills grizzly bears; it is uniformed hunters that endanger the grizzly bear.* ***(Ltr# 20, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # I*

*I feel the grizzly bear habitat in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear ,Recovery Zone should be made as beneficial to the bears as possible. social Impact to increase human ability to have motorized access to the area would only make things worse as it will not only scare the bears, the likelihood of human contact would probably inevitably result in the killing of the bears for "human protection"* ***(Ltr# 25, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # I*

*I favor whatever motorized access restrictions are necessary to provide the best chance for recovering grizzly populations. I own ORVs, however I do NOT believe that ORV owners have the rIght or need to degrade or undermine grizzly recovery. The closures necessary to ensure population recovery is in the best long-term interest of both bears and people.* ***(Ltr# 46, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # J*

*The grizzly bear is a plains animal and has never lived here historically. California has the grizzly bear on its state flag why not give some to California. Why should we have to be subject to someone's agenda. I live against forest service land and already deal with the wolf in my yard. This is private land and my animals should not have to live in fear. And no I am not moving I was here first. My husband's family has lived here for two generations and no wolves and just black bear, elk, deer, mule deer and such lived here with us. Do not close any more roads and open the gated ones. Enough is enough.* ***(Ltr# 21, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # K*

*The DSEIS is so focused on isolating the Grizzly from humans that it is actually creating a bigger problem and seems to be focused only on the "Wilderness is best" mentality. Surely the Forest Service realizes that if we lock up some of the woods today, the same groups will be back to lock up more in the future. For any who doubt this, the Wolf recovery demonstrates the insatiability of the animal activists. Everyone knows the wolves have far exceeded the recovery goals and are beginning to seriously degrade an extremely valuable resource, the elk. Yet the activists are still wasting everyone's time, energy and money, to fight delisting. It appears the activists will not be happy until humans are barred from the forests and must sit in their living rooms and imagine the wonderful forest and the days when people used to get away from city life and engage in camping, hiking, hunting, or fishing to remember the human place in nature.**(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 2)***

*Subconcern # K*

*It seems as though the environmental community will never give up .. probably because the public agencies are always giving in. As a citizen, taxpayer, and land-use advocate, I am requesting that you use common sense in dealing with the matter of putting 24 million more acres of federal land into wilderness.* ***(Ltr# 55, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # K M*

*In essence, it is my opinion that instead of locking up more forest for a benefit that is identified by the research cited in the DSEIS as questionable, we should change tactics and begin training the bears to avoid human sounds and food. This is the only approach that will save both bear and human lives in the future. It is time we end the "wilderness is the only good forest" approach to everything.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 16)***

*Subconcern # L*

*To ensure the future of the Grizzly and to minimize the loss of human life, the Grizzly must be socialized as its population increases. If the bear goes generation after generation without fearing the presence of man, we condemn some number of future forest users to death, and we certainly condemn future Grizzlies to death when they fearlessly become involved with humans. Let us never forget the events that happened in Alaska to our "greatest" bear advocate! (****Ltr# 23, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # L*

*Could it be that the Grizzly mortality cited in the DSEIS is crucial to socializing a growing bear population? Could it be that this is one way that the Grizzlies will learn to fear man? It seems that for each bear killed, a certain number of additional bears had a negative experience that may teach them to avoid man. Could this actually be saving human and Grizzly lives in the future? If the bears learn to fear man, there will be fewer encounters. With fewer encounters, more people can accept the Grizzly in the woods.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # M*

*Humans suing the Forest Service to lock up woods for the animals need to learn that animals do not live in a "Garden of Eden" where all living things live in harmony. The Forest Service needs to reverse the damage done by Bambi and teach people the truth about the cruelty of Mother Nature in governing animals' lives. The Forest Service needs to work with Fish and Game Departments to educate people about the benefits of hunting as a population management tool with a time honored tradition of feeding the people who built this country.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # N*

*The DSEIS is deeply troubling in its omission of the most important impact of the Grizzly recovery effort. It is very strange that the DSEIS focuses on how to reduce bear mortality and human injury. Why is human mortality omitted? Surely every rational person realizes that the Grizzly bear in Idaho will result in the death of humans. In an area like Idaho's panhandle, with so many people escaping Spokane and Coeur d' Alene to enjoy the forest, there will be fatal bear encounters. It is deceptive of the Forest Service to ignore the highly probable human fatality in a bear encounter. It is negligent of the Forest Service not to post warning signs on the roads in Grizzly areas whether inside the recovery areas or not. The Government requires all kinds of ludicrous warnings on nearly everything we consume, but when it comes to a genuine*

*threat to our life, the Forest Service does not issue any warning to forest users who may believe that all the animals live peacefully together in a "Garden of Eden" and have no clue that a documented human killer roams the woods where they are bringing their families.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # O*

*In addition, the more bears are protected from contact with humans by enlarging their private play ground, the more critical it is that every forest user is prepared with both pepper spray and firearms for self defense. This is a financial burden for many citizens.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 9)***

*Subconcern # O*

*The Grizzly bear recovery effort is a classic unfunded mandate by the Federal Government. The Forest Service' should include in its budget the distribution of all appropriate defensive tools to all forest users. Who pays for this additional expense borne by forest users and now required by the Government's program?* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 10)***

*Subconcern # P*

*I will discuss only the Priest Lake Ranger District portion of the DEIS because it is the only area I am familiar with. The district is heavily roaded so that it sometimes seems every square inch is accessible with a motorized vehicle. It is disconcerting to be hiking in an area that is the epitome of quiet old forest and be overtaken by a roaring motorcycle. Judging from the volume of traffic I see on the roads, some probably could be closed without depriving people of access to a variety of areas that would include the full range of activities you list. However, there should be a way to find closures that leave access to some of the more popular spots with a long history of public use. I refer, as an example, to Stagger Inn which also includes the lower grove of ancient cedars and the trailhead to Granite Falls and the upper cedar grove. There probably is a huckleberry field or two that should remain accessible although the huckleberries are scattered widely enough that perhaps that won't be an issue.* ***(Ltr# 27, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # Q*

*Since the Kootenai and the Lolo National Forests are conserving and contributing to the recovery of the grizzly bear, it seems short-sighted to hamper opportunities to improve forest health conditions through timber management, community economic stability through renewable energy development and forest products, enhance recreation and reduce fires suppression costs.* ***(Ltr# 49, Cmt# 7)***

*Subconcern # R*

*Another issue regarding recovery in the Selkirks is the structure of BMU's that lie within the Selkirk range. The U.S. public is penalized because part of our recovery zone lies within Canada. We were informed by Wayne Wakkinen of the IFG, that in part of this zone, Grizzly bears are killed on a frequent basis because of damage to apple orchards (in the Canadian portion of the BMU). Eastern areas of the Cabinet Yaak recovery zones are quite close to units in Eastern British Columbia where there are current hunting seasons for Grizzly Bear.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 6)***

*Subconcern # R*

*We also feel that the portion of the United States that is within the recovery zone is being managed extremely well, but that the portion in Canada does not have the same standards. Our community should not be suffering economically because of different management criteria from another country in which we have no input or ability to affect change.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 4)***

*Subconcern # R*

*I write in protest of any changes in the management within the study areas. On page 45 of the eis study, the human-bear problems are quite clear .... the problem is in B. C. Canada. 72% ofthe losses are there. It was also very interesting to see the live bears in b.c. aren't included in the bear estimates for our area, although the dead bears are!* ***(Ltr# 78, Cmt# 1)***

*Subconcern # S*

*Wayne Wakkinen of the IFG stated that IDFG is trying to trap a bear in the McCarthur Lake area, which will be taken out of the Selkirks and released in another BMU. This is another bear that we (the*

*community) will have to replace, to obtain the ultimate goal of delisting.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 112. The Forest Service should clarify the definition of "habitat" with respect to grizzly bear mortality and explain which of its' parameters do not matter in terms of mortality risk (see page 39 of DSEIS).

**Response:** "Habitat" is being used in this context to refer to conditions that exist with regard to road densities and habitat security. The DSEIS and FSEIS do not state that these aspects of habitat "do not matter' with regard to grizzly bear mortality, but that current habitat (roaded) conditions on NFS lands in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems do not appear to significantly contribute to mortality risk based on mortality patterns from the last ten years.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*"As discussed previously, the relationship between habitat and mortality is indirect and habitat does not appear to be a significant factor presently in mortality of grizzly bears in the SCYE." (P. 39.). What is the definition of "habitat" in this context? What parameters of habitat are you declaring don't matter in terms of mortality risk?* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 21)***

### Public Concern No. 113. The Forest Service should provide specific statistics on human-caused bear mortality and explain how additional road closures would significantly reduce human-caused mortalities on NFS lands when 54 percent of human-caused mortalities occurred on private or State lands.

**Response:** Table 10-Table 13 of the FSEIS (pages 56-63) provides the best available data on known grizzly bear mortality in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems. While it is true that numerous mortalities have occurred in areas outside of Forest Service control, grizzly bears continue to die on NFS lands, including two bears in the CYRZ in the last two years (2009-2010).

We would like to clarify your assessment that mortality has continued to increase within the recovery zones over time. The mortality data presented in Table 11 and Table 12 indicate that the percentage of known human-caused mortality on NFS lands has been decreasing since the late 1990s and after implementation of access management standards was begun in earnest in the early 1990s. Indeed, although there is 6.6 time more federal land than non-federal land in the U.S. portions of these ecosystems, the rate of human-caused mortality is 4.2 times higher on non-federal land than federal land (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a).Although not definitive proof, this implies that access management on NFS lands has been successful in reducing grizzly bear mortality.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Tell us how 87 bears have been killed by people in the last 27 years. (Three bear per year.) How did "Lands Council" substantiate this accusation? Did a remote hiker kill in self defense? Was there a casualty hit by a car on a paved road eating a road kill at night?* ***(Ltr# 47, Cmt# 2)***

*The majority of human-caused mortalities, which appear to be the driving factor in grizzly bear recovery, has been associated with private, state, or railroad land, or on national forest outside of the Recovery zones. Approximately, 54 percent of the human-caused mortalities occurred on private, state, and Crown (Canada) lands that do not have any motorized restrictions. Therefore, there are no indications that additional road closures within the Recovery Zones would significantly affect (reduce) human-caused mortalities on USFS land. (page 43, first paragraph indicates 35 bear deaths from 1999-2008; however, in Table 10 from 1999-2008, 31 bear deaths are indicated. The discrepancy should be explained or corrected.)* ***(Ltr# 50, Cmt# 4)***

*How many grizzlies are being killed a year -vs how many people does the road closures impact -#1 concern*

*in the grizzlies life -not #1 being human life* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 7)***

*-69% of grizzle bear mortalities are human caused -I think we are probably their biggest threat, yes, but what is the number killed per year -all to lock it up for thousands of miles of roads closed to potentially millions of (use/miles) people* ***(Ltr# 52, Cmt# 10)***

*Linda McFaddan of the USFS, stated "there have been several studies that prove restricting access to roads on National Forest Service Lands do not deal with the mortality issues grizzly bears face. Most of the mortalities take place on private lands, in Canada, or they've occurred within wilderness areas within huge blocks of forest that are far away from each other"****. (Ltr# 60, Cmt# 4)***

*Another major driver for Alt D (modified) is concern over increased mortality within these Recovery Zones. Now it seems to us that the extensive road closures and access restrictions in these Zones over the past many years would have begun to show some reduced mortality -yet mortality has increased in the face of these restrictions. Now it is suggested that many more roads be closed to reduce mortality?? Where is the logic and correlation to support this??* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 4)***

### Public Concern No. 114. The Forest Service should explain how there is a 67 percent probability that the Selkirk grizzly bear population is increasing when the population has had excessive mortalities for 13 of the last 14 years.

**Response:** The Selkirk ecosystem has had "excessive" mortalities in 13 of the last 14 years (16 of the last 18 from 1994-2011) only in the sense that there has been at least one human-caused mortality in 16 of these 18 years; when the Recovery Plan set the interim goal of zero because of low estimated population and uncertainty of population estimates when the Recovery Plan was updated in 1993. However, the Recovery Plan allows for a human-caused mortality rate of four percent of the population, with no more than 30 percent of this being females. Assuming a minimum of only 25 grizzly bears in the ecosystem (a low estimate based on the fact that Proctor (2007) identified 33 different bears in just a portion of the ecosystem), the ecosystem could theoretically withstand human-caused mortality of one male per year and still avoid population decline. Eleven of the last 18 years had no human-caused female mortalities while nine of the last 18 years had total human-caused mortalities of one or fewer bears[3]. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect an increasing population even though the amount of human-caused mortalities technically "exceeds" Recovery Plan goals (zero mortality) during 16 of the last 17 years.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Human-caused female mortalities and total grizzly bear mortalities have exceeded recovery goals set in the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan) in both ecosystems. The Recovery Plan goal set the maximum level of human-caused female mortality at 30% of total human-caused mortalities in any given year. The allowable level of total and/or female mortality levels have been exceeded in 8 of the last 14 years (57%) in the Cabinet Yaak Recovery Zone (CYRZ). Those levels were exceeded in 13 of the last 14 years (93%) in the Selkirk Recovery Zone (SRZ): In the SRZ, females have accounted for 35% of the mortalities, while in the CYRZ, female mortality was 70.6% of the total. (USFWS 2006, Wakkinen and Johnson 2006). Other goals in the Recovery Plan that must be met for the CYRZ and SRZ grizzlies to reach viability and recovery include: (1) confirmed sighting of an average of six females with cubs of the year (FCOY) annually; (2) 18 of 22 Bear Management Units (BMU's) occupied over a six year period in the CYRZ and 7 of 10 in the SRZ; and (3) mortality levels not to exceed 4% of the minimum population. None of these standards have been met in either ecosystem. The most recent population trend analysis for the CYRZ grizzly population indicates the probability of decline is currently 91.4 percent. (Kasworm et aI., 2006) The DSEIS states that there is a 67% probability that the Selkirk grizzly population is increasing. However, given the fact that the SRZ population has had excessive mortalities for 13 of the last 14 years,*

[3] Of the 39 grizzly bears that died due to human causes from 1994-2011, 11 were females, 19 were males, and 9 were of unknown sex.

*the scientific integrity of this claim is questionable.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 3)***

*For a grizzly population to remain viable" and reach recovery, human-caused Female Mortality cannot be more that 30% of Total human-caused mortality. Since 1995, the CYRZ has exceeded allowable Total and/or Female Mortality levels in 8 of 14 years (57%), while the SRZ has breached those levels in 13 of 14 years (93%). In the SRZ, females have accounted for 35% of the mortality, while in the CYRZ, female mortality was 70.6% of the total (USFWS 2006, Wakkinen and Johnson 2006, Wakkinen et al. 2009). Updated trend analysis for the CYRZ grizzly population indicates the probability of decline is currently 94 percent. (Kasworm et aI., 2007), and the DSEIS reports that the SRZ has a 67% probability of increase. However, given excessive mortalities in 13 of the last 14 years, this latter claim should be considered "suspect."* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 2)***

*In addition, it's important to remember that under more than a decade of USFS and USFWS "best available science", neither ecosystem has met any Recovery Plan standard, the SRZ has breached mortality standards in 13 of the last 14 years, the CYRZ has female mortality at 70.6% of the total, and a 94% probability of decline.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 11)***

### Public Concern No. 115. The Forest Service should more clearly address the results of the augmentation program associated with the grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges that augmentation of the Cabinet-Yaak population has been occurring since 1990 and is consistent with the Montana Grizzly Bear Management Plan (Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks 2006; FSEIS page 55). As noted by Kasworm et al. (2007), “[h]uman-caused mortality dominates grizzly bear population dynamics in the region (McLellan et al. 1999, Wakkinen and Kasworm 2004) and its reduction can aid recovery of small bear populations. The USFWS is currently implementing strategies to minimize human-caused mortality, improve interpopulation linkage with adjacent areas, improve habitat quality and security, and enhance public support for coexistence with grizzly bears (Servheen et al. 1995, Proctor et al. 2004). Augmentation is a necessary additional component, and is key to increasing numbers of bears so that the comprehensive management program can be successful” (Kasworm, Wayne F, Michael F. Proctor, Christopher Servheen, and David Paetkau, 2007. Success of Grizzly Bear Population Augmentation in Northwest Montana. Journal of Wildlife Management [71(4)], pages 1261-1266).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The results of the augmentation program in the Cabinets have been questionable at best. Two of the four female grizzlies that have been transplanted into the Cabinets since 2005 have been killed. The survival rate of previous transplants was also very low.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 6)***

*Since 2005, four female grizzlies have been augmented into the Cabinets. Two of them (50%) have already died at the hands of humans. The 2006 Rock Creek Biological Opinion concluded that, "Extinction may be imminent for grizzly bears in the CYE if human-caused mortality results in a significant loss of adult and subadult females. Clearly, we're already there.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 116. The Forest Service should focus on access management standards that provide adequate high quality secure habitat for grizzly bears on national forest system lands and not on how many grizzly bears have been killed in Canada or by trains.

