

CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 Introduction

The Forest Service has prepared this Proposed Action Report (PAR) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 40 CFR 1500-1508), the National Forest Management Act (NFMA implementing regulations of 2000, including the transition provisions clarified by the 2004 interpretative rule), and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. Development of this PAR and its content is based on direction in the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Boise National Forest (Forest Plan).

Based on the analysis to date, this Proposed Action Report discloses preliminary environmental effects of a proposed action and no action of the South Fork Salmon River Recreation Access Management Project on the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise National Forest in Valley County, Idaho. Planning for this project was initiated in the spring of 2008.

1.2 Location

The South Fork Salmon River Recreation Access Management Project (SFSR RAMP) is located in the Upper South Fork Salmon River drainage, about 25 miles northeast of Cascade, in Valley County, Idaho (Figure 1-1). The locations for the proposed activities are Township 13N, Range 5E, Section 3; Township 14N, Range 6E, Sections 1,2,3,8,9,10,12,17; Township 15N, Range 6E, Sections 23,24,25,26,35,36; and Township 16N, Range 6E, Sections 9,10,14,15,16,21,22,23,27,28; Boise Meridian. Access to these locations from Cascade is by Forest Highway 22 (Warm Lake Highway) and Forest Road 474.

The project area is about 103,804 acres in size and comprises most of two 5th field watersheds: Warm Lake (HU 1706020810) and Upper South Fork Salmon River (HU 1706020811) (Figure 1-2). Roughly 63,480 acres of the project area have been inventoried as roadless, including portions of the Needles, Stony Meadows, Peace Rock, Reeves Creek, and the Caton Lake Inventoried Roadless Areas. However, none of the activities proposed are within the boundaries of any inventoried roadless area.

1.3 Background

Within the project area, the South Fork Salmon River and many of its tributaries have important spawning, rearing, and migratory habitats for chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout (all Threatened species), including designated critical habitat for chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Native westslope cutthroat trout, redband trout, and introduced brook trout are also present. Although numerous improvements have been made to enhance water quality and fish habitat conditions over the past ten years, aquatic habitat is functioning at risk due to limiting fish habitat factors in this area, including elevated fine sediment and poor pool habitat. Native fish populations are also at risk due to the presence of non-native species.

The upper South Fork Salmon River/Stolle Meadows area is a popular destination for OHV (Off-highway vehicles) users and dispersed camping. In the Warm Lake vicinity, there are three Forest Service developed campgrounds and a number of privately owned or operated sites that include two commercial lodges, summer homes, and organization camps. Several motorized roads and trails provide ingress and egress from Warm Lake and the surrounding areas into Stolle Meadows. Numerous dispersed camp sites adjoin these roads; many of the dispersed sites are immediately adjacent to designated critical habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. On a typical summer weekend, an estimated 1,000 recreationists can be observed visiting the area. The fall hunting season also draws many visitors that use the roads, trails, and dispersed camping sites. In addition to the authorized roads, there is a substantial network of roads closed to motorized uses, most of which have grown in with vegetation.

In 2004, a Dispersed Recreation Assessment was conducted in the Stolle Meadows area with the intent of locating and estimating impacts to aquatic and riparian habitat caused by dispersed recreation (camping and OHV use). In 2005, barriers were placed to prevent motorized vehicles from accessing some of the more heavily impacted sites to promote the recovery of aquatic and riparian habitats.

