

Chapter 1. Purpose of and Need for Action

Document Organization

This draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) is prepared according to the format established by Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations to implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) found in 40 CFR 1500-1508. This DEIS consists of the following:

- Summary
- Chapter 1. Purpose of and Need for Action: This chapter includes a short introduction, information on the history or background leading up to the proposal, relationship to some of the pertinent laws, a statement of the purpose and need for the proposal, brief description of our proposal, and the key decisions that need to be made.
- Chapter 2. Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action: This chapter describes the proposed action and alternatives—including no action—in detail. We developed these alternatives based on key issues raised by the public and other agencies. We include a summary table at the end of the chapter that reflects how each alternative addresses project objectives and key issues.
- Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences: This chapter includes, by resource, a discussion of the affected environment or current situation, and the anticipated environmental consequences of the alternatives. The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects are described and how well each alternative addresses current issues related to the project, the irreversible and irretrievable impacts, and whether actions are consistent with the Helena Forest Plan, and other laws and regulations.
- Chapter 4. List of Preparers: This chapter lists members of the interdisciplinary team (IDT) and others who contributed to this document decision. It also contains a glossary, a list of references used to prepare this document, and outlines the distribution of the DEIS by listing agencies, organizations and individuals who requested to have the document sent to them.
- Appendices: The appendices provide more detailed information pertinent to the decisions to be made that support the analyses presented in this document. They include Appendix A - Forest Plan consistency; Appendix B – List of those who commented during scoping; Appendix C – road-by-road and trail-by-trail alternative details; Appendix D – cumulative effects—past, present and future actions; Appendix E – wildlife methodologies and assumptions; Appendix F – Forest Plan amendment for big game security index under the action alternatives; Appendix G –document maps, and Appendix H – best management practices.

We have used the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. For instance, they may be: developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, incomplete while being created or revised. Due to rounding, acre and mileage totals are approximate. Using the GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. We reserve the right to correct, update, modify, and/or replace GIS products and associated data sources without notification.

Types of Routes and Other Definitions

The following table lists route categories and travel planning definitions applicable to this project based on the definitions in 36 CFR 212-Travel Management. For a total list of terms, please refer to the glossary found in chapter 4 of this document.

Table 1. Road and Trail Terminology - Definitions

Terminology	Definition
Forest transportation system	The system of National Forest System roads (NFSR), National Forest System trails, and airfields on National Forest System lands (36 CFR 212.1).
Road	A motor vehicle route over 50 inches wide, unless identified and managed as a trail (36 CFR 212.1).
Trail	A route 50 inches wide or less, or a route over 50 inches wide that is identified and managed as a trail (36 CFR 212.1).
Route	A term used in this document to refer to a road or a trail
Forest road or trail	A road or trail wholly or partially within or adjacent to and serving the NFS that is determined to be necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the NFS and the use and development of its resources (36 CFR 212.1)
Off Highway Vehicle (OHV)	Any motor vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain (36 CFR 212.1)
Motor vehicle	Any vehicle which is self-propelled, other than: (1) A vehicle operated on rails; and (2) Any wheelchair or mobility device, including one that is battery-powered, that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion and that is suitable for use in an indoor pedestrian area (36 CFR 212.1)
Unauthorized road or trail	A road or trail that is not a forest road or trail or a temporary road or trail and that is not included on a forest transportation atlas (36 CFR 212.1) In this document, unauthorized roads or trails are sometimes referred to as “user-created”, “unauthorized”, “undesignated”, or “non-system” These are older terms that may be found interchangeably throughout specialist reports. Unauthorized routes are not included as part of the forest transportation system.
Motorized use	A term used to refer to travel by any motor vehicle (36 CFR 212.1.36 CFR 261.2, FSM 7705, FSH 2309.18.05); for purposes of this analysis, motorized use is considered use by wheeled motor vehicles (not over-snow vehicles).
Non-motorized use	A term used in this document to refer to travel other than that defined as motorized. For example, hiking, riding horses or mountain biking.
Designated road or trail or area	A National Forest System road, National Forest system trail, or an area on National Forest System lands that is designated for motor vehicle use pursuant to 36 CFR 212.51 on a motor vehicle use map (36 CFR 212.1).
Mixed motorized use	A term used in this document to refer to designation of a NFS road for use by both highway-legal and nonhighway-legal motor vehicles (FSM 7705)
Storage	A term used in this document to refer to roads that are intended to be self-maintaining in a non-use status for up to 20 years, but remain on the National Forest System. This is accomplished through re-contouring or obliterating access points which may include rock or earth barriers, and may include the removal of culverts to restore watercourses to natural channels and floodplains. The remainder of the roadbed would remain intact so the road could be easily rebuilt for future use. See table 5.
Decommissioning	A term used in this document to refer to activities that result in the stabilization and restoration of unneeded roads to a more natural state (36 CFR 212.1) or, Activities that result in restoration of unneeded roads to a more natural state (FSM 7705, FSM 7734). See table 4.