**Response:** As stated on page 12 of the FSEIS, the overall purpose is to amend Forest Plans to include a set of motorized access and security guidelines to meet our responsibilities under the ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears. A number of other key directives that eventually led to this proposal to amend the Forest Plans are found in the 2002 FEIS on pages

1-4 to 1-5. In addition, the purpose and need to prepare the SEIS originates from the District Court for the District of Montana, December 13, 2006 ruling, in which the Court directed the Forest Service to prepare a new analysis that complied with NEPA Regulations [40 CFR 1502.22 (a) and (b)] and included detailed information on grizzly bear mortality (see FSEISpages 55-63).

To meet the purpose and need, the Forest Service has analyzed several access management alternatives. They range from the No Action Alternative (Bear Access Management as of 11/30/98, before the Interim Access Rule Set) to Alternative D Modified, which was designed to primarily focus on the biological needs of the grizzly bear; without consideration of social, valuational and institutional needs.

The data on grizzly mortalities across all land ownerships is included to provide context and a better understanding of how the Forest Service's access management can contribute to providing secure habitat for grizzlies in the recovery zones but cannot eliminate grizzly mortalities on lands outside of its jurisdiction. If the goal is to contribute towards recovery and delisting of these grizzly populations, then it needs to be clear what the Forest Service has control over and what it does not. By describing all the factors that cause grizzly mortalities in these recovery zones, the reader should have a better understanding of how access management on NFS lands can contribute towards recovery of the species, but is not the single cure-all to stop all grizzly mortalities within these recovery zones (FSEIS, pages 55-63 for additional information).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The Forest Service statements imply that access management is not an effective tool because it does not eliminate all mortalities. Is the Forest Service saying that the body of science regarding the effects of roads on grizzly bears should be set aside? The DSEIS includes an elaborate collection of charts and data which establishes the fact that many bears have died in Canada and elsewhere outside the Recovery Zones or on non-federal land. DSEIS pp.41-46. This is not new news. The point is that the Forest Service has a mandatory duty to conserve and recover bears to the best of their ability on lands under their jurisdiction by employing the best available science in decision making. What matters as far as the access management standards are concerned is whether they provide adequate high quality secure habitat for bears on federal lands. That is the question and should be the focus of the Forest Service instead of how many bears have been killed in Canada or by trains.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 30)***

### Public Concern No. 117. The Forest Service should acknowledge the detrimental impacts of both open and closed roads on bears that have been documented over and over again in the scientific literature as well as in USFWS section 7 consultation documents. There are several ways in which roads in grizzly habitat are detrimental to bears and indirectly cause bear mortalities: Bears can become habituated to people and food conditioned around roads. This learned behavior often results in a bear becoming a "nuisance" and requires management removal, which often means a dead bear. Bears that choose to ignore the presence of roads and the developments they serve die at disproportionately high rates.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges that grizzly bears can become habituated to people and food conditioned around roads (FSEIS, page 91).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The detrimental impacts of both open and closed roads on bears have been documented over and over again in the scientific literature as well as in USFWS section 7 consultation documents. There are several ways in which roads in grizzly habitat are detrimental to bears and indirectly cause bear mortalities: Bears can become habituated to people and food conditioned around roads. This learned behavior often results in a bear becoming a "nuisance" and requires management removal, which often means a dead bear. Bears that choose to ignore the presence of roads and the developments they serve die at disproportionately high*

*rates.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 35)***

### Public Concern No. 118. The Forest Service should clarify the statement made on page 45, paragraph 1 of the DSEIS regarding mortalities on State lands that do not provide any restriction on motorized access, as this statement is misleading in the fact that Idaho Department of Lands does in fact close numerous roads within the area and has a formal agreement with Idaho Department of Fish and Game for patrol and enforcement of these closures.

**Response:** The FSEIS (page 60) provides the following clarification: "…of human-caused mortality occurring within 500 meters of an open road takes place on private and Crown lands in British Columbia, and private or state lands that may or may not provide restrictions on motorized access".

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The statement on page 45, paragraph 1 that "A closer look at the available data reveals that 54 percent ... of human-caused mortality occurring within 500 meters of an open road takes place on private and Crown lands in British Columbia, and private or state lands that do not provide any restrictions on motorized access ... " could be misleading. It could imply that most, all private or state lands do not provide any restrictions on motorized access. IDL does in fact close numerous roads within the area, and has a formal agreement with Idaho Department of Fish and Game for patrol and enforcement of the closures.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 7)***

### Public Concern No. 119. The Forest Service should consider the potential increase of self-defense mortalities resulting from the lack of access to roads and having vehicles close by for safety.

**Response:** The Forest Service has no statistics on the number of close encounters between individuals and grizzly bears where deadly force was averted due to the availability of a nearby motor vehicle. While your scenario may occur, it is much more likely based on the available data that grizzly bear mortality is likely to decrease over time with decreasing road densities.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*I have never had to kill a grizzly in self defense and I continue to take precautions in the hopes of avoiding conflict. This is not to say that a self defense situation couldn't have been provoked, but I was able to avoid it by getting in a vehicle. Then I would either wait until the bear was a safe distance or I would leave the area. If these areas are closed to vehicles, I and many like me will continue to enter these areas by foot. Without the safety of a vehicle we will be forced to keep a larger safety zone around us and this would include killing bears that we perceive as too close. Of course this would be a self defense mortality and counter productive to reestablishing grizzly bear populations. Keeping these areas open to vehicles allows us to avoid grizzly mortality.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 120. The Forest Service should consider the negative effects that result from further access restrictions and realize, that education accompanied with the assurance that access will not be restricted, will do more for recovery of the grizzly bears.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges the potential social ramifications of implementing additional wheeled motorized vehicle restrictions (FSEIS, pages 100-101) as well as the need for continuing public education (FSEIS, page 65). More specifically, a change in motorized vehicle access may indeed result in a higher mortality risk for grizzly bears.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Closing roads is an underhanded way of reducing the public activity in the forests. If bears were being run over by cars closing roads could be justified but that is not a common cause of mortality. Human conflict is the largest cause of mortality and road closures are only going to make those conflicts more deadly to the bears. Road closures create a need to have revenge for punishing the public and that can only be focused on the grizzlies. They would be the loser of an escalating war for habitat. Education and a sense that our habitat won't be taken (or access restricted) by grizzlies will do more for the grizzly recovery that you can imagine.* ***(Ltr# 62, Cmt# 10)***

### Public Concern No. 121. The Forest Service is equally responsible for the recovery of grizzly bears, both inside and outside the recovery area, and should work cooperatively with other responsible agencies to maximize habitat security on their own jurisdictions because recovery of grizzly bears is dependent on management of all lands.

**Response:** The Forest Service has no authority over road management on non-NFS lands. While the agency is willing (and often has in the past) to work cooperatively with adjacent landowners and other agencies on various issues related to grizzly bears (including sanitation), it is not the place of the Forest Service to dictate road closures on other properties. Only a few sentences on page 36 of the DSEIS discuss the potential link between access management and grizzly bear mortality. Patterns of human-caused grizzly mortality within the project area are discussed in detail on pages 55-63 of the FSEIS. On page 55 of the FSEIS, it clearly states that habitat security (limiting motorized access) is important in minimizing human-caused bear mortalities. The document does not “downplay” the relationship between open roads and grizzly bear mortality, but merely emphasizes that access management is only one element within a matrix of other factors that limit grizzly population growth. Though it may be inconsistent with the view that Forest Service management of the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem is the greatest obstacle to grizzly bear recovery, the fact remains that only 12 of 61 (20 percent) of all known human-caused mortalities in the last 13[4] years occurred on NFS lands, with at least three of these grizzly bears killed by hunters more than 500 meters from any open road. Meanwhile, more than one-third (27 of 71 from 1982 to 2011) of the human-caused mortalities known to have occurred within 500 meters of an open road were killed in management actions related to sanitation issues (i.e. attractants such as garbage, orchards, livestock) on private lands or in Canada. It is not the intent of the document to place blame, but to disclose the potential effects of the action in context with ongoing activities on other ownerships.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Having spent a good portion of P: 36-37 downplaying the importance of access management that lowers road density and increases Core, USFS finally tells us the facts on page 44-45, as follows: "Of the 87 known human-caused mortalities that have occurred within the SRZ and CYRZ, 70 percent (61 total) have occurred near open roads (less than 500 meters), while another 14 percent (12 total) occurred in areas away from open roads (greater than 500 meters." However, having made this concession with its right hand, the Service takes it back with its left, by saying" For instance, 72 percent (63 total) of all documented human-caused grizzly bear mortalities occurred in British Columbia, on private, state, or railroad lands, or areas on national forest that were outside of the recovery area boundaries" (3.4%). Once again, the Service tries to imply that "someone else did it", so it's OK if USFS proposes weak access standards in this DSEIS. There are a number of problems with this approach. The Forest Service is equally responsible for the recovery of all grizzlies, both inside and outside the recovery area. Thus, the 3.4% of mortalities outside the RZ get added to the 27.6% of mortalities inside the RZ, for a total of 31 % of mortalities on*

[4] Reflects the time period since the Wakkinen and Kasworm access recommendation began to be incorporated on-the-ground and on NFS lands within the respective ecosystems (i.e.1999-2010).

*USFS lands.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 34)***

*Given the small size of both recovery zones, their near total isolation from each other, and from Canadian bears north of Hwy. 3, and the excessive mortalities in both, it seems counterproductive for the Service to be playing the "blame game" with its counterparts in Canada, and state agencies. Grizzlies in these two imperiled ecosystems will only stand a chance if all responsible agencies do their best to work together and maximize habitat security on their own jurisdictions since one area will not survive without the other.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 35)***

### Public Concern No. 122. The Forest Service should clarify the contradictions in the DSEIS that discuss the effects of management on lowering mortality on NFS lands versus non-NFS lands (see pages 36 and 37; and Tables 10, 11, and 12 on pages 43-45).

**Response:** The Forest Service disagrees with your assessment of the mortality information provided in the DSEIS (see pages 55-63 of the FSEIS). In addition, the document does not claim that lower road densities and higher core area would have little to no benefit to individual grizzly bears, but does seek to clarify that lower mortality rates would not be guaranteed through additional motorized access closures on NFS lands. This is because grizzly bear mortality is associated with other factors than just motorized road density in-and-around recovery zones on NFS lands. This includes factors such as the proximity of key seasonal habitats to urban areas, state hunting regulations in the area, and sanitation on private, state, and public lands. To date, grizzly bears continue to die both in areas outside of NFS land, as well as on NFS lands that are not near motorized roads and trails (FSEIS, pages 57-63, Table 11 to Table 13). Mortalities can and will continue to occur on private in-holdings, in British Columbia, areas beyond the recovery zone boundaries, and even areas that are located away from motorized roads and trails. The November 2, 2009 mortality of a sow (who had two cubs) in the CYE provides an excellent example of this point as she was shot in a self-defense killing in identified core habitat in the St. Paul BMU (SCYE IGBC 2009; Annis and Allen 2009, Dueker and Allen 2010). Furthermore, these same data indicate that access management efforts by the Forest Service to reduce motorized access have helped reduce the incidence of grizzly bear mortality on NFS lands since implementation began in the early 1990s.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*It's absolutely clear from Tables 10, 11, and 12 (P: 43-45), showing a shift away from mortality on USFS lands (with access management) toward increasing mortality on Non-USFS lands (without access management), that access management is critical to lowering mortalities -exactly what the Service denied on P: 36-37, but now embraces on P: 45. It seems obvious that had the Service been operating under science-based standards since 1998, we would be a good deal further along on the road to grizzly recovery.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 36)***

### Public Concern No. 123. The Forest Service should specify the duration of "temporary" and disclose the scientific basis for allowing temporary reduction of core area up to three years of the 10-year time span.

**Response:** The Agencies have dropped the provision for temporary three-year incursions into core habitat from the Design Elements in the FSEIS. As currently written, there can be no core reductions in BMUs exceeding the core area standard without in-kind replacements until all BMUs in the respective ecosystems are up to standard, with one exception being provided for in road stabilization projects.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS does not disclose the scientific basis for allowing temporary reduction of core up to three years of the 10-year time span. And the duration of "temporary" isn't specified.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 13)***

*In addition to the permanent reduction in core in many BMUs called for in Alt. E, both alternatives allow temporary reductions in core in order to implement timber sales and other actions. The standard, as in the 2004 Access Management protocol, is "no net" loss of core. See DSEIS at 17 and 22 under 'C': "No permanent net losses of Core Area below the baseline level[s] identified in [Table 4 (Alt. D) and Table 5 for Alt. E] shall occur within any individual BMU." Temporary reductions of Core require "compensation" which includes "in-kind replacement of Core Area concurrent with or prior to incurring the impacts to or loss of existing Core Area." DSEIS at 17 and 22. Alternatives D and E also require actions that decrease Core to be compressed into a three year period so that Core is impacted a maximum of three years out of a ten year period. Newly created Core has to stay in place for ten years, after which it can be entered again. In general Core can only be entered once every ten years, unless the action is the decommissioning of roads. The DSEIS does not provide any scientific basis for concluding that this manipulation of core will conserve bears by avoiding adverse impacts on them. This policy applies to individual blocks of Core within the BMUs. Thus ongoing actions that temporarily reduce the size of different blocks of Core within a BMU are allowed as long as the requisite three year constraint is followed and once a block is entered the Forest Service waits the requisite non-action time period before re-entering that block. Thus timber sale activities could be ongoing in different parts of a BMU and blocks of Core within a BMU could be at different stages in the action/non-action timing requirement scheme.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 20)***

*Continued from comment 20, letter 56. There are at least two assumptions that are required in order for the Forest Service to conclude that this scenario will not adversely impact grizzly bears and that it meets the agency's mandatory duty under the ESA to conserve and recover listed species and avoid jeopardizing their survival. The first assumption is that while these actions may displace bears, it is only for a short time. The second is that displacement does not harm bears, or rather that the compensation mentioned above reduces the harm from displacement to an acceptable level. The DSEIS fails to provide the scientific basis for either of these assumptions.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 21)***

### Public Concern No. 124. The Forest Service should be specific in defining the effectiveness of road closure methods used to increase core area and to decrease Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD) and road miles in BORZ areas, because some types of road closures are vulnerable to illegal breach.