Figure 1-1. Vicinity Map

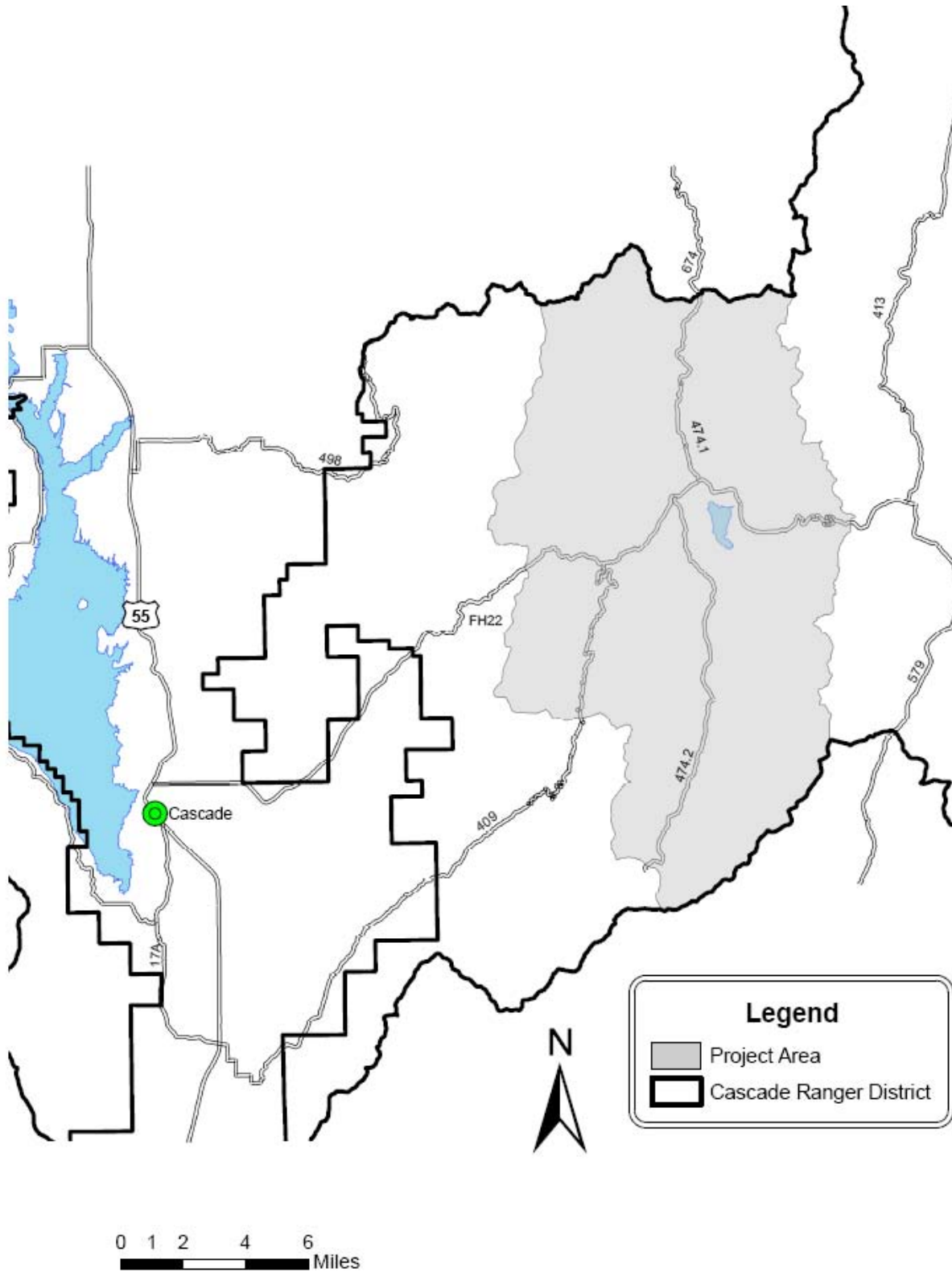
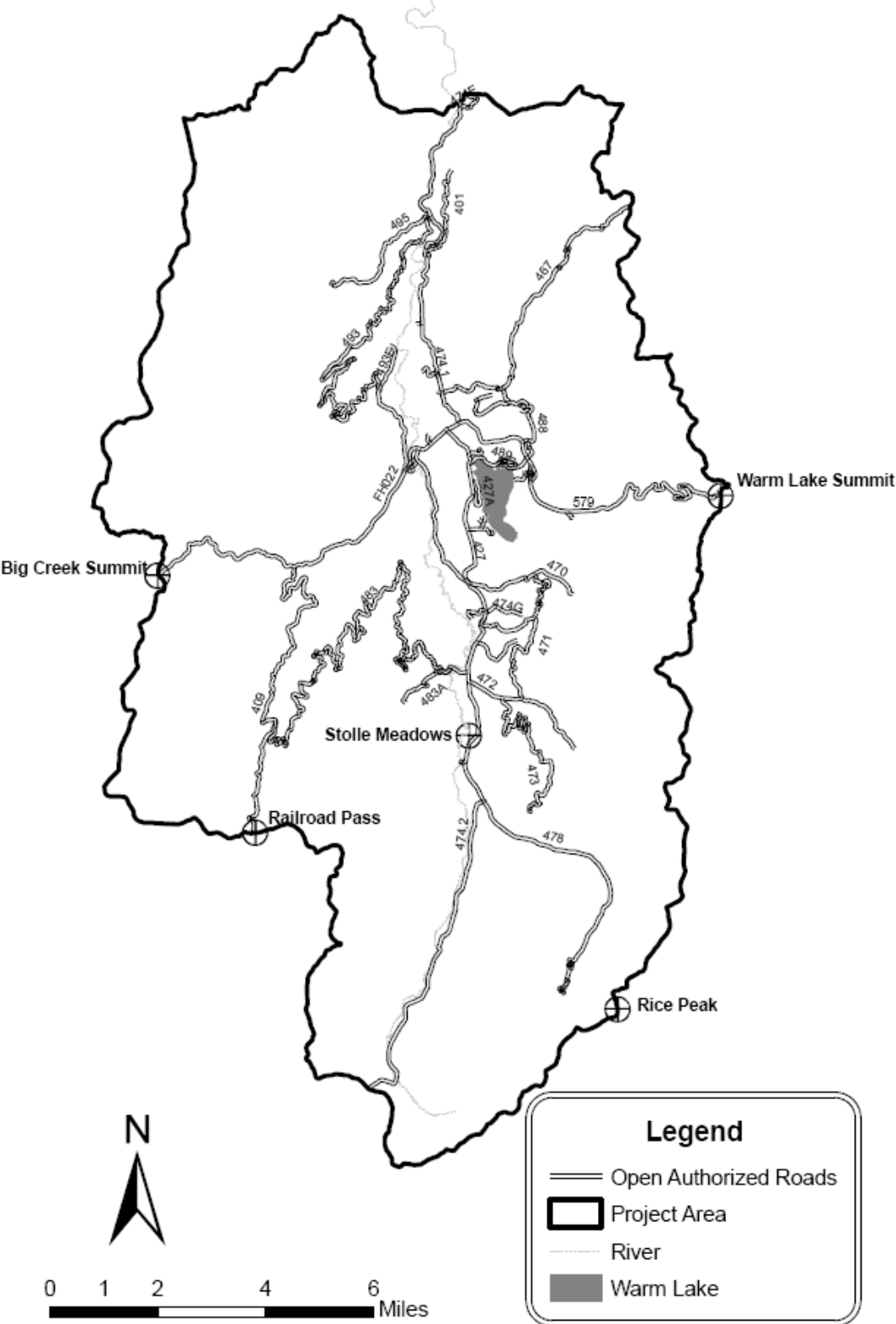