Introduction

The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Helena National Forest is proposing changes to the existing system of designated motorized public access routes and prohibitions within the Blackfoot travel planning area (project area) for wheeled motorized vehicles. The existing system of available public motor vehicle routes and areas in the Blackfoot travel planning area is the culmination of multiple agency decisions over recent decades. Public motor vehicle use of much of this available system continues to be manageable and consistent with the current travel management regulation. Exceptions have been identified, based on public input and the criteria listed at 36 CFR 212.55 (2005 Travel Management Rule), and in these cases changes are proposed. The overall objective is to provide a manageable system of designated public motorized access routes and areas, consistent with and to achieve the purposes of Forest Service travel management regulations at 36 CFR part 212 subpart B.

This DEIS discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from implementing the proposed changes (proposed action) and one other action alternative. This alternative to the proposed action was developed to address issues raised during scoping and continued communication with collaborative groups. The analysis complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. The Helena National Forest Supervisor is the responsible official for this project.

Consistent with Forest Service travel planning regulations, if implemented, the designated wheeled motorized routes within the project area would be displayed on a motor vehicle use map (MVUM). Upon publishing the MVUM, public use of wheeled motor vehicles other than in accordance with the designations would be prohibited. Both action alternatives also include proposals for non-motorized uses and methods to physically store, decommission, relocate, and construct certain roads and trails. This analysis is focused on non-winter use; travel routes over snow are not included and are being addressed in a separate analysis.

The project area encompasses approximately 238,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands outside of wilderness on the Lincoln Ranger District in Montana (figure 1), as well as Inventoried Roadless Areas (p. 502).

Implementing either of the action alternatives would require a programmatic plan amendment to the Helena National Forest Plan regarding the standard for big game security index. The proposed programmatic Forest Plan amendment would establish a new standard for big game security for those herd units within the project area. Forest Plan amendments may also be needed to address trails within Forest Plan Management Area N-1 (Research Natural Areas) and R-1 (Unroaded and Undeveloped Areas), as discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

Table 1 and the glossary (p. 375) provide definitions of many of the terms in this document

Background

We originally initiated the Blackfoot travel planning process in 2000 as part of a Forestwide effort; we developed a proposed action and asked for public scoping comments but then put the effort on hold. In January 2001, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued a joint decision known as the 2001 Tri-State Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Decision; this decision prohibited motorized cross-country wheeled-vehicle travel on all NFS and BLM public lands in a three state area except on designated routes and areas. The decision amended nine Forest Plans, including the Helena National Forest Plan (appendix A).

In 2004, we completed a Forest Roads Analysis report for Maintenance Level 1-5 roads (see glossary) and used this as an additional tool for developing the proposed action.