**Response:** Roads closed to meet the no net increase in linear road miles in BORZ areas will be closed in such a way that a drivable road surface does not remain, similar to how roads will be closed in the future to provide core habitat. The methods used (e.g. culvert removal, surface ripping, full recontour, etc.) will be determined by the site-specific requirements of a particular road. Roads closed to decrease OMRD may employ the same methods. However, a gate or guardrail would also effectively decrease OMRD as long as administrative use levels are not exceeded and motor vehicle use by the public is excluded during the active bear year. Gated (restricted) roads are regularly monitored for illegal use and administrative use compliance. In addition, see response to public concern statement 139.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*"Roads closed to create Core ... will be put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for at least 10 years." (p. 18.) For BORZ areas: Roads closed to meet the no net increase in linear total road densities shall be closed immediately upon completion of activities requiring use of the road, be effectively closed with a berm, guardrail or other effective measure, and put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for at least 10 years. (p. 19.) The DSEIS isn't very specific in those places in defining how those roads will be "effectively closed with a berm, guardrail or other effective measure." Some types of road closures have turned out to be very vulnerable to illegal breach. Also, will roads closed to decrease OMRD have similar closures?"…* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 17)***

### Public Concern No. 125. The Forest Service should acknowledge that applicable studies show displacement is occurring even with seasonally open roads and that it is included in the definition of "take" under the ESA.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges that displacement is likely to occur as an indirect effect of defining new access management standards in the FSEIS (page 104). Specifically, …"bears may be displaced from preferred habitat by the human disturbance associated with road use, with a resultant reduction in habitat availability and quality and potential effects on nutrition and reproduction"(ibid). The USFWS, in the biological opinion for these amendments, has determined that incidental take would likely occur in those BMUs where one or more of the access parameters (i.e., core area, OMRD, or TMRD) are not currently achieved. Furthermore, it is the USFWS's opinion that the incidental take of grizzly bears is likely to occur in the form of harm (displacement) through significant habitat modification or degradation, which causes actual injury to grizzly bears by significantly disrupting normal behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a, pages A-81 and A-82).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*"Despite the uncertainty as to why individual bears in these studies selected the habitat they did, it can be reasonably concluded that areas of lower road densities or providing higher amounts of Core Area does not necessarily guarantee lower mortality rates." (P; 36.) Lower road densities and higher Core many not guarantee lower mortality, however that is certainly a logical likelihood. Regardless, the definition of "take" under the ESA also includes displacement from habitat that would likely otherwise be utilized, and the applicable studies show displacement is what's happening with even seasonally open roads.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 19)***

### Public Concern No. 126. The Forest Service should re-evaluate the LeClerc Bear Management Unit because many small slivers of land are considered core area even though they are highly roaded.

**Response:** The 2002 FEIS and this FSEIS address amendments for the KNF, LNF and IPNFs. Approximately 90 percent of the LeClerc Bear Management Unit is within the Colville NF, which is not part of this analysis (FEIS, page 2-5). The USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (2001c) Biological Opinion for the Colville NF included Terms and Conditions for no net decrease in core or increase in TMRD on NFS lands. Furthermore, Stimson Lumber Company manages approximately 21,000 acres of land within the LeClerc BMU and has entered into a Conservation Agreement with the Colville National Forest and the USFWS to minimize adverse affects to grizzly bears (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2001d).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We remain concerned about the quality of Core habitat in many instances. In the LeClerc BMU, many small slivers of land are considered "core" even though within a highly roaded matrix.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 20)***

### Public Concern No. 127. The Forest Service should establish a minimum size for core area, similar to the Flathead National Forest access standards for the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem.

**Response:** The minimum core area size of 2,500 acres (3.9 square miles) used in the Flathead National Forest Plan Amendment 19 apparently has some connection with the preliminary 1988-1992 radio-telemetry data from the South Fork Flathead River study and appears to have been based on a personal communication from researcher Tim Manley (McLellan 2000). However, core block size was not analyzed or determined in any of the research reports or peer reviewed publications that came out of this 10-year research effort (see core block section in Allen et al.

2011, FSEIS Appendix C). Conversely, Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) attempted to statistically determine if grizzly bears in their study area were actively selecting a minimum core size but were unable to do so; based on the available data set. However, they suggested that if a minimum core block size occurred, it was likely between 2 $mi^2$ and 8 $mi^2$. While this study demonstrated that grizzly bears used core area blocks of greater than 8 $mi^2$ disproportionate to their availability, it is inaccurate to say that bears showed a preference for blocks of 4-8 $mi^2$. Regardless, a minor amount (about four percent) of core habitat in both ecosystems is in blocks smaller than 4 $mi^2$, and all BMUs in this analysis contain portions of large blocks of interconnected core habitat. Please see pages 82-84 and Appendix C of this FSEIS for a discussion of core area block size and distribution.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Failure to establish minimum size for core blocks, both Alternative E and D fail to establish a minimum size for core blocks. Thus the Forest Service continues to ignore the best available scientific evidence regarding bear preference for large core blocks. Regarding core size, the WIK 1997 Study indicated that the female bears showed a definite preference for core blocks greater than 4 square miles in area and a even greater preference for blocks greater than 8 square miles. In spite of this important information from the W/K 1997 Study, the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle NFs continue to avoid setting a minimum size for core blocks. Core calculations for BMUs thus include small blocks of core that are unlikely to be used by grizzlies. Including the undersized blocks helps the Forest Service reach numeric core targets but fails to ensure that all core habitat designated as such is large enough to be useful and beneficial to bears. Also, small blocks may not provide adequate security from human intrusion. It should be noted that the access standards adopted by the Flathead NF for the NCDE include a minimum size for blocks of core which must be equal to or greater than 4 square miles in area.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 19)***

*DEIS correctly recognizes the importance of secure, roadless core in grizzly bear recovery. Unfortunately, it leaves major issues regarding the nature of that security unresolved and presents no standards for core habitat type, core size or method of calculating its size. Specifically, I note that: -Inclusion in "core" of unsuitable habitats inflates the apparent habitat quality of some BMUs, [e.g. high elevation "rocks and ice" in CYE BMUs 1,2,5,6].*

*-Alternatives C and E [pp.2-12,15] allow "57 round trips" for administrative use into otherwise secure areas. DEIS presents no justification for this level of intrusion.*

*-Alternatives C and E require [pp.2-12,15] " ...consideration of seasonal needs .... " but provide no assurances that those "considerations" would be adequate in any sense or even appropriate.*

*-Alternatives C and E allow use of core areas, so long as core remains [pp.2-12,15] " ... fixed in place for 10 years minimum. DEIS provides no justification for this time span, no evidence of its sufficiency and no assurance that spatial distribution of core would maintain adequate security.*

*-Alternatives C and E fail to deal with or even acknowledge road closure violations that lower security values.*

*Below, I explore these issues in more detail and show that any effective management plan for grizzly bear habitat in these recovery zones will require;*

*-Maintenance of adequate core areas in functional block sizes with appropriate buffer widths.*

*-Sufficient secure seasonal habitats that remain stable on a time scale of decades.*

*-Restriction of administrative use to very low levels.*

*-Demonstration of road closure effectiveness.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 54)***

*Core Size Appropriate designations of secure core areas will insure adequate size and usability by bears and will be designated using scientifically sound buffer widths. Grizzly bears select strongly for larger secure areas; roadless areas had to exceed 8 sq.mi. before the females studied by Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] showed positive selection. DEIS provides no standards for core block size and, under its proposals, the national forests could reduce roadless cores to small, unusable, dangerous isolates. DEIS also fails to*

*specify the "buffer" width around disturbances that are excluded from calculations of core areas. Wakkinen and Kasworm [1997] used, and IGBC, 1998 recommended, a buffer of 0.31 mi. However, displacement distances can extend much further. Habitats may need to be as far as 2 miles from trails and roads before bears express preference for them [USFWS 2000, p.59 citing Kasworm and Manley, 1990] and displacement from suitable habitat due to major developments may occur " ...for several miles into the drainage and from ridge to ridge .... " [USFWS, 2000, pp.60,63].* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 55)***

*Under the Interim Access Management Rule Set in effect since 1998 (IGBC 1998) the Service was to manage for Core areas of at least 55%. However, this Core standard contains no minimum acreage size for the blocks of Core Area, meaning they might be the large blocks that grizzlies actually need, or smaller "habitat postage stamps" spread all over a BMU. As noted in the Montanore Mine DEIS (USFS 2009), "Small isolated blocks of core habitat may provide lower quality habitat than large, interconnected blocks." USFS has steadfastly refused to designate minimum Core sizes despite the fact that the grizzlies in Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) showed a clear preference for Core areas of at least 4 sq.mi. (2560 acres), and extending up to 8 sq. mi. (5120 acres).* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 8)***

### Public Concern No. 128. The Forest Service should provide the scientific basis for its conclusion that the effects of displacement are minor; for example, displacement is minor as a result of logging activities that are short-term.

**Response:** With all due respect to the commenter, they have misinterpreted a passage from the Rock Creek Mine BO (USFWS, 2001). USFWS never states that grizzly bears can be displaced by short-term disturbances for up to 35 years, but that grizzly bears would likely be displaced for the 35+ year period that is the expected life of the mine itself. Similarly, the “long-term displacement” referred to in USFWS (1998) is in the context of proposed mines with an “indefinite” period of expected activity. This document also states that “mining in grizzly bear habitat generally results in greater potential effects to grizzly bear recovery and survival than timber harvest.” It is inappropriate to equate disturbance associated with mining in grizzly bear habitat to that of timber harvest, for reasons summarized in USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (1998) on page 21. The requirement that core habitat remain in place for at least ten years comes from IGBC access management direction (IGBC, 1994), and is based on the generation time for a female grizzly bear or the time it takes a female grizzly bear to replace herself.

There will be no administrative use of “core roads” – core habitat, by definition, is free from motorized use during the non-denning period. Mace and Waller (1997) defined Class 1 roads as those with less than one vehicle per day and Class 2 roads as those with 1-10 vehicles per day. Fifty-seven round trips per year (60 proposed in the CYE) averages out to less than 0.5 vehicle passes per day (also see response to public concern statement 131). Clearly this number more closely approximates Mace and Waller’s (1997) definition of Class 1 roads than of Class 2 roads.

The Agencies have dropped the provision for temporary three-year incursions into core area from the Design Elements in the FSEIS. As currently written, there can be no core reductions in BMUs exceeding the core area standard without in-kind replacements until all BMUs in the respective ecosystems are up to standard, with one exception being provided for in road stabilization projects.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*There is, however, a scientific basis for the opposite assumptions, e.g., that grizzlies avoid previously preferred habitat for many years when displaced from it and that the harm that results from displacement is not minor. According to Metzgar, 2001, it is possible that bears are displaced from areas where disturbance takes place for 35 years or even longer: Temporal Stability Core areas must remain secure sufficiently long for effective bear use [expressed in survival and effective reproduction] and, in the case of new core, long enough for recolonization and subsequent effective use. Ten years of stability is too short for these processes to occur. Grizzly bears learn to utilize habitats from their mothers and displacements*

*may persist beyond habitat restoration for unknown lengths of time, perhaps longer than 35 years [USFWS, 2000, pp.58, 60]. Similarly, USFWS [1998, p.33] states: " ... Long-term displacement .... may persist for several generations of bears before grizzly bears again utilize habitat associated with closed roads." Because grizzly bear generation time approximates 10 years [Harris and Allendorf, 1989], effective core must remain secure on a time scale of several decades.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 22)***

*Continued from comment 21, letter 56. Emphasis added. See Exhibit A, at 7. Displacement from preferred habitat can be extremely harmful to bears. The 2004 Biological Opinion for the Access Management Amendments discusses the potentially dire impacts from disturbance/displacement: " ....human disturbance within high quality bear habitats can also influence indirect mortality risk by disrupting efficient foraging strategies resulting in nutritional stress, restricting reproduction and dispersal, and potentially reducing carrying capacity (Mattson et a1.1987 In: Frederick 1991, and Aune and Stivers 1985 In: Frederick 1991). Nutritional demands of female bears with cubs is triple that of other bears, making their access to nutritional food sources and uninterrupted feeding essential ...(Jonkel 1982 In: Frederick 1991). 2004 Bi Op at 101. In other words the impacts of displacement on bears are neither short term nor minor, contrary to Forest Service statements in NEPA documentation for timber sales. Harm is defined in the ESA as disruption of feeding, breeding or sheltering. The Forest Service must present a scientific basis in the Access Management Amendment FSEIS for its conclusion that the effects of displacement as a result of logging activities are short term and therefore minor.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 23)***

*Temporal Stability Core areas must remain secure sufficiently long for effective bear use [expressed in survival and effective reproduction] and, in the case of new core, long enough for recolonization and subsequent effective use. Ten years of stability is too short for these processes to occur. Grizzly bears learn to utilize habitats from their mothers and displacements may persist beyond habitat restoration for unknown lengths of time, perhaps longer than 35 years [USFWS, 2000, pp.58, 60]. Similarly, USFWS [1998, p.33] states: " ... Long-term displacement .... may persist for several generations of bears before grizzly bears again utilize habitat associated with closed roads." Because grizzly bear generation time approximates 10 years [Harris and Allendorf, 1989], effective core must remain secure on a time scale of several decades.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 56)***

*Administrative Use In Core Roads with traffic levels of 57 round trips per year into grizzly bear habitats as proposed by DEIS [pp.2-12,15] will displace grizzly bears and expose them to mortality risks. Mace and Waller, [1997] found less displacement of bears from "class 1" roads for which the median level of vehicular use was very close to zero [R.Mace, pers.comm. and data provided] but traffic on the order of 57 round trips per year should have effects more similar to SFGBS Class 2 roads from which bears showed greater displacement [Mace and Waller, 1997, Table 7.1.5, p.72].* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 57)***

*Both alternatives contain sections on the rules for protecting Core that include more exceptions than they do protection, as shown in the following: " Core Area must remain in place for at least 10 years to be functionally effective for grizzly bears. Therefore, except for emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances ...newly created Core Area shall not be entered for at least 10 years ..." "For those BMU's currently exceeding (being better than) the standards for Core Area...temporary reductions of Core Area shall be compressed in time so that no more than a total of 3 years of the 10-year span are impacted ..." "Temporary reductions of Core Area shall only occur once per lO-year time frame per individual BMU ...The Forest Service may enter Core Area within a BMU more frequently than once per lO-year time frame for the sole purpose of completing road decommissioning or stabilization activities resulting in long term improvement in Core Area." (Ltr# 65, Cmt# 22) Both alternatives contain sections on the rules for protecting Core that include more exceptions than they do protection, as shown in the following: " Core Area must remain in place for at least 10 years to be functionally effective for grizzly bears. Therefore, except for emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances ...newly created Core Area shall not be entered for at least 10 years ..." "For those BMU's currently exceeding (being better than) the standards for Core Area...temporary reductions of Core Area shall be compressed in time so that no more than a total of 3 years of the 10-year span are impacted ..." "Temporary reductions of Core Area shall only occur once per lO-year time frame per individual BMU ...The Forest Service may enter Core Area within a BMU more frequently than once per lO-year time frame for the sole purpose of completing road decommissioning or stabilization activities resulting in long term improvement in Core Area."* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 22)***

*Since the Forest Service may temporarily reduce Core in 3 of 10 years, but -that reduction can only happen once per 10 years, it's clear that all 3 years of Core disruption must happen in a row! What the Service seeks to create under this DSEIS are fake protected areas that are Core in name only. As USFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are well aware, such extended disruption of Core Area can lead to the abandonment of an area for a generation, particularly by females with cubs.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 23)***

### Public Concern No. 129. The Forest Service should recognize the relative ineffectiveness of earth barriers and gates to close roads and require protection of secure areas utilizing road obliterations as an effective method of road closures.

