

Summary

The Smith River NRA of the Six Rivers National Forest proposes to: add 44 miles of motorized trails, eight miles of ML 2 and 3 roads open to motorized use, and seven miles of ML 1 roads closed to motorized use; upgrade three miles of ML 1 roads to ML 2 roads open to motorized use; downgrade 19 miles of ML 2 roads to ML 1 roads; designate four miles mixed-use roads; and decommission 55 miles of ML 1 and 2 roads, and; change of season-of-use on 11 miles of the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS). These changes to the NFTS would result in an overall increase of 15 miles of motorized access, and provide additional access to approximately 13 dispersed recreation sites. This proposal would require a Forest Plan amendment to change the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) for 1 acre of semiprimitive nonmotorized to semiprimitive motorized to allow for the addition of a UAR as an ML 2 road. This proposal is referred to as Alternative 3, the modified proposed action. The preferred alternative is Alternative 6.

The area affected by the proposal includes the Gasquet Ranger District, including the Smith River NRA, exclusive of lands within congressionally-designated Wilderness Areas, and is referred to collectively as the Smith River NRA. The project excludes UARs and NFTS roads and motorized trails that occur within Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs). This action is needed to: provide administrative access to National Forest System (NFS) lands, motor vehicle access to dispersed recreation opportunities (camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, etc.), and provide a diversity of motorized recreation opportunities (4X4 vehicles, motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, sports utility vehicles, passenger vehicles, etc.), and to reduce risks associated with the NFTS and UARs to ecological and cultural resources.

Significant Issues

External scoping identified the following significant issues and these issues were used to assist in development of the action alternatives. The significant issues include the following:

Table 1. List of significant issues

Issue Topic	Cause and Effect
1. Access and Recreation Opportunity	Concerns were raised that the proposed action may not provide adequate access to dispersed recreation sites; the proposed closing of NFTS roads and trails, and not adding or keeping more NFTS roads and trails may reduce motorized recreation opportunity, increase user conflict, and decrease motorized access to the Forest; and closing roads and trails may reduce access to historic mining sites accessible by motorized vehicles. Alternatives 4 and 6 were created to address this issue.
2. Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs)	Concerns were raised that the proposed addition of motorized trails may affect the IRA characteristics of these areas including opportunities for solitude, undisturbed landscapes and primitive, nonmotorized recreation. The proposed action adds 3.1 miles of additional motorized trails in these pristine areas. Opportunities for solitude and primitive nonmotorized experiences would be negatively impacted by the noise and disturbance of vehicles. Motorized trails may change the character of these otherwise undisturbed landscapes. Alternative 5 was created to address this issue.

Issue Topic	Cause and Effect
3. Resource Impacts	Many commenters expressed concerns about impacts to a variety of natural resources including water quality, wildlife, and soils for example. In particular, impacts to botanical resources (Threatened and Endangered, and Region 5 Forest Service Sensitive species) may result from allowing motorized use and/or ineffective mitigation on routes proposed for designation. Impacts to botanical resources may result from the introduction and spread of noxious weeds due to motorized use. Port-Orford –Cedar (POC) may be threatened by the potential introduction and spread of <i>Phytophthora lateralis</i> , POC root disease, due to allowing motorized use and/or ineffective mitigations on routes. Alternative 5 was developed to address this issue.
4. Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs)	Many commenters expressed concerns that changes to the NFTS within TCPs may impact sacred sites and cultural values of regional tribes. In response to the issue of impacts to TCP, the geographic extent of the project’s scope was modified to exclude inventoried UARs, and NFTS roads and motorized trails within TCPs in order to protect sacred sites and cultural values related to those areas. The modified project scope applies to all project alternatives. The proposed action was eliminated from detailed study as it exceeds the modified geographic scope.

Alternatives Considered in Detail

Five alternatives; the No Action, and four action alternatives were developed to meet the purpose and need and respond to the significant issues listed above. Alternative 2, the Proposed Action that was publicly scoped in April 2012, has been eliminated from detailed study based on comments received from the public concerning changing the existing NFTS within TCPs nominated or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The five alternatives considered in detail for this analysis are listed in **Table 2** below. Complete details of the alternatives are found in Chapter 2 of this document.