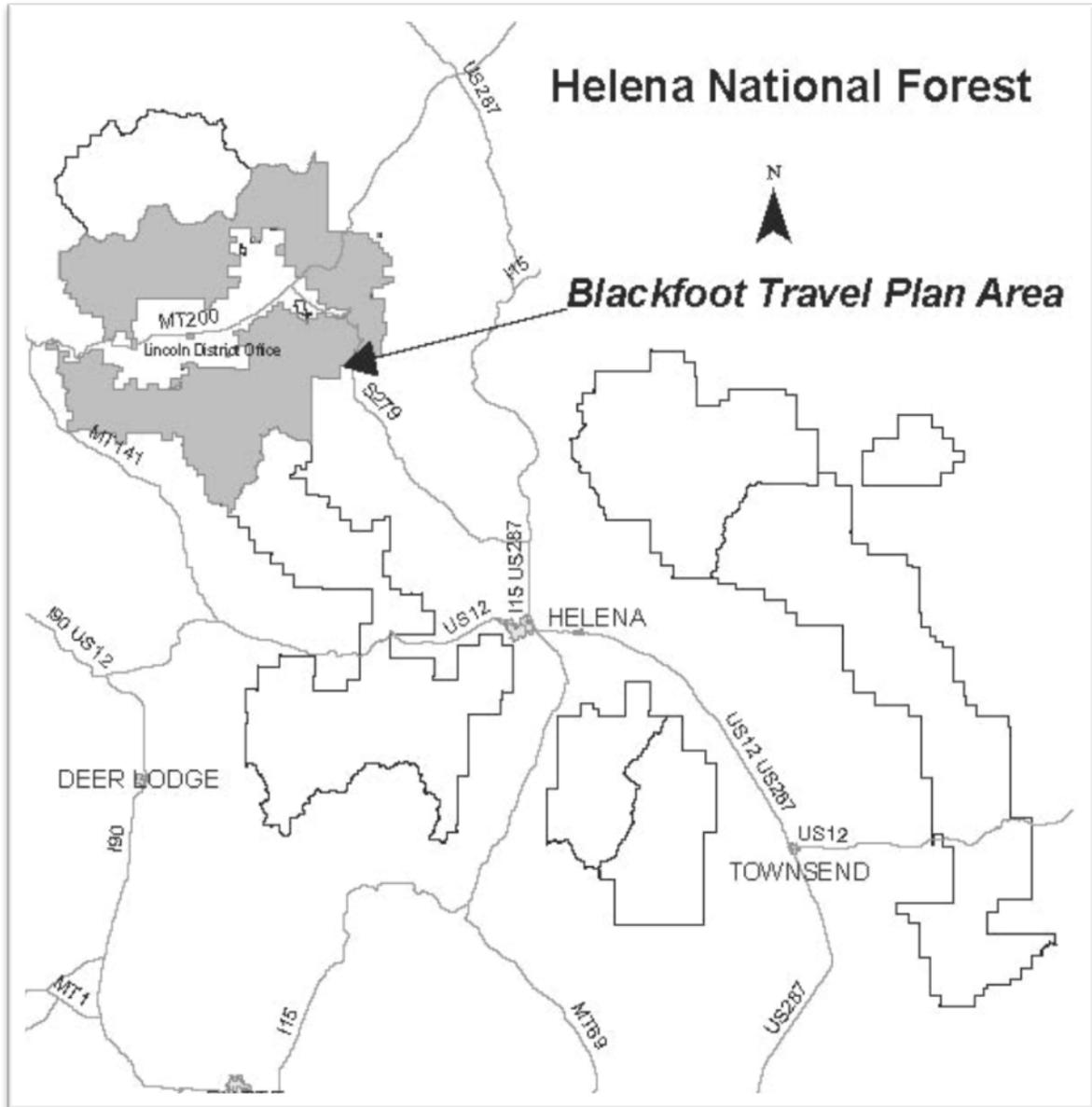


Figure 1. Vicinity map

In 2005, the Forest Service issued new travel planning regulations (the 2005 Travel Management Rule; USDA Forest Service 2005). It addressed national concerns about the effects of unmanaged motorized off-highway vehicles (OHVs).

As a result of these efforts and with the input we received since 2000 (written comments and subsequent discussions with forest users, landowners, agencies, Forest Service specialists, local government, recreation groups and advocacy groups), we revised the original proposed action.

We re-initiated scoping on a new proposed action in 2010 and issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register. We received 336 comment letters in response to this effort. We coded, categorized and analyzed these comments along with the results of continued internal scoping to develop a list of key issues and alternatives for analysis. Based on preliminary analysis of the alternatives, we identified the potential need for a Forest Plan programmatic amendment regarding the standard for big game security index (Forest Plan standard 4a) as part of this proposal and issued a corrected NOI on October 1, 2012 with this new information.

Regulatory Framework

Several important laws and policies form the regulatory framework applicable to managing the Helena National Forest. The framework is also an integral part of the purpose and need for action. These established many of the parameters for the environmental analysis of travel management for NFS lands encompassing the Blackfoot travel planning area

In addition to the following laws and documents, each specialist report in the project record identifies the regulatory framework that is applicable to their analysis.

- Forest Service Manuals (FSM) and Handbooks as applicable, including FSM 7700 and 7709 related to transportation planning
- Forest Service regulations under 36 CFR part 212 subpart B and part 261
- Executive Orders (EO) 11644 and 11989
- Helena National Forest Plan (1986, as amended)
- National Forest Management Act (NFMA)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act (1973)
- Clean Water Act (CWA)
- National Historic Preservation Act (HNPA) of 1966, as amended
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act

We provide a brief overview of the Forest Plan below, with more details in appendix A.