**Response:** The literature cited either predates or was concurrent with earlier efforts to implement habitat security measures via road closures on NFS lands to benefit grizzly bears. The Forest Service acknowledges that early efforts to maintain road closures through earthen berms, boulders, fixed barriers, and gates were not as effective as desired in the early 1990s. However, the approach to creating restricted roads (via gates) and road closures to create core area (via berms, boulders, planting of vegetation, full recontouring of the road prism, and partial ripping and seeding of a portion of the road prism) has evolved since the early 1990s. Gate design and installation has been improved, monitoring and enforcement has become commonplace, and the need to repair or fix an ineffective point closure is part of annual budgeting and wildlife targets. Monitoring of OMRD is reported annually to the USFWS and provides documentation of breached closures and use in excess of administrative trips that would result in an increase in OMRD for individual BMUs. Also see response to public concern statement 139.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Use Of Earth Barriers And Gates; Violations Of Road Closures Managers cannot assume that closed gates and earth barriers effectively restrict motorized access in secure habitats. An extensive literature documents high failure rates [35 to 55%] of road closures in the national forests that administer these recovery areas [Bertram, 1992; Hammer, 1986, 2001; Lobdell, 1994; Platt. 1993]. Additionally, the Grizzly Bear Compendium [IGBC, 1987] as well as Fish and Wildlife Service evaluations [USFWS 1993a,b] recognize the relative ineffectiveness of road closures compared with road obliteration. The persistent violations of road closures will require protection of secure areas by road obliteration.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 58)***

### Public Concern No. 130. The Forest Service should rework the entire core area section of the DSEIS to ensure that core area is not entered, lost, or shifted except under the most unusual of circumstances.

**Response:** Design Elements clearly state that any roads closed to create core areas must be “put in a condition such that any need for motorized access is not anticipated for at least 10 years”; in other words, no newly created core areas will contain roads that will require future road decommissioning or stabilization activities. There are roads within existing core areas that are currently undrivable as a result of years, or even decades, of non-use. If these roads are to be permanently decommissioned, it will be necessary to enter these areas in order to remove culverts and otherwise hydrologically stabilize these roads. While this may not satisfy the commenter’s definition of “the most unusual of circumstances,” it is a short-term disturbance necessary to gain long-term habitat security.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The Service needs to rework this entire section to ensure that Core Area is not entered, lost, or shifted except under the most unusual of circumstances. Perhaps if USFS conducted its "road decommissioning or stabilization activities" as part of the original Core creation, it would have less reason to enter these areas*

*later. Grizzlies are a listed species not pawns to be shifted about at will on a habitat chessboard for agency convenience.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 24)***

### Public Concern No. 131. The Forest Service should clearly identify the scientific basis or management's decision criteria for selecting and prioritizing use changes in individual roads and related Open Motorized Road Density (OMRD) and Total Motorized Road Density (TMRD); and disclose the scientific basis for allowing certain number of exceptions for administrative use.

**Response:** Given the programmatic nature of this document, it is not possible to disclose site-specific changes in motorized access by individual road in the FSEIS. However, maximum changes in miles of roads open for public access, as well as total road density, is displayed for each of the Action Alternatives A-C (FEIS, pages 3-59, 3-60, 3-62, 3-63, 3-65, and 3-66) and Alternatives D Modified and E Updated (FSEIS, pages 174-181). Subsequent site-specific activities planned within the framework of the selected action will be subject to a separate NEPA review and documentation and further consultation with the USFWS (FEIS, page 1-2; FSEIS, page 1).

There are no trip limits on roads used in OMRD calculations ("open" roads). For those roads counted toward TMRD, but not OMRD ("restricted" or "gated" roads), the scientific basis for administrative use limits is summarized in the project record (Wakkinen and Kasworm Administrative Use Levels). This approach follows the Mace et al. (1996) definition of "Class 1 roads" averaging less than 1 pass per day with a median near zero. The researchers calculated that using a median value of zero and a mean of 0.5 vehicle passes per day, a total of 57 round trips per year would be available, divided proportionately among the grizzly bear spring, summer and fall, using the April 1-November 15 "Bear Year". If the Bear Year is extended to November 30, as is proposed for the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, the total number of round trips is raised to 60 per year.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Clearly identify management decision criteria for selecting and prioritizing use changes in individual roads and related Open Motorized Road Density (OMRD) and Total Motorized Road Density (TMRD).* ***(Ltr# 42, Cmt# 2)***

*The DSEIS does not disclose the scientific basis for allowing certain numbers of exceptions for administrative use of roads otherwise restricted to meet OMRD and TMRD standards.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 14)***

### Public Concern No. 132. The Forest Service should re-evaluate the minimum standards as recommended by Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997 because we don't believe these specialists intended for you to take the word "minimum" so literally.

**Response:** Per IGBC direction in 1994, each ecosystem was to develop standards based on research of bear habitat use in local population (IGBC, 1994, page 6). The Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997 report fulfilled that expectation and provided the Forest Service with the average access parameters of 33:26:55. Based on discussions with the authors, the USFWS and the Forest Service, the average amount of OMRD, TMRD, and core area were brought forward and incorporated as the "research parameters" to strive for in Alternative C. However, Alternative E (FEIS 2002) and Alternative E Modified (FSEIS) provide higher levels of core area and meet or exceed the Wakkinen and Kasworm average values for OMRD and TMRD across both recovery zones.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*"Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) '" recommended that information from their report be used to establish minimum standards. Based on their report and consultation with the USFWS, the USFS set minimum standards." (p. 47.) We don't believe Wakkinen and Kasworm meant you 'to take "minimum" so literally.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 23)***

### Public Concern No. 133. The Forest Service should explain the statement on page 57 of the DSEIS that recommended levels of OMRD, TMRD, or core area cannot be met due to the social consequences of closing certain important forest roads. There is not enough information in the DSEIS to make such a statement, because the DSEIS doesn't specify which roads it is referring to closing.

**Response:** It appears that the commenter is editing the statement from the DSEIS to imply that the Forest Service would not close certain roads purely in response to social pressure. The complete statement from the DSEIS reads, “In a few BMUs, recommended levels of OMRD, TMRD, or core area cannot be met due to a lack of legal authority to close highways and county roads, the high percentage of non-federal lands, or the social consequences of closing certain important forest roads". The Forest Service has no authority to close state highways or county roads, and has no interest in closing roads leading to private inholdings that may be under permanent easement or would subsequently be litigated under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). The project record contains information on jurisdiction, location, and access needs of other owners for all roads considered to be “unavailable” for closure. Since this is a programmatic document, roads are not specified for closure under Alternative E Updated, although project record documents do specify which roads would not be closed for the reasons stated above.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*P.57: "(R)ecommended levels of OMRD, TMRD, or Core Area can not be met due to ... the social consequences of closing certain important forest roads." There is not enough information in the DSEIS to make such a statement, since it doesn't specify which roads it is referring to.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 25)***

### Public Concern No. 134. The Forest Service should explain why the OMRD, TMRD, and core area standards were increased and are more restrictive in Alternative E Updated, yet conditions have not changed, the Forest Service hasn't violated the Endangered Species Act, and the biologists’ recommendations were adopted.

**Response:** In the 2004 ROD, Alternative E was the selected alternative and consultation with USFWS focused on Alternative E. Even though the court's motion states that the Forest Service was not in violation of ESA, the USFWS later withdrew their BO as a result of the Forest Service needing to issue another NEPA decision. To capitalize on previous efforts and aid in consultation for the SEIS, Alternative E Updated and Alternative D Modified in the DSEIS included the Terms and Conditions from the original BO as Design Elements. The Reasonable and Prudent Measures (2004 ROD, page 75) were also included and apply to reoccurring use areas (BORZ polygons). As described on page 3 of the DSEIS, consultation has been ongoing during this process and the original Terms and Conditions from the BO and Reasonable and Prudent Measures from the 2004 ROD have been updated for the FSEIS (see FSEIS, pages 9-12 for additional information).

In the FSEIS, Alternative E Updated proposes a stricter TMRD standard for only two CYRZ BMUs (i.e. Vermillionand North Lightning) and more stringent core standards for four CYRZ BMUs (i.e. Spar, St. Paul, Pulpit, and Northwest Peak). Additionally, the core standard was

lowered for one CYRZ BMU (i.e. Bull). The changes were generally the result of a reassessment of conditions in the affected BMUs since the 2004 ROD was issued.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Alternative D Modified sets the highest standards for OMRD, TMRD, and Core Area, with BMU's unable to meet these standards set at the highest level possible. Alternative E Updated sets road densities and Core Areas individually for each BMU based on the presence of uncontrollable factors such as highways, county roads, etc. It provides for some flexibility for management access, but not the same level of flexibility as in the 2002 FEIS. The question is, did the US Forest Service go beyond the court's 2006 concerns when updating the 2002 FEIS and the 2004 ROD. The lDT indicated that conditions have not changed, eliminating the need to reanalyze Alternatives A, B and C. The court's motion states the US Forest Service was not in violation of the ESA. The IGBC and the Access Management Task Group adopted the biologists' recommendations. It is not clear in the DSEIS why the standards were increased and became more restrictive.* ***(Ltr# 49, Cmt# 5)***

### Public Concern No. 135. The Forest Service should acknowledge the science-based conclusion that roads are the major factor in the degradation of grizzly bear habitat and that one of the ways to provide adequate security is to reduce the number of OMRD and TMRD and establish and maintain large areas free from motorized use.

**Response:** The potential effects of roads on grizzly bear habitat are discussed on pages 55 to 63 and 70 of the FSEIS, as well as on pages 3-6 to 3-11 of the 2002 FEIS. These passages are in no way dismissive of the relationship between road density and reduced habitat quality. Nonetheless, it is obvious from the data in Table 11 and Table 12 of the FSEIS that NFS roads have been much less of a factor in grizzly bear mortality in the last 12 years. This does not imply that reducing the presence of roads is no longer an important aspect for grizzly bear recovery, but that other issues, particularly big game hunting and sanitation, may currently play a larger role in limiting this recovery.

Currently, about 96 percent of the core habitat in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems is in blocks larger than four square miles, with much of this in blocks of over 100 square miles (for more information on core area block size and distribution, please see pages 82-84 and Appendix C of this FSEIS).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*In the process of making this argument the agency seems to be dismissing the science based conclusion that roads are the major factor in the degradation of grizzly habitat and that one of the most obvious tools, ways to protect grizzlies and provide adequate security is to reduce the number of open and total roads and establish and maintain large areas in grizzly habitat that are free from motorized use.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 34)***

### Public Concern No. 136. The Forest Service should explain the adoption and enforcement of precise numerical standards when there is nothing in the Mace and Waller 1997 final report on Grizzly Bear Ecology in the Swan Mountains of Montana supporting these standards, nor does it support the inflexible enforcement of these standards or the necessity for permanent decommissioning or blocking of public roads or closure of trails to motorized use.

**Response:** Mace and Waller (1997) do not report percentages of BMUs in certain road density

categories, although they did report "roadless areas[5]" of 56 percent for the multi-annual composite home range for female grizzly bears. However, the Flathead National Forest Amendment 19 access standards were derived from a subset of the South Fork Flathead River (Mace and Waller) data.

The standards proposed in this Forest Plan Amendment were generated from research conducted in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems by Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997). The IGBC has 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. Based on this direction, research data from radio-collared grizzly bears in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems were used to determine the appropriate levels of these three parameters. This study was conducted by two research biologists with a combined experience of more than 45 years monitoring grizzly bear populations in these ecosystems; and the resulting publication was peer-reviewed by nine biologists, whose comments were incorporated into the final report. The Forests also disagree with the interpretation that Mace and Waller "recommends against" establishment of road density standards. The researchers stress achieving a balance between grizzly bear security and survival, and human sociological and economic concerns. Alternative E Updated (proposed action) attempts to strike this balance.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*None of the science cited in the DSEIS has adequate data to warrant the adoption and enforcement of the precise numerical standards proposed. One of the most authoritative peer-reviewed grizzly research publications recommends against the Forest Service inflexible use of standards across thousands of acres of diverse habitat. "We maintain that road density standards and road closure programs should incorporate seasonal habitat requirements of grizzly bears. A properly implemented program would minimize road densities and traffic volumes in highly preferred habitats. Road Density standards could then be relaxed somewhat in less suitable habitats, allowing increased public use of public lands while minimizing threats to the local grizzly populations." (Mace and Waller, 1997. Grizzly Bear Ecology in the Swan Mountains of Montana., MT FWP. P. 73). There is nothing in the Mace and Waller 1997 final report on Grizzly Bear Ecology in the Swan Mountains of Montana that requires any of the specific numeric motorized access standards. In addition there is no support for the inflexible enforcement of the arbitrary standards proposed. There is no scientific support of the necessity for permanent decommissioning (obliteration) or blocking of public roads or closure of trails to motorized use.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 3)***

### Public Concern No. 137. The Forest Service should consider Mace and Waller (1997) findings that use of nonmotorized trails and areas displaced bears even more than motorized roads.

**Response:** The purpose of this Forest Plan Amendment is to address motorized access for the threatened grizzly bear within-and-around the Selkirk or Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery areas. Specifically, the scope of the analysis pertains to access standards for wheeled motorized vehicle use during the active bear year (FEIS, page 2; FSEIS, page 1). Therefore, the effects analysis for grizzly bear and other wildlife species that focuses on motorized access impacts is appropriate.

The Forest Service disagrees with this interpretation of the findings of Mace and Waller (1997). The report does not imply that nonmotorized trails and areas displaced bears more than motorized roads. While bears avoided areas of human use, most (66 percent) of trails were in forest cover

[5] Mace et al. (1996) reported "roadless areas" (road densities of 0 km/km$^2$) rather than core habitat. A cursory analysis of three Selkirk ecosystem BMUs using ARCInfo and a square window revealed that the amount of BMU within the 0 km/km$^2$ category underestimates core by approximately five percent on average (page 3, Appendix C).

types that were avoided by bears regardless. The authors do cite the McLellan and Shackleton (1989) finding that grizzly bear response to off-trail hikers was greater than that observed for other types of disturbances. However, these authors specifically state that responses of bear in the study area "were not associated with hiking trails." While the effects of non-motorized human use on grizzly bears are not well documented and what research exists is somewhat contradictory, studies have consistently demonstrated grizzly bear avoidance of roads and motorized traffic (FSEIS, page 50).

The bears in the Mace and Waller (1997) study demonstrated increased use of timber harvest units during summer and autumn, and the researchers suggest that certain harvest methods may promote fruit production in *Vaccinium* and *Sorbus* species. However, nothing in this study implies that increased road use can be beneficial to bears. With one exception, the researchers only found positive selection of preferred habitats near roads of 10 or fewer vehicles per day, and selection for areas near roads of greater than or equal to one vehicle per day only occurred in spring. The report states that "few bears exhibited positive selection towards areas near roads having greater than 60 vehicles per day," but does not say that positive selection occurred near roads of less than 60 vehicles per day. In fact, most bears showed negative selection towards 0.5 km buffers around all road classes except Class 1 (less than or equal to one vehicle per day). Later on page 73, the document states that "spatial avoidance [by bears] will increase and survival decrease as traffic levels, road densities, and human settlement increases." There are no statements on this page or elsewhere in the document that lend support to the idea that increased use of roads positively affects grizzly bear habitat.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The 1997 final report Mace and Waller stated on p. 72 that their road density data coefficients "were rarely significant in multivariate models. Thus road density did not strongly influence bear use of habitats within established home ranges ...". On page 73 they further explained how increased use of properly designed roads and timber harvest can provide positive benefits to bear habitat. Mace and Waller confirmed their data found positive selection towards habitats near roads when important habitat components occurred near roads and average daily traffic was less than 60 vehicles/day (that criteria would fit most of the hundreds of miles of forest management roads that have already been illegally obliterated and closed). The Forest Service is irresponsibly and illegally focused only on reducing motorized access and arbitrarily and capriciously extended the adverse motorized assumptions from roads to trails. Contrary to the recommendations of Mace and Waller, you just assume that any motorized access is harmful to grizzly bears while ignoring data in Mace and Waller that found use of non-motorized trails and areas displaced bears even more than roads.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 10)***

### Public Concern No. 138. The Forest Service has repeatedly misrepresented the meaning of the standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area as a way to permit continued road building in grizzly bear habitat. This is a subversion of sound science. The Forest Service must clearly address this misrepresentation by noting that all numbers from 0-33 percent, 0-26 percent, and 55-100 percent meet (not exceed) standards, and that no degradation of any Bear Management Unit from current levels will be permitted.