Figure 1-2. SFSR Recreation Access Management Project Area



In 2007, this area was extensively burned in Cascade Complex Fire. Because much of the area burned at high and moderate severity, the fire killed the vegetation and removed the down woody material which provided visual screens and physical barriers to the closed routes. These conditions create the potential for unauthorized motorized access over much of the area.

In addition to the loss of vegetation there is an increased potential for accelerated erosion and sediment delivery from roads, dispersed camp sites, and indiscriminant OHV use. Temporary changes in travel management and dispersed site access have been established via Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) to minimize the risk to human health and safety, prevent unacceptable degradation of critical habitat, and protect burned areas from uses that could interfere with recovery. However, longer-term changes in travel management and dispersed site access to reduce erosion and sedimentation have not been established.

1.4 Proposed Action

Activities included in the proposed action are guided by direction in the Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2003), and direction stated in 36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261 and 295: Final Rule for Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use (11/9/2005). The Proposed Action activities include:

1. Dispersed Recreation Access (Stolle Meadows)
 - a. Specify designated routes where motorized access to dispersed camping and recreation sites is authorized. The designated routes will allow motorized vehicle access and provide for dispersed camping opportunities. See Figure 2-1 for proposed designated routes.
 - b. Prohibit motorized vehicle access off of designated routes for dispersed camping in Stolle Meadows Corridor. Currently, motorized vehicle access is authorized 300 feet off designated roads and 100 feet off designated trails for dispersed camping. The “Corridor” is defined as FR 474 from the FR 474/427/470 intersection south to the Telephone Ridge Trail (#112) intersection. This includes all designated routes between FR 474 and the South Fork Salmon River including FR 483 to FR483/483A intersection. See Figure 2-1 for proposed Stolle Meadows Corridor motor vehicle restrictions.
 - c. Rehabilitate unauthorized routes and dispersed recreation sites that are contributing to resource impacts. Rehabilitation activities could include placing barriers (rocks or fences) to eliminate vehicle access, tilling or scarification to loosen compacted soils, seeding and revegetating with native grass and shrub species. See Figure 2-1 for proposed rehabilitation routes and recreation sites.
2. Recreation Facility Improvements
 - a. Improve facilities at Cupp Corral, Telephone Ridge, and North Fork Dollar trailheads as well as along proposed road near Bear Creek. Improvements may include installing vault restrooms, permanent fire rings, signs, hardened/gravel surface parking, horse hitching rails, etc. See Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2 for proposed improvement areas.
 - b. Relocate and improve the Vulcan/Tyndall Trailhead and existing recreation facilities across FR 474 and establish a designated dispersed camping area (Figure 2-1). Additional improvements may include permanent fire rings, signs, hardened/gravel surface parking, horse hitching rails, etc.
 - c. Install “Recreation Access Information” signs at the Warm Lake Kiosk, Vulcan/Tyndall and Cupp Corral trailheads, and north and south boundaries of the Stolle Dispersed Camping Corridor.
3. Roads and Trails
 - a. Develop a non-motorized trail from the Warm Lake area to the Vulcan/Tyndall Trailhead that accesses the Fish Viewing Site (FR 483) and Stolle Meadows cabin (Figure 2-1). The proposed non-motorized route would utilize existing system facilities, some new construction, and designation of existing unauthorized routes.
 - b. Change type of use on 5.4 miles of the Tyndall Trail (#107) from motorized single track to motorized two track vehicles (Figure 2-1). This would authorize operation of motorized vehicles 50 inches or less in width on the route.
 - c. Decommission and convert to a non-motorized trail, approximately 2.2 miles of FR 495 (Dollar Creek Road) beginning at the North Fork Dollar Creek to the end of the road (Figure 2-2). A trail bridge would be constructed over the North Fork Dollar, and management of this route would be consistent with the existing nonmotorized trail system in the Dollar Creek drainage. Decommissioning FR 495 would effectively decommission an additional 18.4 miles of existing spur roads to FR 495.