The Helena National Forest Plan (Forest Plan, USDA Forest Service 1986, as amended) provides management direction for the project area. The Forest Plan divides the Forest into management areas (MAs) – each with different goals, resource potentials, and limitations. Management areas are not single, contiguous units; they consist of many individual pieces, each classified with one of the specific management area prescriptions. The decision for this project must be consistent with the standards and guidelines in the Forest Plan.

Forestwide goals, objectives, and standards are found in Chapter II of the Forest Plan (pp. II-1 to II-36). The Plan also provides goals for each of the twelve Management Areas (MAs). These MAs are described in Chapter II of the Forest Plan. Each specialist report includes a section on Forest Plan consistency.

The Forest Plan includes direction for road and trail management and provides important guidance for this project. Forestwide direction that is applicable to this project includes:

- Goal 15 (Forestwide II/2) – develop and implement a road management program with road use and travel restrictions that are responsive to resource protection needs and public concerns
- Objectives, Facilities (Forestwide II/6) – transportation facilities such as roads and trails will be constructed, managed and maintained to cost effectively meet the Forest land and resource objectives and visitors’ needs. The Forests transportation system will be coordinated and integrated with public and private systems to the fullest extent possible....soil and water conservation practices will be applied...to ensure that Forest water quality goals will not be degraded
- Forestwide Standards, Facilities - Road Management (Forestwide II/31-32) – the criteria to be used for road, trail or area restrictions are safety, resource protection, economics, conflicting uses, facility protection, public support, land management objectives

Management Areas within the Blackfoot travel planning area include: A1, L1, L2, M1, N1, R1, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, W1, W2 and other lands. We would adhere to standards and guidelines for each of these management areas for this project (see appendix A).

For additional information on the MA goals, resource potentials, and limitations see the Helena Forest Plan on pages III: 5-7, 17-26, and 30-55.

Purpose and Need for Action

The overall objective of this proposal is to provide a manageable system of designated public motorized access routes within the Blackfoot project area, consistent with and to achieve the purposes of the Forest Plan and the travel management regulations at 36 CFR 212 subpart B.

To meet the overall objective, there is a need to:

- Designate public wheeled motorized and non-motorized use for roads and trails
- Mitigate resource concerns associated with certain routes and uses (resource concerns by route are described in more detail in the project record). For off-road motor vehicle use, the objective is to minimize effects as described at 36 CFR 212.55(b).
- Ensure the route system is in compliance with the Forest Plan for grizzly bear security and habitat within the recovery zone.
- Ensure the route system provides continued access for resource management needs (e.g. vegetation management and fire).
- Ensure the route system minimizes exclusive use from and to private land and mining claims
- Reduce the complexity of the current travel plan map
- Provide for wheeled motorized vehicle travel for camping and parking associated with camping near designated system routes, including roads and trails (unless signed otherwise) as long as no new permanent routes are created by this activity; no damage to

existing vegetation, soil, or water resource occurs; travel off-route does not cross streams; and travel off-route does not traverse riparian or wet areas

- Provide for parking safely next to the side of the road.

Executive Order 11644 (1972) as amended required the Forest Service to, among other things, designate “the specific areas and trails on public lands on which the use of off-road vehicles may be permitted, and areas in which the use of off-road vehicles may not be permitted. The Helena National Forest had complied with that Executive Order by the 1980s (Forest Plan Record of Decision, page 7, USDA Forest Service 1986). The executive order, Section 8, then requires the agency to “monitor the effects of the use of off-road vehicles [and] from time to time amend or rescind designations.” The Helena National Forest has updated its travel plan numerous times over the last three decades, amending or rescinding designations as monitoring indicated the need. This current proposal continues that longstanding approach. Public motor vehicle use of much of the existing system continues to be manageable and consistent with the E.O. and current travel management regulation; but we have identified a need for change in some areas.

In November 2005, the Forest Service published new implementing regulations (Federal Register 2005: 70 FR 68264) (PF-DIRECTION-003). This rule, known as the 2005 Travel Management Rule (36 CFR 212 Subpart B), replaced the previous regulations.