**Response:** Whether a BMU "meets" or "exceeds" the standards is a purely semantic argument being used to imply that there can be no loss of core habitat or increase in road densities. The statement that "no degradation of any Bear Management Unit from current levels will be permitted" reflects a value statement on the part of the commenter, and is not found anywhere in the Forest Service proposed action or the USFWS Biological Opinion, and is not recommended in available research. The intent of Alternative E Updated is to "provide increased grizzly bear habitat security while allowing management flexibility" for public and administrative access.

Providing this flexibility may involve core loss or road density increases in cases where this activity is consistent with Design Elements of the FSEIS. Additionally, Chief Judge Molloy of the U.S. District Court repeatedly makes references to ”overperforming” BMUs “exceeding” research standards in the *Cabinet Resource Group v. USFWS* decision.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*If we look at Table 5, P: 24 of the DSEIS, we see that after 11 years of management under the Interim Access Rule, 11 BMU's (37%) don't meet the OMRD standard of 33%; 12 BMU's (40%) don't meet the TMRD standard of 26%; and 13 BMU's (43%) fail to meet the Core standard of 55%.Beginning with Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) and continuing in a modified form in this DSEIS, we've seen the USFS adopt the following access management standards for Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD), Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD), and Core: OMRD greater than 1 mile/square mile must comprise 33 percent or less of the BMU. TMRD greater than 2 miles/square mile must comprise 26 percent or less of the BMU. Core area must be at least 55 percent of the BMU (Emphasis Added). Unfortunately, the Service has repeatedly misrepresented the meaning of these standards as a way to permit continued road building in grizzly bear habitat. For example, what the OMRD definition clearly says, is that 33 percent, and all numbers below it, meet the OMRD standard. However, since 1998, USFS has sought to claim that a BMU at 30 percent OMRD exceeds the standard by 3 percent allowing them to continue roading the area until they degrade the BMU up to 33 percent. This is nothing less than a subversion of sound science, and an abrogation of the Service's responsibility to protect listed species. USFS must clearly address this misrepresentation in the FEIS by noting that all numbers from 0-33%, 0-26%, and 55100% meet (not exceed) the OMRD, TMRD, and Core standards, and that no degradation of any BMU from current levels will be permitted.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 12)***

### Public Concern No. 139. The Forest Service should disclose that under conditions described in Alternative E Updated, standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area will fail to be met because:

#### A) This takes into consideration that there is documentation that gate closures fail to work; and the DSEIS shows that the number of miles changing from gated/barriered to open, indicates 110-330 miles become more secure, while 160-480 miles become less secure.

**Response:** The Forest Service disagrees with the assertion that gate closures fail to work “90 percent” of the time and no data are provided to support it. Additionally, the assumption that any use behind a gate renders the closure completely ineffective is not accurate (e.g., Griffin, 2004 – cited as Hammer, 2005; where gated roads receiving “administrative” use [quotes in original] are discussed as being “ineffective”). In fact, any reduction in motorized use from closure devices can be expected to decrease mortality risk and potential displacement compared to roads with no restrictions.

The Forests have spent considerable time and money replacing and improving closure devices in the 15 years since the last documentation of closure effectiveness in the Selkirk or Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems cited. Additionally, the Districts involved regularly monitor closures in grizzly bear habitat, and make timely repairs when damage or unauthorized use is observed (e.g. USDA Forest Service 2008, 2009, 2010). Gate locks are regularly replaced on the IPNFs, with key use closely monitored and the keys themselves (in most cases) impossible to duplicate. In recent years, illegal motorized use has become uncommon, and violations of closures by full-sized vehicles a rare event. As roads are closed to provide security, they are no longer simply “bermed” or “tank-trapped” to prevent motorized use. Instead, decommissioned or stored roads have culverts removed, have non-drivable waterbars or slash placed on the surface, are partially or fully recontoured, or some combination of these. As a result, roads recently closed to provide core habitat are effective at preventing motorized use.

Regarding USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (1994), the audit of closures on the IPNFs is dated and was flawed in a number of ways. This information documented the potential for unauthorized access, rather than the actual presence, thus overestimating the amount of "failed" closures. Several open gates and roads apparently receiving "heavy" traffic had active timber sales being conducted at the time, and were modeled as "open" roads during that bear year. A number of other roads with reported "minimum" or "moderate" use had scheduled administrative activities conducted along them, or provided access to special use permit areas. Ultimately, motorized use behind all but one of the closures was a result of previously planned and authorized use. The one exception was suspected to have been tracks made the preceding winter by timber sale activities during the grizzly bear denning season (USDA Forest Service 1994).

The Forests have made steady progress towards the research levels since the Interim Access Management Rule was adopted. In the affected Selkirk ecosystem BMUs, core habitat has increased by 13,755 acres (nearly 3 percent) between 1999 and 2009, with additional increases that will be realized as a result of activities in 2010. In the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, core habitat has increased by about 45,200 acres and 5 percent total in 17 BMUs for which these data were available in 1999.

While opportunities have been identified for accommodating increases in wheeled motorized vehicle access, such opportunites only exist in those BMUs with conditions that are better than the standard. For those BMUs, changes would not be permitted that would result in conditions for OMRD, TMRD or core area being worse than their selected standard. Therefore, standards for OMRD, TMRD, and core area will be met. It is also important to note that permitted changes would be unlikely to occur to the extent identified in the EIS (FSEIS, page 92). Any project that proposes changes that would increase OMRD or TMRD or decrease core area (but not drop below selected standards) would require a site-specific analysis, including public involvement and consultation with USFWS. In contrast, changes needed to bring deficient BMUs up to standard would be mandatory.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # A*

*When the first press release came out on the DSEIS, the media reported that both alternatives would improve grizzly bear security, but that the "moderate" alternative E would only close 325 miles of roads. However, when we examine the table on DSEIS page ii, we see a different story. First, we need to realize that both the agencies and conservation groups have documented that gate closures fail to work 60-90% of the time, so claimed benefits of gating roads are an illusion (Bertram 1992, USDI 1994, Skeele 1995, Hammer 2005). When we factor in this failure, plus the number of miles changing from Gated or Barriered to Open, it shows that while 110-330 miles become more secure, 160-480 miles become less secure. As noted under Baseline Condition, after 11 years under the Interim Access Management Rule, 11 BMU's (37%) still don't meet the OMRD standard; 12 BMU's (40%) don't meet the TMRD standard; and 13 BMU's (43%) fail to meet the Core standard.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 13)***

### Public Concern No. 140. The Forest Service should determine whether the grizzly bears in the Wakkinen and Kasworm study had chosen optimal habitat or whether they simply chose the best habitat available; and assess the relevance and importance of this uncertainty.

**Response:** Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) were unable to complete a second-order resource selection analysis in regards to home range selection and motorized routes because a GIS layer of the road system was not available for the recovery zones at that time. However, these circumstances have changed and an overall road layer is now available for development of a map

reflecting the approximate amount of core habitat[6] available during the tenure of the research effort (1989-1994). The Forest Service revisited the habitat security conditions available to the six study bears south of the international border and discovered they did indeed have several large areas of core habitat available to them outside of their home ranges (Allen et al. 2011 in FSEIS Appendix C). These large blocks of core habitat included an array of vegetation types, elevations, slopes, and aspects. More specifically, the composite home ranges of the Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk study bears in the U.S. reflected 28.7 and 41.8 percent core habitat, respectively, versus 38.2 and 44.3 percent core habitat available throughout the respective recovery zones in the U.S. 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.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*"The District Court found that the FEIS should acknowledge that the study authors (Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997), were uncertain whether the bears they studied had chosen optimal habitat or whether they simply chose the best habitat available; and assess the relevance and importance of this uncertainty." Essentially, the court wanted to know if the habitat on the three forests had been so compromised by decades of runaway logging and roading that grizzlies had few options to find the type of habitat they really needed. If that were true, it would raise serious doubt about the agencies adoption of the OMRD/TMRD/Core standard of 33%/26%/55% as one likely to bring about recovery. Unfortunately, the Service's response makes it clear that 12 years after Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997, the agencies still have not done the research and analysis to answer this most basic of questions. USFS notes that the researchers didn't do this analysis in 1997 "because a detailed route map was not available", but certainly this is no longer the case.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 28)***

### Public Concern No. 141. The Forest Service should address establishing and maintaining connectivity or functional linkage zones within and between recovery zones because it's essential for the genetic diversity and the recovery of grizzly bears and:

#### A) roads fragment otherwise large blocks of secure habitat into smaller habitat islands which may be insufficient to maintain viability, road networks lower carrying capacity of an area, and higher road density equals lower value for grizzly bear habitat.

**Response:** The scope of the proposed action pertains to access standards for wheeled motorized vehicle use during the active bear year (FEIS, page 1-2; FSEIS page 2). Designation or management of linkage corridors between recovery zones, while important, is beyond the scope of the proposed action. The FSEIS does address your concern that roads fragment large blocks of secure habitat into smaller habitat islands (FSEIS page 82).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

[6] The 1970s and 1980s represents the peak of road construction and associated logging on the NFS, state, and commercial timber lands located in-and-around the recovery zones. Additionally, the 1987 Fores Plans habitat security standards were just beginning to be implemented (e.g. gate installation and road closures), but were often ineffective at keeping motorized use out due to vandalism or ineffective design (e.g. Platt 1994). Therefore, developing a “maximum core habitat” layer (based on 500 meter buffer around **all** roads known to have been constructed within the recovery zone) provides the most conservative—and likely most accurate—portrayel of what the study bears had available to them in regards to secure habitat, i.e. core habitat selection (see Allen et al. 2011 in FSEIS Appendix C).

*Failure to Address Connectivity. No movement of grizzlies between the Cabinet and Yaak portions of the CYE has been documented in the last 25 years. Thus the 10-15 grizzlies in the Cabinet Mountains are in all likelihood completely isolated from the Yaak portion of the CYRZ. It has been well established in the scientific literature that connectivity between grizzly populations both within and between Recovery Zones is essential for the genetic diversity and the recovery of grizzly bears. Neither alternative in the DSEIS addresses establishing or maintaining connectivity within the CYRZ or SRZ or a functional linkage zone between the CY and Selkirk RZs, or between these RZs and other recovery zones, such as the Northern Continental Divide (NCDE).* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 24)***

*Since 1983, FWS has documented no movement of grizzlies between the Cabinet and Yaak portions of the ecosystem, meaning that the 10-15 Cabinet grizzlies are in all likelihood completely isolated (USDI 2006). FWS Grizzly Recovery Coordinator Chris Servheen (personal communication) has reported to the CYE/SE Grizzly Subcommittee that populations of 30-40 grizzlies have a 95% chance of extinction over 100 years, while for 20 bears, it's 100%.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 5)***

*On P: 53, the DSEIS notes that, "Habitat connectivity within and between the SRZ and CYRZ has been identified as a possible factor that influences habitat (Servheen et al. 2003; Proctor et al. 2002 & 2005) ...Habitat connectivity is being addressed through the Forest Plan revision process." First, as every first year student in Wildlife or Conservation Biology knows, connectivity is not a possible factor influencing carnivore survival, but one of the critical issues in maintaining viable populations (Soule and Terborgh 1999; Hilty et al. 2006). Second, many of us have been involved in the Forest Planning process for the CYRZ and SRZ forests, and the Forest Service is not addressing the issue of linkages in any substantive way, leaving these two ecosystems isolated from one another, from the NCDE, and from Canadian populations north of Highway 3 in British Columbia.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 43)***

*Subconcern # A*

*The detrimental impacts of both open and closed roads on bears have been documented over and over again in the scientific literature as well as in USFWS section 7 consultation documents. There are several ways in which roads in grizzly habitat are detrimental to bears and indirectly cause bear mortalities: Roads fragment otherwise large blocks of secure habitat into smaller and smaller habitat "islands" which may be insufficient to maintain viability. Road networks lower the carrying capacity of an area. The higher the density of roads the lower its value as grizzly bear habitat.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 37)***

### Public Concern No. 142. The Forest Service should explain the difference between core area and buffer habitat, which is broken down on the GIS layers on the IPNF website and whether the buffer habitat would be subject to the same requirements as the core areas.

**Response:** Buffer habitat as displayed in the GIS layers are those areas situated within the 500 meter ‘influence zone’ of open roads. Therefore, buffer habitats represent lower quality habitat where grizzly bear use is expected to be minimal based on their juxtaposition to the open road corridor.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The Idaho Panhandle National Forest GIS website has layers which include Core Habitat for Grizzly bears. Within this layer, the habitat is broken down into 'core' and 'buffer' habitat. Buffer habitat is not mentioned in the DSEIS. It would be helpful to understand where this 'buffer' habitat fits into the DSEIS, and whether the 'buffer' habitat would be subject to the same requirements as the core areas.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 143. The Forest Service should provide scientific support or justification for not limiting OMRD or TMRD levels in "Bears Outside Recovery Zones" (BORZ) areas, given there is no core area within the BORZ.

**Response:** The recurring use areas (i.e., BORZ) are not part of the official recovery zone area. Therefore, applications of the access parameters developed to identify use levels within a prescribed cumulative effects area (i.e. Bear Management Unit=home range of an adult female grizzly bear or approximately 100 square miles) are not appropriate for these areas. Changes in the recovery zone boundaries are the responsibility of the USFWS and would require supporting research and documentation on the amount of use by grizzly bear(s), availability/use of seasonal habitats, and the designation of an appropriate cumulative effects boundary (i.e. BMU) that is consistent with the direction used in that recovery zone (i.e. size of female home range)[7]. The latter is particularly important to ensure a consistent approach in application of the road density parameters and to afford comparison of areas throughout the ecosystem. This information would have to undergopublic disclosure and an environmental analysis to disclose the impacts of changing management direction. The USFWS has recently completed a five-year status review for the grizzly bear (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011b). It is expected that the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem recovery plan will be revised in the near future.

Recovery and delisting goals are targeted at the recovery zones, not outside of them. Because of the documented recent recurring grizzly bear use in the BORZ areas, Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated include conservation measures in BORZ areas that would maintain the not decrease the current level of security in these areas by not allowing an increased amount of wheeled motorized access beyond the baseline conditions.

It is stated on page 18 of the Recovery Plan (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1993a) that areas outside of the recovery zones are not primarily managed for grizzly bear use: "It is recognized that grizzly bears occasionally will move and even reside permanently in areas outside recovery zones. Bears can and are expected to exist outside recovery zone lines in many areas. However, only the area within the recovery zone will be managed primarily for grizzly habitat. Bears residing within the recovery zone are crucial to recovery goals and hence to delisting. The mere presence of bears outside a recovery zone does not warrant changes in the boundary line…Bears both inside and outside the recovery zone are listed as threatened under the Act and are protected under provisions of the Act against illegal killing. Management efforts such as pursuit, capture, and relocation will not be directed against grizzly bears outside the recovery zone if such bears do not come into conflict with people or domestic livestock or do not represent a demonstrable threat to humans. It is recognized that such areas are not primarily managed for grizzly bear use. Bears outside the zone that come into conflict with humans will be captured and relocated into the recovery zone according to the nuisance bear criteria in the Guidelines (USDA Forest Service 1986). Capture and removal of nuisance bears outside the recovery zone by authorized agency action is necessarily more lenient than within the recovery zone."

Some of the BORZ areas have relatively high road densities compared to the recovery zones. However, the presence of grizzly bears in these areas indicates that some bears have apparently acclimated to the conditions within them, and at least in the short term, seem able to find and secure the resources necessary for their needs and avoid human encounters resulting in mortality (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2011a). Since these bears have presumably adapted to these conditions, management of BORZ areas will guarantee no deterioration of habitat as a result of increased road miles (FSEIS pages 22-24).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS does not provide scientific support or justification for not limiting TMRD or OMRD levels in*

[7]Currently there is a paucity of grizzly bear use data, a lack of information on the availability and use of season habitats, and a large disparity in the current size of BORZ (from 53 square miles for the Pack River BORZ to 449 square miles for the Tobacco BORZ).