- d. Decommission FR 493G and FR 493G1. These roads, about 6.5 miles, are currently closed to motorized vehicle travel. See Figure 2-2 for proposed road decommissioning.

Note: The roads specified for decommissioning are currently closed to motorized travel. All metal culverts have been removed and the majority of the roads have naturally revegetated (except where removed by fire).

Decommission activities would involve limited ground disturbance to reshape/contour and revegetate the beginning road prism for minimal distance to eliminate unauthorized motor vehicle access.

1.5 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of this project is to actively restore and maintain aquatic and water resources through management of dispersed camping, motorized, and non-motorized vehicle access. In relation to the Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), the project area falls within Management Area 19 – Warm Lake. The primary management prescription category is Active Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources (MPC 3.2). The South Fork Salmon River has a management prescription category as a Wild and Scenic River with a recreational classification (MPC 2.1).

The need for this project is to: 1) reduce and rehabilitate damage to soil, water, riparian, and aquatic resources; and 2) continue to provide recreational opportunities that are consistent with Forest Plan desired conditions for multiple resources. The emphasis is to change existing recreational opportunities and motorized vehicle travel so uses are compatible with recovery of the fire-damaged areas in the temporary time frame (1-3 years), and to rehabilitate existing disturbances and prevent unacceptable impacts that contribute to the degradation of important habitats that support Federally-listed aquatic species in the short (3-15 years) and long term (15+ years).

Activities associated with the Proposed Action would further the achievement of the following Forest Plan goals and objectives:

Objective TEOB03 - Identify and reduce road-related effects on TEPC species and their habitats using the Watershed and Aquatic Recovery Strategy and other appropriate methodologies (Forest Plan, p. III-8).

Objective TEOB28 - During fine-scale analyses in areas where dispersed and developed recreation practices or facilities are identified as a potential concern or problem contributing to adverse affects to TEPC species or degradation of their habitats, evaluate and document where the problems are and prioritize opportunities to mitigate, through avoidance or minimization, adverse effects to TEPC species (Forest Plan, p. III-11).

Goal SWGO11 - Manage human-caused disturbances to avoid or reduce degrading effects to aquatic populations, particularly during critical life stages (Forest Plan, p. III-19).

Objective FROB06 - Identify roads and facilities that are not needed for land and resource management, and evaluate for disposal or decommissioning (Forest Plan, p. III-59).

Goal REGO03 - Address current and emerging recreation conflicts, while maintaining recreation opportunities when possible (Forest Plan, p. III-62).

Goal REGO04 - Manage recreation uses and facilities to mitigate degrading effects from recreation to other resources (Forest Plan, p. III-62).

Goal REGO05 - Manage motorized and non-motorized travel and travel-related facilities to:

- a. Provide for public safety,
- b. Meet resource objectives and access needs,
- c. Mitigate road and trail damage, and
- d. Minimize maintenance costs and user conflicts (Forest Plan, p. III-62).

Objective REOB05 - Identify and develop motorized use opportunities in locations appropriate for motorized uses through road to trail conversion, development of new trails, and other methods (Forest Plan, p. III-62).

Objective TROB03 - Work with designated tribal representatives during project planning to develop protection or mitigation measures for resources important to the tribes (Forest Plan, p. III-71).

Goal WSGO01 - Manage river segments that are eligible or suitable for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System to meet the requirement of the Wild and Scenic River Act (Forest Plan, p. III-75).

Objective 1929 - Improve water quality by reducing road- and trail-related accelerated sediment delivery to the South Fork Salmon River and its tributaries (Forest Plan, p. III-326).

Objective 1931 - Improve streambank stability in the Stolle Meadows area by restoring and maintaining cutbank and fillslope stability structures on Stolle Road, and by revegetating banks with native species as needed (Forest Plan, p. III-326).

Objective 1932 - Restore aquatic and riparian habitats in the South Fork Salmon River and its tributaries by reducing streambank instability or accelerated sediment resulting from existing roads and other disturbances (Forest Plan, p. III-326).

Objective 1953 - Improve dispersed recreation management in the South Fork/Warm Lake Basin, south of Penny Spring, to reduce impacts and potential degradation to vegetation, soil, and water resources from recreation use (Forest Plan, p. III-327).

1.6 Decisions to be Made

Based on the completed analysis the District Ranger will make decisions to implement activities within this project area. The decisions to be made include:

- What changes, if any, should be made in the number and location of authorized routes that allow motorized vehicle access for dispersed camping?
- Should non-motorized trails be designated, and if so where?
- Should recreation facility improvements be implemented?
- Should roads be decommissioned, and if so which roads?
- What changes, if any, should occur to the current trail system?
- What design features and/or mitigation measures are needed to alleviate undesirable effects when implementing the proposed activities?