While carrying forward the requirements of the executive order, it makes two other national requirements. First, all units will now use a consistent approach to designations by identifying on a map those routes and areas that are open to wheeled motorized use. Second, once designations are in place, motorized travel off of designated routes and areas will be prohibited.

For the Helena NF, cross-country motorized travel has been prohibited since 2001 and therefore no change is needed for most lands to be consistent with the rule. Existing user-built or unauthorized motorized routes, however, were unaffected by the 2001 decision. Therefore this proposal must determine future use of those unauthorized routes.

Sideboards Used to Develop the Proposed Action

We reviewed and incorporated the criteria for designation of roads, trails and areas found in 36 CFR Part 212.55 in developing the proposed action. We also used the following:

- Roads and trails currently designated as closed are not assumed to remain designated as closed
- Unauthorized routes (also known as user-created routes) and motorized routes will be identified on existing condition maps and determined “open motorized,” “open non-motorized,” or “closed”
- Consider construction or reconstruction opportunities to provide wheeled motorized use and to better protect resource conditions
- Determine the long-term status of all routes and prescribe closure methods (as site-specific information becomes available) as appropriate, including decommissioning.
- Identify type and season of use (non-winter) for all system roads and trails
- Identify areas where wheeled motorized use would be appropriate as well as the type of use for each area (ATV, motorcycles, etc.)
- Clearly identify roads of open public access for the Washington Gulch/Jefferson Gulch Roads as directed by Judge Mizner in his summary judgment
- Identify opportunities for a broad spectrum of motorized and non-motorized uses

- Place emphasis on reducing the complexity of visitor maps by reducing the number of different travel restriction types including seasonal restrictions; this will assist in making travel management simple and concise (i.e. current plans have 12-15 different closures); the process needs to be simplified for public understanding and management efficiency
- Continue to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and private land owners to identify access routes necessary for land management and to reduce or eliminate routes that are not necessary to meet the purpose and need for action or project objectives
- Incorporate collaborative efforts conducted since 2000 and the detailed information gathered into the alternatives
- Allow administrative use for management needs and emergency access on closed routes
- Any existing route not identified as a Helena National Forest (HNF) system route in this travel plan decision would be considered an unauthorized route

Proposed Action

In response to the purpose and need for action, we developed the proposed action using current Forest Transportation System maps, information from the 2004 Helena Roads Analysis Process, field verification and monitoring, and public input received since 2000. Consistent with our travel planning regulations, we would designate the resulting available wheeled motorized access routes and areas on a motor vehicle use map and public use of a motor vehicle other than in accordance with those designations would be prohibited as per 36 CFR 261.13. We provide more details regarding the proposed action in chapter 2, and appendix C and G.

The proposed action includes closing some roads and trails that are currently open to motorized use and opening some roads and trails for motorized use that are currently closed. It also includes some limited new construction of roads and trails. We would not designate any areas for off-route wheeled motorized vehicle use, except for camping or parking associated with camping within 300 feet of a designated system route.

The proposed action would designate motorized and non-motorized routes for non-winter travel on the Lincoln Ranger District and would result in changes to the existing motorized and non-motorized route system. Some roads and trails are proposed for closure and in this case, the proposed action includes proposed levels of closure (storage levels and decommissioning levels, as described in more detail in chapter 2 and displayed in table 4).

Under alternative 2 – proposed action:

- Approximately 98 miles of roads would be closed to public wheeled motorized use (348 miles of National Forest System roads would still be available)
- Approximately 30 additional miles of motorized trails would be designated (92 miles of motorized trails would be available)
- Approximately 51 additional miles of non-motorized trails would be designated (122 miles of non-motorized trails would be available)
- Approximately 2 miles of new motorized trail would be constructed
- Approximately 31 miles of new non-motorized trail would be constructed
- There would be no change to approximately 21 miles of roads currently considered naturally reclaimed/decommissioned per field investigations (roads that are vegetated to

the point that they are not drivable and thus are reclaimed on their own , or naturally decommissioned; see table 4)

- Approximately 62 miles acquired through land exchange would be identified for closure and possible decommissioning.
- Approximately 39 miles not previously part of the road or trail inventory (unauthorized routes) would be identified for closure and possible decommissioning
- Approximately 133 miles of roads would be stored
- Approximately 8 miles of roads would be decommissioned