*"Bears Outside Recovery Zones" (BORZ) areas. Table 17 indicates that ORDs are high in many of these areas. Such standards are necessary, given there is no Core in these areas.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 5)***

*Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), all listed species are entitled to the same protection of the law regardless of where they live. Yet the OMRDITMRD/Core standards of this DEIS apply only within the CYRZ and SRZ. Bears outside these recovery zones (BORZ) are given protection that is considerably weaker than grizzlies within the recovery zones, in violation of the law. For example, on lands outside recovery areas, there are no OMRD, TMRD, or Core standards based on a Moving Windows analysis of each square mile, and the DSEIS notes that, " ...roads created, opened, or reconstructed to facilitate land management activities may be opened to the public, immediately following completion of all harvest activities requiring use of the road, to allow personal firewood gathering for 30 consecutive days during either the month of July or August." Thus, after logging, roading, and habitat fragmentation of occupied habitat that may have. extended for months or years, and additional 30 days of intensive public use is tacked on. The Final EIS must move quickly to correct this impermissible disparity in the protection of grizzlies outside recovery zone boundaries.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 42)***

### Public Concern No. 144. The Forest Service should change the BORZ standards to include no net increases in linear open road mileage and no permanent increases in linear total road mileage.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges that the road metric used in the 2004 USFWS Reasonable and Prudent Measure (USDI Biological Opinion 2004) needed to be changed for greater ease in calculation and for the sake of transparency in reporting. Consequently, the Design Element on pages 22-24 of the FSEIS have been changed to refer to “total linear miles of open road” and “total linear miles of permanent road”.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS states that in recurring use (BORZ) areas, "The Forests shall ensure no net increases in linear open road densities on National Forest System Lands in any individual area of grizzly bear occupancy" and "The Forest shall ensure no permanent increases in linear total road densities above the baseline conditions ...". These standards are vague and ripe with loopholes. Here's an example of a loophole. From the above clauses, the public would assume that after any project is done, the total miles of road would not increase. But for the Little Beaver Hazardous Fuels Reduction HFRA Project, the EA indicates that the construction of 5.5 miles of new permanent roads in the Clark Fork BORZ area would meet this standard. Apparently, the BORZ areas can be so large that calculating to a decimal place or two, the effects of 5.5 miles or road are masked to look like nothing. Which is not what the effects of 5.5 miles of new roads will be for grizzly bears, especially considering that one was shot in that BORZ recently. Furthermore, when the next timber sale/fuels reduction project in the Clark Fork BORZ is carried out in a few years, it obviously would be fully consistent with Access Amendment BORZ standards to build 5.5 more miles of new system roads again. If that is the meaning and intent of these alternatives, the agency should disclose that clearly instead of later being rightfully accuses of misleading the public. We believe that these BORZ standards should be changed to state "no net increases in linear open road mileage" and "no permanent increases in linear total road mileage" else, as shown by this example, they are all but meaningless.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 15)***

*Allowing temporary roads to increase the total TMRD in BORZ areas will essentially nullify the standard that disallows net increases in TMRD in the BORZs. This is because projects could be essentially continuous, one following another-or even simultaneous-in any given BORZ area. The affluence of such repeated "temporary" increases in TMRD could itself turn out to be essentially permanent TMRD increases, without limit as to how many miles of "temporary" roads could be open at any given time, and/or for how long. The aforementioned Little Beaver Hazardous Fuels Reduction HFRA Project would add 2.5 miles of new "temporary" roads and the EA doesn't state when these roads would have to be obliterated.* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 16)***

*Standards for BORZ: The "standard" for areas outside the RZ known to be occupied by grizzly bears is no increase in the number of linear miles of open road in the various BORZ areas, except in cases where the*

*Forest Service lacks the discretion to prevent road building. New roads can be constructed as long as they are gated or closed with other devices during project activities and closed with a berm, or other more effective closure than a gate, when the project for which they were needed is finished. In other words there is apparently no upper limit on total road densities in the BORZ areas. DSEIS at 18 and 23. Contrary to the statement that there will be "no permanent increases in linear total road densities above the baseline conditions in Table 3," there is no requirement to obliterate the new roads in the BORZ areas. They are only required to be "put in a condition such that a need for motorized access for maintenance is not anticipated for ten years." DSEIS at 18 and 23. The ESA applies to listed species that are outside as well as inside RZs. We contend that the bears outside the RZ deserve better than these weak standards. For example an effort could be made to lower linear road densities in the BORZ areas that are well in excess of the old 1987 Kootenai Forest Plan 0.75 mile per sq. mile standard for linear open road density in grizzly habitat.* ***(Ltr# 56, Cmt# 25)***

### Public Concern No. 145. The Forest Service should recognize that further designation of security areas within the recovery zones would not seem to address a limiting factor for grizzly bear recovery, but it may result in negative attitudes about grizzly bears from some segments of the public.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges the potential social ramifications of implementing additional wheeled motorized vehicle restrictions (FSEIS, pages 100 and 101). More specifically, a change in motorized vehicle access may result in a higher mortality risk for grizzly bears.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The DSEIS describes areas outside of the SRZ and CYRZ that are adjacent to the recovery zones as BORZ (Grizzly Bear Outside the Recovery Zones). The BORZs are not included in the analysis, but are mentioned because they are areas of reoccurring use, and Reasonable and Prudent Measures in the 2004 ROD apply to these areas. Recent evidence has indicated bears are expanding their range beyond the BORZs (e.g., Kelly Creek within the Bitterroot Experimental Population Area; Kingston, Idaho just north of Interstate 90), and increasing in numbers within the Recovery Zones under current management programs. Therefore, it appears that current management has been providing regulatory mechanisms for bear recovery. Further designation of security (more road closures) areas within Recovery Zones would not seem to address a limiting factor for grizzly bear recovery, but may result in negative attitudes about grizzly bears from some segments of the public.* ***(Ltr# 50, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 146. The Forest Service should base management decisions on the necessities of multiple use and scientific data that supports the necessity of even more restrictions on national forest system lands in the Bears Outside Recovery Zone (BORZ).

**Response:** In Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated, the current/baseline amount of permanent roads (open and total) in the BORZ areas is not to be exceeded, therefore the current "multiple uses" of those areas can continue. Roads may be constructed or reopened if they are compensated for with in-kind closures. The variety of uses within the BORZ areas can continue, but there won't be an increase in wheeled-motorized access over current/baseline conditions. "Multiple use" does not mean that every acre is available for every conceivable type of use, but that the Forest in general will provide for a variety of uses. Also, a range of alternatives was analyzed, and only Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated would not increase the amount of wheeled-motorized access over current/baseline conditions within BORZ. As stated on page 18 of the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 1993a), even though grizzlies may occur outside of the recovery zones they are still protected from illegal killing. It also states that areas outside of the recovery zones are not managed primarily for grizzly bears.

The Forest Service is not proposing managing those areas the same as within the recovery zone. However, in order to minimize the displacement of bears that are using these areas and reduce opportunities for someone to illegally kill a grizzly bear in the BORZ areas, then Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated would cap the amount of roads available for wheeled motorized use at their current/baseline conditions.

Page 85 of the FSEIS explains where these BORZ design criteria originated: "Although withdrawn because the action was no longer pending, the BO on Alternative E (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2004) is an important document because it contains direction that the USFWS considers important for grizzly bear recovery, including bears found outside the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones and was found to comply with the requirements of ESA by the District Court. This direction is anticipated to be included in the BO for the FSEIS. The Terms and Conditions in the BO for bears outside the recovery zones (BORZ) have been incorporated into Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated in anticipation of the BO." Information on bear mortality, including mortality related to roads, can be found on pages 55-63 in the FSEIS and pages 19-26 in the Biological Assessment (2011).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We object to the new concept of Bears Outside Recovery Zone (BORZ) limiting all other land uses. Your intent to limit motorized access outside of wilderness areas for the single use of bear recovery is antithetical to the principles of multiple-use and there is no science that supports the necessity of even more restrictions. Extending this strategy to forest acres not even included in the bear recovery plan is over the top and a clear violation of your multiple use mandate as laid out in MUSYA and other statutes and regulations. Outside of bear recovery zones road management decisions should be based on the necessities of multiple-use in the area under consideration. No single use should trump all other uses designated by the Forest Plan. This arbitrary proposal supports our claim that these so-called amendments are in reality a Forest Plan revision.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 5)***

### Public Concern No. 147. The Forest Service should evaluate the lynx study completed in the Seeley Lake area and its findings that there were no adverse impacts to lynx from winter snowmobile use.

**Response:** The FSEIS does not change current management direction for winter motorized recreation such as snowmobile use (FSEIS, page 2). It pertains to access standards for wheeled motorized vehicles use during the active bear year, which is April 1 to November 15 in the Selkirk Recovery Zone and April 1 to November 30 in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone. Therefore, there is no need to evaluate the scientific literature in regards to snowmobiling impacts on various wildlife species.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*A lynx study completed in the Seeley Lake area found no adverse impact to Lynx from winter snowmobile use. The results of this study and the data that was collected must be used in evaluating areas open or closed to snowmobiles. The closure of any area because of winter motorized impact to lynx is not valid and, therefore, must not be used to initiate closures.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 52)***

### Public Concern No. 148. The Forest Service should consider that caribou are very sensitive to motorized uses and will require the removal of roads and reduction of snowmobile use, which Alternative D Modified will go a long way in achieving.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledged that woodland caribou appear to avoid roads (FSEIS, page 118). However, some members of the Selkirk mountain caribou population have become habituated to the high-volume/high-speed British Columbia Highway 3, which bisected

prime caribou habitat in the Stagleap Pass area with its construction in 1963. While caribou are likely attracted to the road in part due to the salting of the highway in the winter months, the area also provides high quality habitat year-round which the caribou continue to use in spite of the traffic. As a consequence of this use, caribou continue to die in collisions with motor vehicles (Wakkinen et al. 2009).

The FSEIS does not change current management direction for winter motorized recreation such as snowmobile use (FSEIS, page 2). It pertains to access standards for wheeled motorized vehicle use during the active bear year, which is April 1 to November 15 in the Selkirk Recovery Zone and April 1 to November 30 in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Caribou are very sensitive to roads and Alt D will go a long way in protecting Caribou.The needs of the Caribou will require that roads are removed and snow mobile uses are drastically reduced.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 149. The Forest Service should correct the statement on page 77 of the DSEIS: "Timber harvest in caribou habitat on Idaho Department State lands in the Priest Lake Basin and in British Columbia continues to convert suitable caribou habitat into an unsuitable condition by harvesting mature and old growth cedar, hemlock and Engelmann Spruce, subalpine fir stands.", as the Idaho Department of Lands has worked to ensure that while maximizing revenues for the endowments, the needs of threatened and endangered species are taken into account.

**Response:** The Forest Service acknowledges the Idaho Department of Lands efforts to ensure that the needs of threatened and endangerd species are taken into account, while meeting its mandate to maximize revenues for the state endowment. The statement in the DSEIS was based upon the history of timber harvest during the last 15+ years, where timber sales in the Two Mouth Creek and Abandon Creek drainages resulted in the conversion of suitable caribou habitat. More recently, proposed timber sales (2010-2011) indicate that the majority of harvest units and associated road construction are located outside of the caribou recovery zone.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The phrasing on p. 77: "Timber harvest in caribou habitat on Idaho Department State lands in the Priest Lake Basin and in British Columbia continues to convert suitable caribou habitat into an unsuitable condition by harvesting mature and old growth cedar hemlock and Engelmann Spruce subalpine fir stands." seems to be a very broad statement. What is this statement based on? There are no citations to offer any support for this statement. The Idaho Department of Lands has worked to ensure that while maximizing revenues for the Endowments, the needs of threatened and endangered species are taken into account. This can be evidenced by the Kinley and Apps 2007 report which you reference which was funded by the IDL to model and assess caribou habitat on IDL managed lands.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 10)***

### Public Concern No. 150. The Forest Service should specify if Table 24 in the DSEIS is taken directly from the 2007 Kinley and Apps report and also clarify the table's title and description regarding which lands are included and the fact that acreage habitat potentially occurring on these lands was modeled and the Idaho Department of Land lands were ground-truthed.

**Response:** Page 118 of the FSEIS includes a corrected version of this table.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Table 24 on p. 77 presents some questions: The table title and description do not seem to match (the title indicates that both IPNF and IDL lands are included, however the description listed above the title states that it is only IPNF land in the table). The table does not appear to come directly from the 2007 Kinley and Apps report. It would be helpful to clarify if this table was created based upon data in the Kinley and Apps report, or whatever sources are relevant. Finally, it would be helpful to add to both the table description and title that the acreage habitat POTENTIALLY occurring on these lands was in fact modeled. IDL land was ground-truthed, but the remainder was modeled.* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 11)***

## Timber

### Public Concern No. 60. The 2002 FEIS inaccurately portrayed potential effects of the rule set by falsely claiming they will not constrain suitable timberlands in roadless areas. The Forest Service should ensure that the Final SEIS clearly portray potential effects to suitable timberlands in roadless areas as a result of the proposed road closures.

**Response:** The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR) (USDA 2001b), if in effect in Montana, permits timber harvest within IRAs provided at least one of the exceptions found at 36 CFR 294.13(b) is met. Road construction or reconstruction within these areas for the purposes of addressing forest health improvement objectives (for example, thinning to improve vigor or fuels reduction) is not permitted. Helicopter would be the principal yarding method utilized for timber harvest under the RACR, except in those areas that may be accessed by existing roads that do not require reconstruction. Because of the high cost of this logging system, cost per acre would increase substantially and proportionally with the distance of such harvest from the nearest road, thus effectively limiting its use. Therefore, the RACR would combine cumulatively with the alternatives considered to further restrict access to suitable acres for timber harvest and stand tending purposes. If the RACR is not in effect in Montana, then the 1987 Forest Plan management direction would apply and there would be no cumulative effects to access suitable timber acres for timber harvest.

In the Idaho Roadless FEIS and Rule [36 CFR 294 Subpart C (USDA 2008c and 2008d)], the Primitive theme permits timber harvest: to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat; to maintain or restore characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure; or to reduce the significant risk of wildland fire effects to an at-risk community or municipal water supply system. However, only existing roads or aerial systems would be able to be used. It is expected that timber cutting in the Primitive theme would be rare and therefore, roadless characteristics would be maintained.

In the Idaho Roadless FEIS and Rule, the Backcountry theme permits road construction and/or reconstruction when done to facilitate timber harvest within a community protection zone. While some roads could be constructed outside the community protection zone for activities designed to reduce the significant risk of wildland fire to communities and municipal water systems, the Idaho Roadless FEIS and Rule expects these instances to be limited because of additional conditions that would have to be met. The Idaho Roadless FEIS and Rule is expected to be more effective in addressing forest health concerns in the IRAs than the RACR, but less effective than existing forest plans. Therefore, the Idaho FEIS and Rule, in conjunction with the alternatives considered in this FSEIS, could further restrict access to suitable acres.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The entire EIS is full of bias and misleading figures and statements. (e.g. FEIS, p.3-96 claims the amendment would not affect 200,000+ of timber lands in roadless areas determined to be suitable by current forest plans. The ROD, p. 62, admits that the Forest Service has been permanently enjoined from*

*implementing the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.) Under current plans, legal project proposal for vegetation management supported by roads can be made and this amendment prohibits implementation of existing forest plan direction on those acres within road less areas as well as outside. The FEIS is inaccurately portraying potential effects of the rule set by falsely claiming they will not constrain suitable timberlands in roadless areas.* ***(Ltr# 64, Cmt# 20)***

### Public Concern No. 151. The Forest Service should clearly define suitable lands giving consideration to the type of management and the cumulative damage caused by previous management of the suitable timber.