1.7 Forest Plan Direction Relative to the Project Area

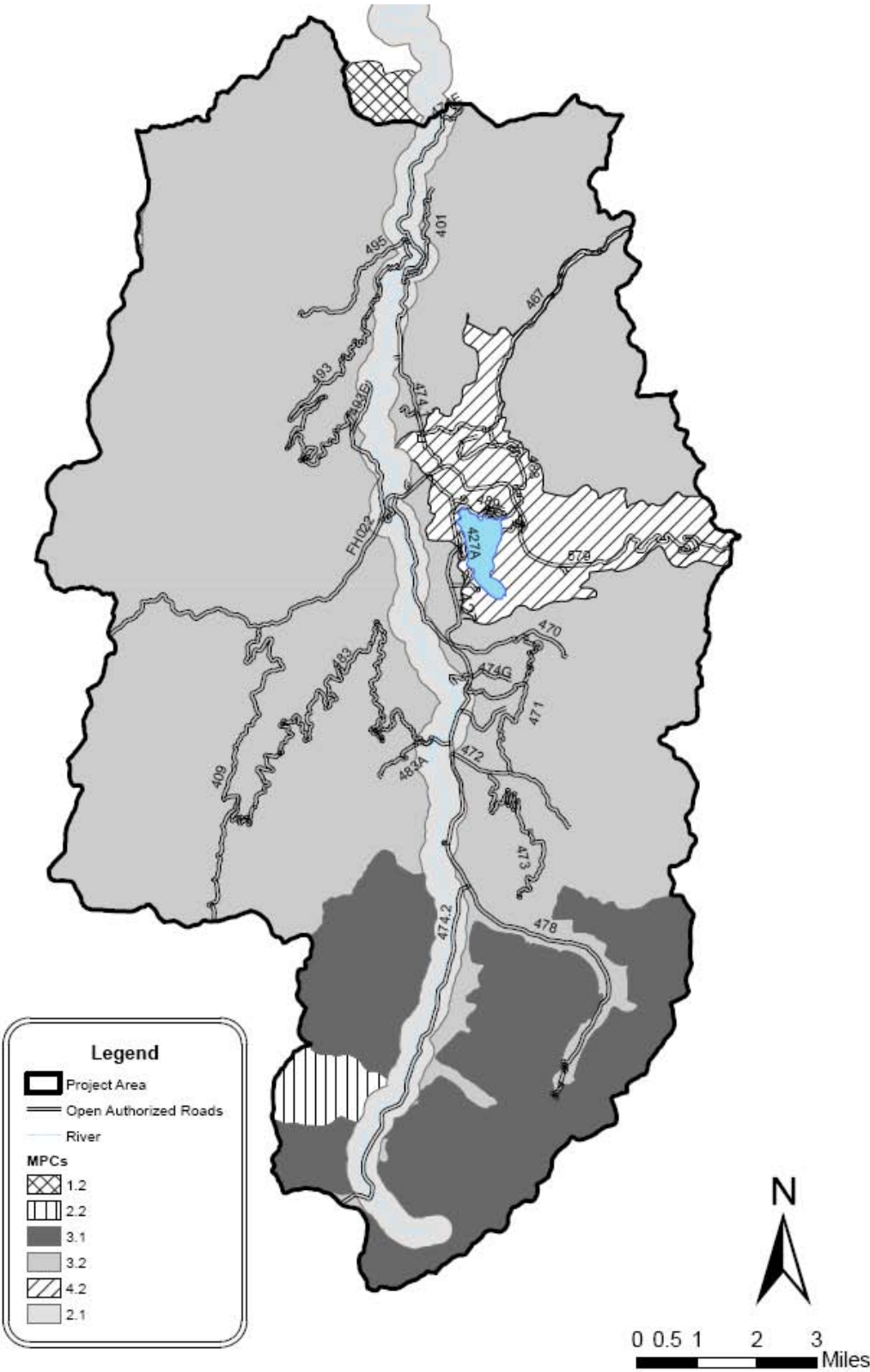
This document is tiered to the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Boise National Forest (Forest Plan) and the Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Land and Resource Management Plans Final Environmental Impact Statement (2003). Information from the Forest Plan, the Final Environmental Impact Statement prepared in concert with that plan, and all associated appendices, have been referenced and incorporated into this document.

The entire project area lies within Management Area 19 (Warm Lake), discussed on pages III-316 through III-331 in the Forest Plan. Several management prescription categories (MPCs) apply within this management area. However proposed activities would occur only within MPC 2.1, 3.2, and 4.2 (Figure 1-3).

1.7.1 MPC 2.1 – Wild and Scenic Rivers and Their Corridors (Forest Plan pg. III-83)

MPC 2.1 applies to areas that have been Congressionally designated as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational Rivers and their associated land corridors, which extend an average of ¼ mile from each bank. Wild and Scenic Rivers and their corridors are managed to protect their free-flowing waters, outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs), and their classification status. A “Wild” classification is the most primitive or least developed. These rivers have essentially undeveloped corridors and are generally inaccessible except by trail. “Scenic” river corridors may have some development, and are accessible in places by roads. “Recreational” rivers are readily accessible by roads and often have development within their corridors.