Public Involvement

We released the Blackfoot (non-winter) Travel Plan Project Notice of Intent and Proposed Action on October 29, 2010 for a 30-day scoping period. We subsequently extended the scoping period through January 7, 2011 and continue to accept comments throughout the process. We mailed a scoping newsletter with a detailed purpose and need and proposed action description to 617 stakeholders including private landowners, agencies, organizations, and tribes. We also posted information on the Helena National Forest website, published a news release on November 1 and 23, 2010, and published a legal notice in the *Missoulian*, *Independent Record*, and *Great Falls Tribune* newspapers. We held a public open house on November 18, 2010 and November 30, 2010 at the Lincoln Ranger District in Lincoln, Montana to provide project information, answer questions and accept comments. We have received a total of 336 comment letters from you, the public; including agencies, organizations, individuals and elected officials; in response to our request for input (appendix B). We have also been working with the following collaborative groups on this project and have taken their input into consideration: Lincoln Restoration Committee; Blackfoot Challenge; Southwest Crown of the Continent; Montana Restoration Committee and The Wilderness Society, and Wildlands CPR.

We released a corrected Notice of Intent on October 10, 2012 with more information regarding the anticipated need for a Forest Plan amendment as a result of this project, and the development of an alternative to the proposed action. We also mailed a letter to all those on the 2010 scoping mailing list with this new information and posted updated information on our Forest website.

Using the comments from the public, organizations, other agencies, tribes and collaborative groups, the project interdisciplinary team (IDT) developed a list of issues to address.

Issues

We analyzed all of the comment letters we received. We read all of the 336 comment letters to identify individual comments within each letter and then grouped like-comments into categories. Our IDT reviewed these categories to identify issues and information to address in this DEIS. Issues serve to highlight effects or unintended consequences that may occur from the proposed action and alternatives, giving opportunities during the analysis to reduce adverse effects and compare trade-offs for the decision maker and public to understand. An issue is phrased as a cause-effect statement relating actions under consideration to effects. An issue statement describes a specific action and the environmental affects expected to result from the action (FSH 1909.15.12.4).

The CEQ regulations have specific direction for issues in EISs. Agencies shall determine the scope and the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the environmental impact statement (40 CFR 1501.8(a) (2)), and identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not

significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review, narrowing the discussion of these issues in the statement to a brief presentation of why they will not have a significant effect on the human environment (40 CFR 1501.7(a) (3)). We separated the issues into two groups: key and non-key issues. Key issues were defined as those directly or indirectly caused by implementing the proposed action. Non-key issues were identified as those: 1) outside the scope of the proposed action; 2) already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations explain this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review" (Sec. 1506.3).

Key Issues

The following topics were identified as Key Issues by the IDT for the Blackfoot Travel Plan project.

Wildlife (Grizzly Bear, Mountain Goat, Elk) Habitat Security

Forest roads and overall road density have the potential to affect the quality of wildlife habitat, including habitat security for a variety of species such as grizzly bears, mountain goats and elk. Increasing road density could result in adverse effects while decreasing road density could result in beneficial effects, depending on the species and the habitat affected.

Measurement Indicators:

- Open and total road densities within grizzly bear security habitat.
- Consistency with Forest Plan grizzly bear standards/guidelines and USFWS grizzly bear recommendations;
- Potential effects associated with key grizzly bear habitats and seasons of use.
- Summer range Forest Plan Standard 3 for elk hiding cover and habitat effectiveness by Elk Herd Unit (EHU)
- Hiding cover/open road densities Forest Plan Standard 4(a) by EHU
- Hunting season elk security by Elk EHU
- Winter Range Forest Plan Standard 3 for thermal cover by EHU (p. II/17) and Forest Plan Standard 4(c) (p. II/18) Motorized vehicle use in the Stonewall and Red Mountain areas and the connecting ridgeline for mountain goats
- Motorized vehicle use in the Stonewall and Red Mountain areas and the connecting ridgeline for mountain goats

We have conducted an effects analysis and documented this in the wildlife specialist report and the wildlife section of chapter 3 of this document. This section will describe in more detail how these measures are defined for each species and used in the analysis.

Water Quality and Fisheries

Forest roads can contribute to increased soil erosion, increased sediment delivery and peak flows that could impact water quality and aquatic habitat, especially if road densities in a watershed are high. These effects would vary depending on the location of a road on the landscape (sloped or flat ground), their proximity to streams or drainages, and timing of precipitation events.