**Response:** Timber land suitability was discussed on page 150 of the DSEIS and page 201 of the FSEIS. The individual forest plans have identified lands as suitable or not suitable for timber production. Table 3-38 of the FEIS displayed the amount of land considered suitable for timber production on each national forest (FEIS, page 3-96). The identification of the suitability of lands for timber harvest and timber production at the land management plan level is not a final decision compelling, approving, or prohibiting projects and activities. A final determination of suitability of lands for timber and other resource uses is made through project and activity decision-making. Because the programmatic nature of the analysis does not allow for knowledge of which roads would be proposed for closure at some future date, the acres represented in the analysis are only relative estimates and not a true representation of the accessible acres for the purpose of timber management and are used only to compare the effects of Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated (FSEIS, pages 203 and 209). As forest plan revision proceeds on the three forests, timberland suitability is being considered in those analyses.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*DSEIS fails to clearly define "suitable lands." (See p. 155-157, for example.) It fails to consider how many are actually "suitable" for the kind of management the Forest Service has in mind in the near term, perhaps significantly lower than the numbers presented in Tables 37, 38, and 39 simply in consideration of the cumulative damage caused by previous "management" of the "suitable timber."* ***(Ltr# 45, Cmt# 31)***

### Public Concern No. 152. The Forest Service should reconsider that, even though Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated improve habitat for ranking sensitive species and management indicator species, the ability to manage timber has decreased, flexibility of resource management has decreased, access to suitable acres is lost, and the ability to tend to previously treated stands is lost and:

#### A) Should not change existing motorized access without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific data because of the negative effects to resource and timber management.

**Response:** In selecting an alternative to implement, one of the factors considered by the responsible Officials was the potential effect on the ability to manage timber. While Alternative E Updated potentially provides some flexibility for resource management, the overall purpose and need for the amendments is to include a set of wheeled motorized vehicle access and security guidelines within the three forest plans that meet the agency's responsibilities under the ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). Under the NFMA, the Forest Service is to provide for diversity of plant and animal communities and balance competing demands in managing the national forests. Alternative E Updated, the selected alternative, is the alternative that best provides for that diversity and balance among the competing demands of the national forest.

The ability of the Forest Service to access stands for timber management purposes would be affected under either Alternatives D Modified or E Updated. Alternative E Updated was developed to address a number of issues, including more management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access, economics, access to private inholdings, and increased grizzly bear habitat security (FEIS, page 2-15). Alternative E Updated is based upon the best available science (FSEIS, page 97). The IGBC directed each ecosystem to develop ecosystem-specific guidelines using local data where possible. The Wakkinen and Kasworm study (1997) numbers (33/26/55) were generated with such data. In addition, the identified habitat parameters for Alternative E Updated were developed in consultation with grizzly bear research scientists and USFWS Biologists from the Helena, Montana and Spokane, Washington field offices. They reflect the unique features of biological and social factors (highways, high quality habitat, residential developments, and linkage zones) in specific BMUs (FEIS, page 2-15).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Unfortunately, the new DSEIS suggests a significant increase in the negative impacts to forest management both within Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated. While Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated improve habitat for ranking sensitive species and management indicator species, the effects on timber management on over 159,000 acres are highly impacted in four specific areas: flexibility for resource management; level of administrative access; ability to access suitable acres; and ability to tend to previously treated stands. The allowable sale quantity for the Kootenai and Lolo National Forests is 227 MMBF from 16,500 acres and 107 MMBF from 17,113 acres respectively. Due to budget constraints, biological and agency capacity and litigation, these targets are rarely met. As a result, there are many stands that are not meeting land management objectives.* ***(Ltr# 49, Cmt# 2)***

*The DSEIS even goes beyond the Flathead National Forest's Amendment 19. The KNF Amendment 19, even though restrictive, offers flexibility for resource management, access to administrative and suitable acres and the ability to tend to previously treated stands. Management in BMU's proving successful with an initial population count of over 700 grizzly bears. In addition, timber management in Core Areas has been recently upheld by the District Court.* ***(Ltr# 49, Cmt# 6)***

*Grizzly Bear recovery has significantly contributed to the protracted decline and virtual disappearance of timber harvest on area federal lands.* ***(Ltr# 60, Cmt# 14)***

*Subconcern # A*

*We do not support nor accept changes as extensive as those enumerated below, without more supportable and acceptable levels of scientific persuasion: Extensive loss of flexibility for resource management* ***(Ltr# 82, Cmt# 6)***

## Watershed

### Public Concern No. 154. The Forest Service should clarify in the aquatics analysis whether active roads in the subbasins on the IPNF would be barriered or gated.

**Response:** The FSEIS is a programmatic document, which will not provide determinations as to which specific active roads would be barriered or gated; therefore this information cannot be displayed in the aquatics analysis. On page 1 of the FSEIS, in the Introduction, paragraph 3; it states "The programmatic environmental analysis (FSEIS and subsequent ROD) will provide guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level." Chapter 2 of the FSEIS includes a description of the design elements for this project. Design elements I.B.1.f, II.A, and II.B discuss the use of barriers and gates to achieve desired results but do not specify on which roads they will be used.

Affects of gated and barriered roads to the aquatic environment are discussed on pages 193-194 of the FSEIS. Changes to the miles of gated or barriered roads are described on page 196 and 197

of the FSEIS.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The aquatics analysis needs to clarify whether active roads in the subbasins on the IPNF would be barriered or gated.* ***(Ltr# 24, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 155. The Forest Service should provide in the final aquatics analysis, expert agency comments indicating whether the preferred alternative, as it applies to the areas on the IPNF, is consistent with, and in full compliance with, each applicable Forest Practices Act road maintenance regulation found at IDAPA 20.02.01.040.04.

**Response:** The implementation of this programmatic document will not alter Forest Service road maintenance. The following direction is provided in IDAPA 20.02.01.040.04, titled "Road Maintenance": "Conduct regular preventative maintenance operations to minimize disturbance and damage to forest productivity, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat." The Forest Service does regular preventative maintenance. Each system road is assigned a maintenance level (ML) and based on that ML; a specific schedule of maintenance needs is performed. The objective of the Road Maintenance Program is to maintain the road system to the approved maintenance levels within the constraints of funding allocations and authorizations. Currently, maintenance is performed on a regular cyclical basis. Condition surveys are performed on 20 percent of all Maintenance Level 3, 4, and 5 roads every year, resulting in identification of conditions on all of these routes every five years. Condition surveys on Maintenance Level 1 and 2 roads are performed on a random sample number of roads decided upon by direction from the Regional Forester's office.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The aquatics analysis in the Final SEIS is required to provide expert agency comments indicating whether the preferred Alternative as it applies to the areas on the IPNF is consistent with and in full compliance with each applicable FPA Road maintenance regulations found at IDAPA 20.02.01.040.04.* ***(Ltr# 24, Cmt# 2)***

### Public Concern No. 156. The Forest Service should include language that would provide for management within the Bear Management Units for protection of any watershed providing municipal drinking water, especially in emergency situations, and protect these watersheds from extreme fuel loading or sedimentation.

**Response:** The FSEIS takes into consideration the need for contingencies in the case of emergencies. This is described under the Design Elements No. 1.B.1.e in the FSEIS, "Therefore, except for emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances consulted on with the Service . . . ".

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Include language in the DSEIS that would provide for management within the BMU's in emergency situations for protection of any watershed providing municipal drinking water (i.e. treatment of fuel loading and reduce sedimentation).* ***(Ltr# 42, Cmt# 5)***

*I would also suggest that special allowances be made for managing any watershed that provides municipal drinking water and lies within a BMU.* ***(Ltr# 76, Cmt# 2)***

*Consider some type of statement in the document that would allow for treatment in the community watersheds in this community for what we consider extra-ordinary, and almost emergency situations*

*regarding the health of these areas that provide drinking water to our citizens. Currently there exists no measure to speed the process for protecting these vital areas from extreme fuel loading or sedimentation.* ***(Ltr# 77, Cmt# 1)***

### Public Concern No. 157. The Forest Service should add clarifying language to Design Element D that would provide assurance that minimizing risks to water quality through the establishment of hydrologic stability is an essential element for the implementation of Design Element D in the Water Quality section of the DSEIS.

**Response:** See response provided for Public Concern No. 21.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Water Quality and Hydrologic Stability: We believe additional information on how Design Element D would be implemented at the project level would clarify how road closures lead to long-term water quality benefits. Design Element D currently states, "Roads closed to create Core Area ...: Will 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 will not be considered as contributing to Core Area." (DSEIS, p. 18). The DSEIS also states that, " ...roads closed to create Core Area would have hydrologic function restored," (p. 211). From these statements it appears that establishing hydrologic stability (e.g., removing culverts and reconstructing stream channels) is a goal of Design Element D. Elsewhere in the DSEIS, however, Design Element D's implication for the establishment of hydrologic stability is less clear. On page 210, stabilization treatments are a "potential" and on page 146 the DSEIS concludes that long-term water quality benefits would be realized "Provided that the treatments of barriered and gated roads are adequate ..." These statements imply that establishing hydrologic stability is an optional part of meeting Design Element D. EPA believes that (i) the establishment of hydrologic stability (at least the reduction of road-related mass wasting and erosion potential) is central to the effective implementation of Design Element D and (ii) the specific methods for protecting long-term water quality are best determined at the project level. Recommendation: We recommend that clarifying language be added to Design Element D. This clarifying language should provide assurance that minimizing risks to water quality -through the establishment of hydrologic stability -is an essential element for the implementation of Design Element D. (****Ltr# 57, Cmt# 3)***

## Outside of Scope

### Public Concern No. 161. The Endangered Species Act needs to be amended so that the majority of taxpayers and citizens are guiding decisions instead of environmental group lawsuits and threats of legal action because:

#### A) we have enough grizzly bears to worry about as it is;

#### B) the grizzly bears are here and we don't need more introduced into this area.

**Response:** 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). Amending the ESA is beyond the scope of this analysis, as the ESA can only be amended by the U.S. Congress. At recovery levels, it is anticipated that the minimum grizzly bear population for the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones would be approximately 90 bears and 100 bears, respectively. Currently, a minimum population estimate of 40 bears was made for the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone and 47 bears for the Selkirk Recovery Zone (FSEIS, page 53). Augmentation of large carnivore populations can be a valuable management and recovery tool. Recent augmentation of the grizzly bear population in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone suggests that experimental augmentation affected the persistence, size, and genetic diversity of the Cabinet

Mountains grizzly bear population between 1990 and 2005 (Kasworm et al. 2007).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Subconcern # A*

*More generally, the endangered species act needs to be amended so that the majority of taxpayers and citizens are guiding decisions instead of environmental group lawsuits and threats of legal action. We have enough grizzly bears to worry about as it is. Why is it necessary to have the largest lower North American predator trolling campgrounds and other recreational areas? Why do we need to worry about our kids taking a short hike around the campground without an adult armed to the teeth with bear spray and a firearm? If global warming takes place as predicted, we will lose up to 50% of species in the next century. So do we all lock ourselves in our houses just in case all these species might recover? Some environmental groups are apparently now advocating classification of some wilderness areas as human exclusion zones. Is this our future Keep Out of public lands?* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 10)***

*Subconcern # B*

*Please do not bring more Grizzly Bears to our back doors. Just last week, one of these magnificent creatures had to be shot and killed as it crossed boundaries between national forest and residential development at an elk farm near Rose Lake, Idaho, south of Interstate 90. These bears are already here, please do not bring more in.* ***(Ltr# 32, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*See letter 32 comment 3* ***(Ltr# 39, Cmt# 3)***

*Subconcern # B*

*And, please, please do not bring in danger to us or the peaceful animals by bringing in bear or wolves.* ***(Ltr# 43, Cmt# 6)***

### Public Concern No. 162. The Forest Service should redirect the route designation process for motorized use and inventory all existing motorized routes and designate them for motorized use versus initiating motorized closures.

**Response:** This is not a site-specific analysis done according to 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4). This programmatic environmental analysis and decision provides guidance for future decisions conducted at the site-specific or project level. It is those site-specific analyses that will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, a separate public involvement process, under the auspices of NEPA will be conducted.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The route designation process was supposed to inventory all existing motorized routes and designate them for motorized use. Instead it is being used to produce wholesale motorized closures contrary to the understanding with motorized recreationists. The process needs to be re-directed back onto the right path.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 21)***

### Public Concern No. 163. The Forest Service should include new road and trail construction for the purpose of establishing motorized loops in this DSEIS.

**Response:** This is not a site-specific analysis done according to 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears (FEIS, page 1-4).

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Note that some new construction may be required to accomplish a reasonable system of loops. Therefore, new construction must be included in the scope of the project.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 23)***

### Public Concern No. 164. The Forest Service needs to clarify the objectives and the cumulative effects on motorized travel management from revision of the 1987 Forest Plans, Travel Management planning, and this DSEIS.

**Response:** This programmatic environmental analysis and decision neither identifies routes nor designates areas for motorized or non-motorized use. The purpose 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 ESA to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears. Future analyses conducted at the site-specific or project level will identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, a separate public involvement process, under the auspices of NEPA will be conducted.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*We read the recent KIPZ Forest Plan Revision Newsletter dated July 6, 2006 (http://www.fs.fed.us/kipz/documents/070606_kipznewsletter_issue9_color.pdf ) and we are very concerned about the misleading statement made in the newsletter. Under the 4th bulleted item on page 1, the statement is made Therefore, the Proposed Plan will not open or close roads or trails; it only identifies the desired motorized/non-motorized condition. Based on our experience, if routes are proposed for closure or an area is designated for non-motorized used under the forest plan, then it is all but a done deal when travel planning comes along later. The public is not aware that the forest planning process effectively closes motorized routes. Therefore, the current forest planning process puts motorized recreationists at a disadvantage because of the lack of understanding about its role in the travel planning process. It also puts motorized recreationists in the disadvantage of double jeopardy, i.e. of having to protect motorized opportunities in both forest planning and travel planning processes. There are significant social and environmental justices impacts to motorized recreationists associated with this setting that must be addressed by this action.* ***(Ltr# 26, Cmt# 32)***

### Public Concern No. 165. The Forest Service should provide a break from extractive industries on national forest system lands because the timber market has declined, many mills have closed, the economy has changed, and people move here for the natural environment.

**Response:** The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. As set forth in law, including the National Forest Management Act and Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act, the Forest Service mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The market for timber has dropped and many mills have closed. The economy has changed also in NW Montana, Northern Idaho and Eastern Washington. People move here for the natural environment. The focus has already shifted from timber extraction. These lands need a rest from more extractive industries.* ***(Ltr# 34, Cmt# 8)***

### Public Concern No. 166. The Forest Service should apply for and use any appropriation available to study and implement the best method for route removal and to target this activity in a manner that builds community support.

**Response:** It is anticipated that a variety of funding sources would be used to implement these amendments. Future analyses conducted at the site-specific or project level would identify the specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use. When those proposals are ripe for a decision, potential funding sources would be identified and a separate public involvement process, under the auspices of NEPA would be conducted.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*Congress has recently allocated $50 million in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 for the Legacy Road and Trail Remediation Initiative that can be used for planning and on-the-ground activities to remove problem routes and restore areas. We encourage the Service to apply for and use any appropriation to study and implement the best methods for route removal, and to target this activity in a manner that builds community support.* ***(Ltr# 65, Cmt# 20)***

### Public Concern No. 167. The Forest Service should manage roadless areas for wilderness qualities and protect them from motorized use.