Figure 1-3. Management Prescription Categories



1.7.2 MPC 3.2 – Active Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources (Forest Plan pg. III-86)

MPC 3.2 is designed to minimize temporary and short term risks and avoid long term risks from management actions to soil/hydrologic conditions and aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The objective of this prescription is to actively restore or maintain conditions for fish, wildlife, and botanical species, or 303(d) impaired water bodies through a combination of management activities and natural processes. Management activities used to achieve this objective include watershed restoration, noxious weed treatments, and vegetative treatments that include prescribed fire, wildland fire use, and mechanical. Restoration is focused on those components of the ecosystem that are not functioning properly, or are outside the range of desired conditions, while maintenance helps to preserve those components that are functioning properly.

1.7.3 MPC 4.2 – Roaded Recreation Emphasis (Forest Plan pg. III-88)

MPC 4.2 applies to lands where dispersed and developed recreation uses are the primary emphasis. A wide range of recreational activities and developments occur. Facilities are maintained, and both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities may be provided. Multiple uses such as timber harvest and grazing are allowed to the extent that they do not compromise recreation resource objectives. Human use and presence are generally obvious. The area has a predominantly natural-appearing environment, with moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of people. Generally, a mix of mechanical and fire activities are used to treat vegetation to achieve desired conditions for recreation settings and developments, and to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic vegetative damage or loss from insects, diseases, and fire.

1.8 Regulatory Requirements and Required Coordination

As part of the analysis for this project, the Interdisciplinary Team will evaluate the alternatives relative to pertinent laws, regulations, and requirements relating to federal natural resource management. Design features will be developed and incorporated as necessary to insure these requirements are met for implementing proposed activities under Alternative B. The following paragraphs summarize the preliminary findings for these concerns that most often apply. Upon completion of the analysis, this information will be updated with final determinations and effects.

1.8.1 Clean Air Act

Neither current management of ongoing activities under Alternative A nor will implementing the actions proposed under Alternative B are expected to degrade air quality in the project area and surrounding airshed, temporarily, or in the short or long term.

1.8.2 Clean Water Act

Alternative A will not decrease the current levels of management induced sediment, the pollutant of concern, to water quality limited waterbodies.

In the short and long term, Alternative B would be expected decrease sediment and have a positive effect on the identified beneficial uses of domestic and agricultural water supply, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, primary and secondary contact recreation, and special resource waters. Relative to water quality and fisheries, Alternative B would comply with existing management direction including Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and the Clean Water Act, as well as Terms and Conditions prescribed in the Biological Opinion prepared for the Forest Plan.

Prohibiting motorized vehicle access into riparian areas and floodplains and decommissioning roads under Alternative B would be more consistent than Alternative A in meeting the intent of the TMDL of reducing sediment, the pollutant of concern.

1.8.3 Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, and Forest Watch Species

The analysis for effects to TES and Forest Watch Species is incomplete at this time.

The following plant species have been identified as having individuals or habitat within the project area: *Spiranthes diluvialis*, *Botrychium lineare*, *Botrychium simplex*, *Botrychium crenulatum*, *Botrychium multifidum*, *Botrychium virginianum*, *Douglasia idahoensis*, *Lewisia sacajaweanana*, *Epipactis gigantea*, and *Allotropa virgata*. Field surveys will direct the analysis to incorporate design features in site-specific locations where appropriate to mitigate impacts to plants and habitat under Alternative B.

Activities associated with implementing Alternative B will be evaluated for effects to Canada lynx, northern Idaho ground squirrel, boreal owl, peregrine falcon, mountain quail, greater sage grouse, western big-eared bat, spotted bat, spotted frog, gray wolf, great gray owl, flammulated owl, bald eagle, northern goshawk, white-headed woodpecker, northern three-toed woodpecker, fisher, and wolverine. Analysis for other projects within this same geographic area has determined there may be impacts to individuals but those impacts would not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species.

Activities associated with implementing Alternative B will be evaluated for effects to Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, bull trout, and westslope cutthroat. Biological assessments for other projects in the same geographic location have determined there may be impacts to individuals but those impacts would not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species. Over the short and long term, the results of changes in ongoing activities proposed under Alternative B are expected to be beneficial to the species and their habitats.

Consultation with the USFWS and NOAA is ongoing for threatened and endangered species. Implementation of any action alternative would not occur until such time that concurrence on the effects determinations has been received from those agencies and/or the effects mitigated.

1.8.4 Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Activities implemented under Alternative B would be designed to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In addition, the project analysis will comply with Executive Order 13186 and meet agency obligations as defined under the January 16, 2001 Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designed to complement Executive Order 13186. If new requirements or direction result from subsequent interagency memorandums of understanding pursuant to Executive Order 13186, this project would be reevaluated to ensure that it is consistent.