Measurement Indicators:

- Road sediment reduction estimates resulting from road storage or decommissioning in tons per year
- Miles of road or trail reclaimed in the 150-foot buffer along streams (riparian habitat conservation areas)
- Number of road stream crossings and relationship to fish bearing streams
- Miles of high/moderate risk roads and relationship to fish bearing watersheds
- Consistency of alternatives with Forest Plan guidance for threatened, endangered and sensitive fish and aquatic species

We have conducted an effects analysis and documented this in the soil, water and fisheries reports and in these sections of chapter 3 of this document.

Quality Motorized Trail/Route System

Changes in the transportation system have the potential to affect the quality of the recreation experience for motorized users. Prohibiting motorized travel on unauthorized roads and trails could limit access throughout the project area. Reductions in open motorized routes could adversely impact this experience while increases could result in beneficial effects to the overall motorized experience.

Measurement indicators:

- Miles of roads and routes open for motorized use and relationship to currently-used or popular areas
- Miles of roads available for possible motorized, mixed use
- Miles of new motorized trail construction
- Overall ease-of-use of the motor vehicle use map for motorized users (level of complexity)

We have conducted an effects analysis and documented this in the recreation and transportation reports and chapter 3 of this document.

Quality Non-motorized Trail/Route System

Changes in the transportation system have the potential to affect the quality of the recreation experience for non-motorized users. Reductions in non-motorized routes could adversely impact this experience while increases could result in beneficial effects to the overall non-motorized experience.

Measurement Indicators:

- Miles of routes open for non-motorized use only and relationship to currently-used or popular areas
- Miles of new non-motorized trail construction or miles of new non-motorized routes designated on existing routes
- Overall ease-of-use of motor vehicle use map and non-motorized trail system for non-motorized users (level of complexity)
- Miles of motorized and non-motorized routes in Inventoried Roadless Areas

We have conducted an effects analysis and documented this in the recreation specialist report and in chapter 3 of this document.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) occurs within the project area. The primary purpose of this trail is to provide a “continuous, appealing trail route, designed for the hiker and horseman, but compatible with other land uses...” It is to be managed primarily for non-motorized recreational opportunities. The CDNST currently has sections that are motorized. Motorized use and roads/road density within the CDNT have the potential to adversely affect the quality of non-motorized recreational opportunities within this corridor while improved or enhanced non-motorized opportunities have the potential for beneficial effects.

Measurement Indicators:

- Miles of motorized routes within the CDNST
- Miles of non-motorized routes within the CDNST
- Consistency of alternatives with the intent of the 2009 CDNST Comprehensive Plan and the Forest Plan

We have conducted an effects analysis and documented this in the recreation report and in the recreation section of chapter 3 of this document.

Decision Framework

The responsible official for the Blackfoot Travel Plan is the Forest Supervisor for the Helena National Forest. Based upon the effects of the alternatives, he will decide whether to implement the proposed action, no action, or alternative 3, or any combination of the analyzed alternative components considered in this document. He will consider the comments, disclosures of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the decision, stating the rationale in the Record of Decision (ROD). He will also decide whether programmatic or other Forest Plan amendments would be necessary.

The Forest Supervisor’s decision would apply only to *public* use of roads, trails, and areas designated for motorized use. The rule at 36 CFR 212.51(a) provides exemptions, including administrative use, special use authorizations, and use in emergencies.

The existing system of available public motor vehicle routes and areas in the Blackfoot travel planning area is the culmination of multiple agency decisions over recent decades. Public motor vehicle use of much of this available system continues to be manageable and consistent with the current travel management regulation. This decision is limited to the changes proposed within the alternatives: *“The responsible official may incorporate previous administrative decisions regarding travel management made under other authorities, including designations and prohibitions of motor vehicle use, in designating National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands for motor vehicle use under this subpart (section 212.50(b)).”*

Project Record

This document hereby incorporates by reference the project record (40 CFR 1502.21). The project record contains project specialist reports and other technical documentation and data used to support the analysis and conclusions in this document.

Relying on specialist reports and the project record helps implement the CEQ Regulations’ provision that agencies should reduce NEPA paperwork (40 CFR 1500.4), that documents shall be analytic rather than encyclopedic, and that documents should be concise (40 CFR 1502.2).

The objective is to furnish enough site-specific information to demonstrate consideration of the environmental impacts of the alternatives and how these impacts can be mitigated, without repeating detailed analysis and background information available elsewhere. The project record is available at the Lincoln Ranger District in Lincoln, MT.

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