Table 2. List of alternatives considered in detail

Alternative	Description
Alternative 1: No Action Alternative	<p>The No Action alternative provides a baseline for comparing the other alternatives. This alternative maintains the status quo. Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. No changes would be made to the current NFTS. The agency would take no affirmative action on any unauthorized routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not add new NFTS facilities (Roads and Motorized Trails) • Does not decommission roads • Does not restore drainage patterns on unauthorized routes • Does not authorized stormproofing measures on NFTS facilities • Does not authorize new Port-Orford-cedar mitigations.
Alternative 3: Modified Proposed Action	<p>Alternative 3 is the proposed action (Alternative 2) modified in geographic scope to exclude inventoried unauthorized routes and NFTS roads and trails within Traditional Cultural Properties. Alternative 3 is referred to as the modified proposed action and includes the following actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address motorized recreation and access to dispersed sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overall addition of 15 miles of motorized access on NFTS ○ Designate mixed-use on 3.9 miles of road 17N49 ○ Add 13 routes to dispersed sites • Reduce risk to resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restore 79 miles of UARs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barricade 72 miles of UARs ○ Stormproof 122 miles of roads and motorized trails ○ Seasonal gate closure on 11 miles of roads and motorized trails • Change 1 acre of semiprimitive nonmotorized to semiprimitive motorized in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). Forest Plan Amendment required.

Alternative	Description
Alternative 4	<p>Alternative 4 responds to issues concerning impacts on motorized recreation opportunities. This alternative was developed to provide increased opportunities for motorized recreation and access to dispersed sites. Specifically, this alternative adds more motorized trails and level 2 roads to address motorized recreation opportunity; adds more motorized trails accessing dispersed recreation sites (including short inventoried unauthorized routes); maintains more maintenance level 2 roads; and designates parking along 17N49.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address motorized recreation and access to dispersed sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overall add 51 miles of motorized access on NFTS ○ Designate mixed-use on 0.4 miles of road 17N49 ○ Add 54 routes to dispersed sites ○ Designate parking at five sites along 17N49 • Reduce risk to resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restore 71 miles of UARs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barricade 65 miles of UARs ○ Stormproof 114 miles of roads and motorized trails ○ Seasonal gate closure on 42 miles of roads and motorized trails • Change 6 acres of semiprimitive nonmotorized to semiprimitive motorized in the ROS. Forest Plan Amendment required.
Alternative 5	<p>Alternative 5 responds to issues concerning impacts to forest resources and inventoried roadless areas (IRAs). This alternative was developed to reduce the number and miles of roads and motorized trails open for motorized travel with specific attention given to protecting nonmotorized recreation opportunities in IRAs and increased level of protection for Port-Orford-cedar, and botanical resources. Specifically, this alternative does not add motorized trails in IRAs; does not add inventoried unauthorized routes to the NFTS with a high resource risk and low need; does not keep roads on the NFTS with high resource risks and low need; reduces motorized access to stands of Port-Orford-cedar; reduces motorized access to areas with Threatened and Endangered and Region 5 Sensitive botanical species; barricades all inventoried unauthorized routes not proposed for addition to the NFTS; and restores drainage patterns on short inventoried unauthorized routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address motorized recreation and access to dispersed sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add 12 routes to dispersed sites • Reduce risk to resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overall reduction of 94 miles of motorized access on NFTS ○ Restore 135 miles of UARs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barricade 135 miles of UARs ○ Stormproof 121 miles of roads and motorized trails ○ Seasonal gate closure on 8 miles of roads and motorized trails • Change 1 acre of semiprimitive nonmotorized to semiprimitive motorized in the ROS. Forest Plan Amendment required.
Alternative 6: Preferred Alternative	<p>Alternative 6 is similar to Alternative 3; however, it makes limited changes to address key issues identified through public scoping related to dispersed recreation and restoration of drainage patterns. Alternative 6 adds short inventoried UARs to popular dispersed recreation sites to the NFTS; restores drainage patterns on short inventoried UARs to dispersed recreation sites not added to the NFTS; barricades inventoried UARs not added to the NFTS; and designates parking and mixed-use along road 17N49.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address Motorized Recreation and Access to Dispersed Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overall addition of 16 miles of motorized access on NFTS ○ Designate mixed-use on 0.4 miles of road 17N49 ○ Add 50 routes to dispersed sites ○ Designate parking at 4 sites along 17N49 • Reduce Risk to Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restores 101 miles of UARs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barricade 101 miles of UARs ○ Stormproof 122 miles of roads and motorized trails ○ Seasonal Gate Closure on 52 miles of roads and motorized trails • Change 6 acres of semiprimitive nonmotorized to semiprimitive motorized in the ROS. Forest Plan Amendment required