1.8.6 National Forest Management Act (NFMA)

The proposed activities have been determined to be consistent with the goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines in the Forest Plan.

1.8.7 National Historic Preservation Act

Alternative B would not be expected to have any direct or indirect effects on historically significant sites. Previously identified sites would be protected. The State Historic Preservation Officer will provide review of the resource report to determine the concurrence with the no adverse effects determination. A mitigation that ceases potentially degrading activities will be developed and incorporated to prevent adverse impacts to unknown sites discovered during implementation.

1.8.8 Idaho Stream Alteration Act

All activities in Alternative B would adhere to the requirements of the Idaho Stream Alterations Act and the 404 Permit Process of the Corp of Engineers. The goals of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 would be met.

1.9 Public Involvement

Public involvement has been ongoing in the planning and analysis for this project. The proposal was presented to Level 1 representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries on July 2, 2008. On July 10,

2008 the project was discussed with tribal representatives at the scheduled Wing and Roots meeting. On July 28, 2008, the activities proposed in this project were presented to the Valley County Commissioners. The project was discussed with representatives of the Idaho Conservation League and The Wilderness Society on August 8, 2008.

The legal notice providing 30-day Notice for Comment is expected to be published in *The Long Valley Advocate* on August 20, 2008. A mailing that includes this PAR will be sent to 66 individuals, agencies, and/or groups, with an anticipated mailing date of August 18, 2008. Correspondence soliciting comments on the Proposed Action were addressed specifically to representatives of the Shoshone-Bannock and Nez Perce Tribes, and the Valley County Commissioners.

The purpose for distributing this document is to disclose the Proposed Action (Alternative B), along with the a summary of the preliminary environmental effects, in order to solicit comments on the project pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Notification of the 30-day opportunity to comment on this project has also been published in *The Idaho Statesman* and *The Star News*.

Based upon public feedback received during this 30-day comment period, and information in the completed EA and associated planning record, the District Ranger will decide whether to document his/her decision in a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impacts or to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

1.10 Identification of Issues

Through the 30-day Notice to Comment process, the public and other agencies are encouraged to submit their concerns to the Proposed Action. The Issue identification process will involve review of written and verbal comments, input from Forest Service resource specialists, review of the Forest Plan, and comments from state and other federal agencies. Comments received during the public involvement process will be evaluated against the following criteria to determine whether or not the concern would be a major factor in changing the course of the analysis.

- Has the concern been addressed by implementation of Forest Plan direction or in a previous site-specific analysis, or through legislative action?
- Can the concern be resolved through mitigation (avoiding, minimizing, reducing or eliminating, or compensating for the proposed impact) or project-specific design features?
- Will the concern be addressed during the routine analyses performed to determine project effects? If so, these concerns will be addressed within the EA or accompanying Specialist's Report in the project record.
- Is this an unresolved concern about the proposed action? If, after further analysis, a concern within both the scope of the project and the decision to be made remains an unresolved issue, it may initiate development of either an alternative considered but not analyzed in detail or an additional alternative studied in detail.
- Is the comment a generic comment of support or opposition but without the presentation of any specific issue?
- Is the concern or comment within the scope of the project and relevant to the decision to be made?

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CHAPTER 2 – ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and compares the Proposed Action Alternative that wholly or partially meets the purpose and need identified in Chapter 1, and a No Action Alternative (Alternative A). This chapter included a comparative summary of the alternatives considered in detail. This comparison will be more developed based on the comments received and the completed analysis that will provide a detailed disclosure of the effects of the alternatives.

2.2 Development of Alternatives

The Proposed Action was developed by the Interdisciplinary Team and was reviewed and approved by the Responsible Official. Some of the activities in the Proposed Action have been in the development stages for 2 to 3 years. The refinement of the specific activities into a Proposed Action was completed in July 2008. With the analysis completed to date, it is expected that the Proposed Action (Alternative B) would not result in unacceptable impacts on any given resource and the Proposed Action is consistent with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and Forest Plan standards and guidelines. To the extent possible, the Proposed Action was designed to fully or partially meet the purpose and need for which the project was proposed.

2.3 Alternatives Considered in Detail

This section describes the proposed activities and design features of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative (Alternative A). The design of Proposed Action Alternative was based on the most current information and technology available at this time. Minor variations in the alternative due to changed on-the-ground conditions or improved technology prior to implementation would be consistent with the intent of the original alternative.

2.3.1 Alternative A – No Action

This is a required "no action" alternative that provides a baseline against which impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative can be measured and compared. Under this alternative no changes in management activities would occur. All other ongoing activities (e.g. developed and dispersed recreation, fuelwood gathering, etc. authorized under the existing travel management regulations) would continue in the area.