**Response:** While portions of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones include inventoried roadless areas, this is not a site-specific analysis done under 36 CFR Part 212 for the purposes of designating specific roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use. The purpose 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 (FEIS, page 1-4). Subsequent site-specific analyses would identify specific roads and trails for possible change of status in motorized use.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The management plan needs to protect our roadless resources, by providing non-notorized recreational experiences wherever that opportunity still exists. The few roadless areas that still exist need to be protected and utilized for wilderness qualities.* ***(Ltr# 80, Cmt# 1)***

## Comment

### Public Concern No. 168. Thank you for your comment.

**Response:** The Forest Service received the following comment letters that contained comments that were unsupported opinion or a statement of fact with no stated request for action, and therefore, do not warrant further response. Letters include 1, 2, and 40.

## Vote

### Public Concern No. 169. Thank you for your comment.

**Response:** Alternative E updated was selected by the responsible officials for implementation because it would best achieve the purpose and need for this proposal, while responding to identified issues, including increased secure habitat for grizzly bears. The ROD for this FSEIS discusses in detail the rationale for the selection of Alternative E Updated (see ROD, *Rationale for the Decision*). The Forest Service received the following comment letters and within these letters there were some comments that appeared to be a vote; however the comment period for the DSEIS is not a vote-counting process; the most useful comments are those that are unique,

substantially different, provide rationale, and suggest specific changes to the DSEIS. Therefore, the comments that appeared to be a vote within these comments letters do not warrant further response. Letters include 4, 5, 23, 44, 46, 48, 58, and 63.

*Sample Public Comment(s):*

*The preferred Alternative E (as updated) is certainly better than Alternative D (as modified).* ***(Ltr# 4, Cmt# 1)***

*I am stating my objection to this proposal for elimination of motorized access to the forest service trail system.* ***(Ltr# 5, Cmt# 1)***

*Because you probably are only looking for a yea or nay on the limited options you present, consider me nonsupportive of either option, but more supportive of your preferred option.* ***(Ltr# 23, Cmt# 17)***

*I wish to express my support for Alternative E Updated in the proposed Forest Plan Amendment for Motorized Access.* ***(Ltr# 44, Cmt# 1)***

*I am writing to demonstrate my support for, and to encourage adoption of Altemative D modified of the DSEIS to adopt Forest Plan Amendments Within the Selkirk and Cabinet Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones.* ***(Ltr# 46, Cmt# 1)***

*We prefer the Alternative E as outlined in the SDEIS as opposed to Alternative D.* ***(Ltr# 48, Cmt# 1)***

*IDL does not support Alternative D Modified* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 15)***

*IDL has concerns about Alternative E Modified* ***(Ltr# 58, Cmt# 16)***

*If we must choose between D & E, (E) would be the logical choice.* ***(Ltr# 63, Cmt# 8)***

# Appendix A – Content Analysis Process

Content Analysis (CA) is the process used to document, analyze, and respond to the public comment letters that were received on the DSEIS for the Grizzly Bear Access Amendment. This is a systematic process of compiling and categorizing all public viewpoints and concerns submitted on a plan or project. Content analysis is intended to help the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) clarify or adjust the DSEIS before finalizing the document and the project. Information from public meetings, letters, emails, faxes, and other sources are all included in this analysis.

In the CA process, each comment letter is logged-in, assigned a unique number, read, coded, summarized, and responded to by the IDT. This number allows analysts to link specific comments to the original comment letter. All commenters' names and addresses are entered into a project-specific database program, enabling creation of a complete list of all commenters.

The comments that are most helpful are those that are unique, substantially different, and are specifically related to the analysis disclosed in the Update to the DSEIS. In addition to capturing unique and substantially different comments, this report attempts to reflect the emotion and strength of public sentiment in order to represent the public's values and concerns as fairly as possible. Analysts read and code these comments in each letter using the coding structure (see Appendix B). Each comment is coded by subject and category, and then all coded comments are entered into a comment database with minor corrections made for clarity, grammar, and punctuation. When an individual raises multiple concerns within the same letter, each unique comment was numbered and tracked separately.

Once the unique and substantially different comments were coded and entered into the DB, concerns raised by different commenters on the same subject and with the same intent and issue were grouped and summarized into public concern statements (PCs) that capture the essence of those like-concerns. In this way, multiple comments may be addressed by one response. In some cases, more nuanced or complex concerns may be answered through multiple responses to multiple concern statements, or they may have a single response dedicated to just that specific commenter. It is important to keep in mind that even though the public concern statements attempt to capture the full range of public issues and concerns, they should be reviewed with the understanding that there is no limitation on who submits comments. Therefore, the comments received do not necessarily represent the sentiments of the public as a whole. This report attempts to provide fair representation of the wide range of views submitted. Every comment has the same value, whether expressed by many, or by one respondent. Analyzing comments is not a vote-counting process. The FS response to the public comments, which in some cases resulted in changes to the DEIS, was not determined by majority opinion but rather by the substance of the comments. The content analysis process we used ensured that every comment was read, analyzed, and considered.

Following is the systematic process used to analyze the comments:

**Step 1:** All comment letters were assigned a communication number to allow for tracking the unique comments within the letter to the public concern statements. Name and address information were entered into a database and these commenters were added to the project mailing list.

**Step 2:** Forest managers and the IDT read each letter and worked with third-party collaboration specialists to ensure all unique and substantially different comments in the letters were coded, entered into a database, incorporated into public concern statements, and addressed in this appendix.

Each unique and substantially different comment within a letter was assigned a comment number, subject code, and category code to enable grouping of similar comments for the report described in step 5. The coding structure and coding of each comment letter can be found in the project record. For example, a comment desiring more motorized loop trails to provide for a better recreational experience would be coded as:

- Comment Number: 1 (1st comment coded in the letter)
- Subject Code: REC (Recreation)
- Category Code: 21300 (Recreational Trail Use)

**Step 3:** Form letters were identified and filed in the project record. Regardless of the number of copies received or the number of signatures, one copy of each form letter (identified as the master form letter) was analyzed for unique and substantially different comments and that one letter followed step 2 of this process. The other letters were identified as being associated with this master form letter.

**Step 4:** Each of the more than 857 unique and substantive comments that were coded were entered into a database, verbatim.

**Step 5:** Reports were produced from the database that contained the coded comments and a report was generated that grouped similar comments. The IDT, along with the third-party collaboration specialist, then drafted PCs that summarized each group of like-comments. These PCs were reviewed and revised by the IDT, and approximately 167 total PCs for the DSEIS are contained in this report.

**Step 6:** The Forest Supervisor and IDT were provided a report of the PCs to assist them in discussing changes to the DSEIS. In addition, both teams received a report of all 857 unique and substantially different comments, as well as the original comment letters.

**Step 7:** After reviewing the PCs and comments, the Forest Supervisor met with the IDT to clarify questions, discuss comments, and direct changes to be made for the Final SEIS. In addition, the IDT responded to all the PCs and these responses are included with the associated PCs in this report.

# Appendix B – Coding Structure

Listed below are the Subject and Category Codes that were used to sort the public comments received during scoping. A more detailed description of the coding, database, and comment letters can be found in the project record.

| Subject | Category | Sub Code | Cat Code | Cat Code 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Air Quality** | Air Quality | **AIR** | **10000** | **100** |
| | | | | |
| **Alternatives** | General | **ALTS** | **11000** | 110 |
| | A – No Action | | **11100** | 111 |
| | B - Interim Access Rule Set (Proposed Action) | | **11200** | 112 |
| | C – Security Standards Applied Across All BMU's | | **11300** | 113 |
| | D – Increased Security Habitat | | **11400** | 114 |
| | E – Security Standards For Individual BMU's (Preferred Alt) | | **11500** | 115 |
| | F – Maintain Current Levels of Access | | **11600** | 113 |
| | G – Maximum Access | | **11700** | 117 |
| | Other Alternatives | | **11800** | 118 |
| | | | | |
| **Cultural** | General | **CULT** | **12000** | 120 |
| | Cultural Resources | | **12100** | 121 |
| | American Indian | | **12200** | 122 |
| | | | | |
| **Fire** | General | **FIRE** | **13000** | 130 |
| | Fire | | **13100** | 131 |
| | Fuels | | **13200** | 132 |
| | | | | |
| **Fish** | General | **FISH** | **14000** | 140 |
| | Fisheries | | **14100** | 141 |
| | Amphibians | | **14200** | 142 |
| | Sensitive Species | | **14300** | 143 |
| | T&E Species | | **14400** | 144 |
| | | | | |
| **Forest Plan** | General | **FP** | **15000** | 150 |
| | Forest Plan | | **15100** | 151 |
| | FEIS | | **15200** | 152 |
| | | | | |
| **Management Indicator Species** | General | **MIS** | **16000** | 160 |
| | Elk | | **16100** | 161 |
| | Moose | | **16200** | 162 |
| | Mountain Goat | | **16300** | 163 |
| | P Woodpecker | | **16400** | 164 |
| | Pine Marten | | **16500** | 165 |
| | White-tailed Deer | | **16600** | 166 |
| | | | | |
| **Miscellaneous** | Miscellaneous comments | **MISC** | **17000** | 170 |
| | | | | |
| **NEPA** | General | **NEPA** | **18000** | 180 |
| | NEPA Process | | **18100** | 181 |

| Subject | Category | Sub Code | Cat Code | Cat Code 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cumulative Effects | | **18200** | 182 |
| | Monitoring | | **18300** | 183 |
| | | | | |
| **Plants** | General | **PLNT** | **19000** | 190 |
| | Invasive Plants | | **19100** | 191 |
| | Sensitive Plants | | **19200** | 192 |
| | T&E Plants | | **19300** | 193 |
| | | | | |
| **Public Involvement** | Public Involvement Process | **PUB** | **20000** | 200 |
| | | | | |
| **Recreation** | General | **REC** | **21000** | 210 |
| | Road Use | | **21100** | 211 |
| | Trail Use | | **21200** | 212 |
| | Roadless Areas | | **21300** | 213 |
| | | | | |
| **Roads** | General | **ROAD** | **22000** | 220 |
| | Access | | **22100** | 221 |
| | Administrative Access | | **22200** | 222 |
| | Public Access | | **22300** | 223 |
| | Private Access to In-holdings | | **22400** | 224 |
| | | | | |
| **Sensitive Species** | General | **SNSP** | **23000** | 230 |
| | Common Loon | | **23100** | 231 |
| | Harlequin Duck | | **23200** | 232 |
| | B Woodpecker | | **23300** | 233 |
| | W Woodpecker | | **23400** | 234 |
| | T Big-eared Bat | | **23500** | 235 |
| | Flammulated Owl | | **23600** | 236 |
| | Northern Goshawk | | **23700** | 237 |
| | Peregrine Falcon | | **23800** | 238 |
| | N Bog Lemming | | **23850** | 023 |
| | Fisher | | **23900** | 239 |
| | Wolverine | | **23950** | 039 |
| | | | | |
| **Social Economic** | General | **SOEC** | **24000** | 240 |
| | Employment and Income | | **24100** | 241 |
| | Economic Diversity | | **24200** | 242 |
| | Land Ownership and Use | | **24300** | 243 |
| | Lifestyle and Attitude | | **24400** | 244 |
| | Values and Beliefs | | **24500** | 245 |
| | Perceptions on Grizzly Bear Management | | **24600** | 246 |
| | Civil Rights and Environmental Justice | | **24700** | 247 |
| | | | | |
| **Soils** | Soils | **SOIL** | **25000** | 250 |
| | | | | |
| **T&E Species** | General | **TES** | **26000** | 260 |
| | Grizzly Bear | | **26100** | 261 |
| | GB Mortality | | **26110** | 011 |

| Subject | Category | Sub Code | Cat Code | Cat Code 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | GB Core | | **26120** | 012 |
| | GB TMRD/OMRD | | **26130** | 013 |
| | GB Connectivity | | **26140** | 014 |
| | GB BORZ | | **26150** | 015 |
| | Bald Eagle | | **26200** | 262 |
| | Canadian Lynx | | **26300** | 263 |
| | Woodland Caribou | | **26400** | 264 |
| | Gray Wolf | | **26500** | 265 |
| | | | | |
| **Timber** | General | **TMBR** | **27000** | 270 |
| | Timber Harvesting and Management | | **27100** | 271 |
| | | | | |
| **Watershed** | General | **WTR** | **28000** | 280 |
| | Water Quality | | **28100** | 281 |
| | Water Quantity | | **28200** | 282 |
| | Watershed Condition | | **28300** | 283 |
| | Watershed Restoration | | **28400** | 284 |
| | | | | |
| **Science** | Best Available Science | **ZBAS** | **70000** | 700 |
| | | | | |
| **Out of Scope** | Outside the scope of the decision being made | **ZOS** | **80000** | |
| | | | | |
| **Comment** | Thank you for your comment (non-substantive) | **ZTHY** | **90000** | |

# Appendix C - Demographics

## Introduction

Demographic analysis presents an overall picture of respondents: where they live, their general affiliation to various organizations or government agencies, and the manner in which they respond. The database that was used contains public comments organized by subject and then category and demographic information. This kind of database can be used to show public comment from certain geographic locations or show comments associated with certain types of organizations. Thus demographic coding, combined with comment coding, allows managers to use the database to focus on specific areas of public concern linked to geographic area, organizational affiliation, and response format.

It is important to recognize that the consideration of public comment is not a vote-counting process in which the outcome is determined by the majority opinion. Relative depth of feeling and interest among the public can serve to provide a general context for decisionmaking. However, it is the uniqueness, appropriateness, and factual accuracy of comment content that serves to provide the basis for modifications to planning documents and decisions. Further, because commenters are self-selected, they do not constitute a random or representative public sample; therefore, caution should be used when interpreting the demographic information. While demographic information can provide insight into the perspectives and values of commenters, it does not necessarily reveal the desires of society as a whole. All input is considered and the analysis team attempts to capture all relevant public concerns in the analysis process.

## Geographic Representation

Geographic representation is tracked for each commenter. The following table displays the number of commenters by State.

| State | Number of Comment Letters | Number of Signatures |
|---|---|---|
| Colorado | 1 | 1 |
| Georgia | 1 | 1 |
| Hawaii | 1 | 1 |
| Idaho | 38 | 45 |
| Indiana | 1 | 1 |
| Montana | 22 | 28 |
| Oregon | 1 | 1 |
| Oklahoma | 2 | 2 |
| Washington | 10 | 12 |
| Washington DC | 1 | 1 |
| Unknown | 8 | 8 |
| **Total** | **86** | **101** |

## Organizational Affiliation

Organizational affiliation is tracked for each comment letter. The following table displays, by organization type, the number of responses and signatures.

| Organization Type | Number of Comment Letters | Number of Signatures |
|---|---|---|
| Business | 3 | 3 |
| Elected Official | 2 | 6 |
| Federal Agency | 4 | 4 |
| Group or Organization | 11 | 18 |
| Individual | 61 | 65 |
| State Agency | 4 | 4 |
| Tribal | 1 | 1 |
| **Total** | **86** | **101** |

## Reply and Delivery Type

The following table displays by comment letter format and how it was received, the number of comment letters and signatures.

| Reply and Delivery Type | Number of Comment Letters | Number of Signatures |
|---|---|---|
| Email | 27 | 29 |
| Letter | 57 | 70 |
| Phone Call | 2 | 2 |
| **Total** | **86** | **101** |

# Appendix D – List of Preparers

This list includes the names of the individuals who contributed toward the completion of the analysis of public comments for the DSEIS.

**TEAMS Forest Service Enterprise Unit**
Jodi Kramer and Susan Ague
1602 Ontario Street
Sandpoint, ID 83864

**Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones Interdisciplinary Team**
Karl Dekome, Teamleader, Forest Plan, Miscellaneous, NEPA, Public Involvement, Timber
Lydia Allen, Management Indicator Species, Sensitive Species, T&E Species, Science
Matt Butler, Air Quality, Fire
Annie Dueker, Plants
Ellen Frament, Social and Economics
Lisa Hawden, Fish and Watershed
Gina Rone, Soils
Becky Timmons, Cultural
Kent Wellner, Recreation
Jack Zearfoss, Roads