2.3.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action

This alternative was developed to meet the project's purpose and need stated in Chapter 1. It represents the Forest Service's best recommendation prior to detailed analysis of the environmental effects. Alternative B would undertake the activities described below, summarized in Table 2.1, and illustrated in Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

2.3.2.1 Dispersed Recreation Access

Motorized vehicle access for the purpose of dispersed camping will be limited to within 300 feet along 1.0 mile of designated roads in the Stolle Meadows Corridor. The Stolle Meadows Corridor is defined as FR 474 from the FR 474/427/470 intersection south to the Telephone Ridge Trail (#112) intersection. The "Corridor" includes all designated routes between FR 474 and the South Fork Salmon River, including FR 483 to FR 483/FR 483A intersection. The 300 ft. and 100 ft. limitations already apply under the current Motor Vehicle Use restrictions.

Five (5) existing unauthorized road segments (about 1.0 mile) would become designated routes and added to the transportation system, one road segment (FR 474Q) would be relocated. Thirteen distinct unauthorized road segments (roughly 3.3 miles) will be rehabilitated using various treatments. The treatments would range from simply placing barriers that prevent motorized vehicle access to scarification/tilling, adding ground cover, and revegetating.

Figure 2-1. Stolle Meadows Proposed Action Activities

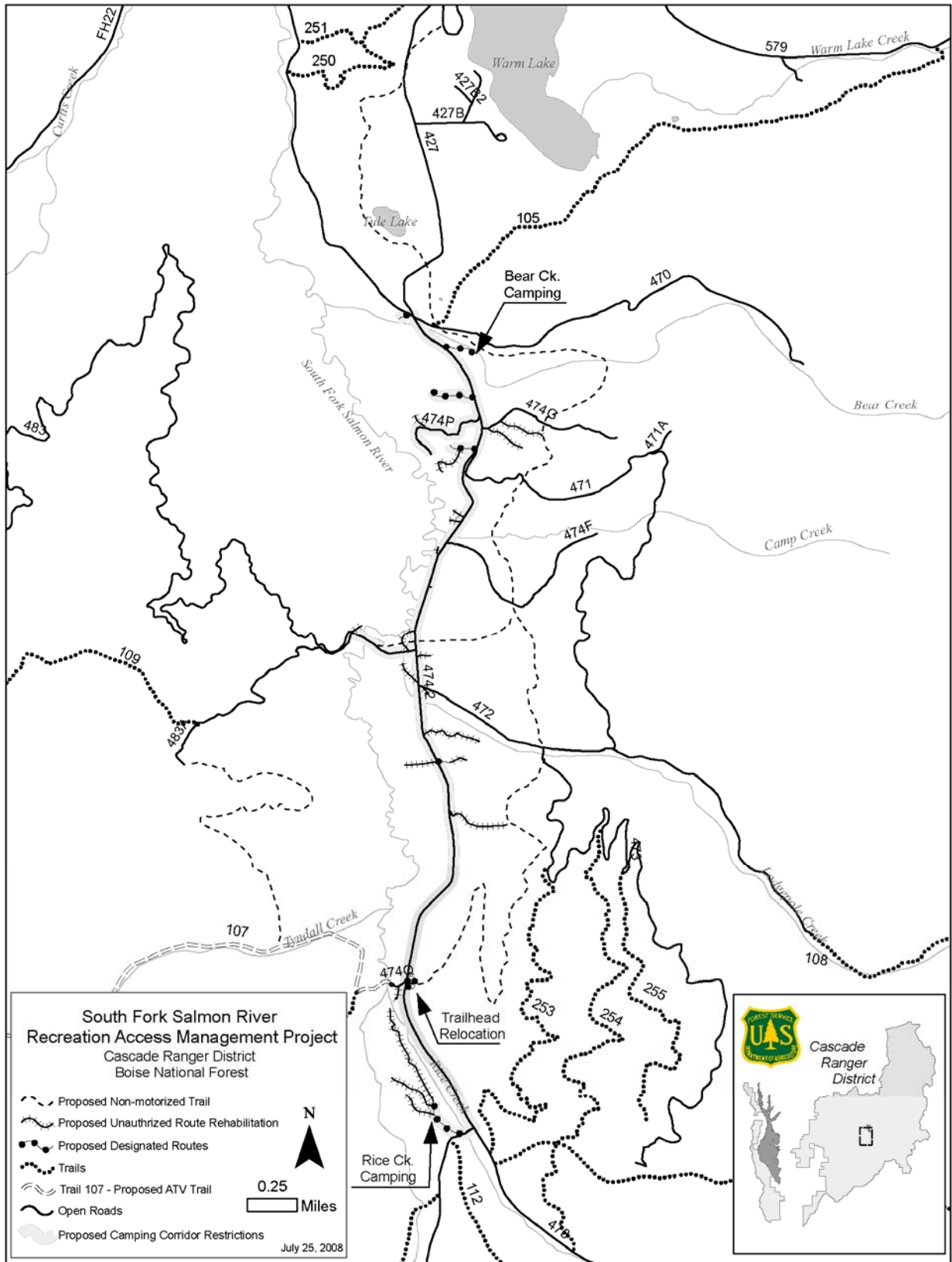
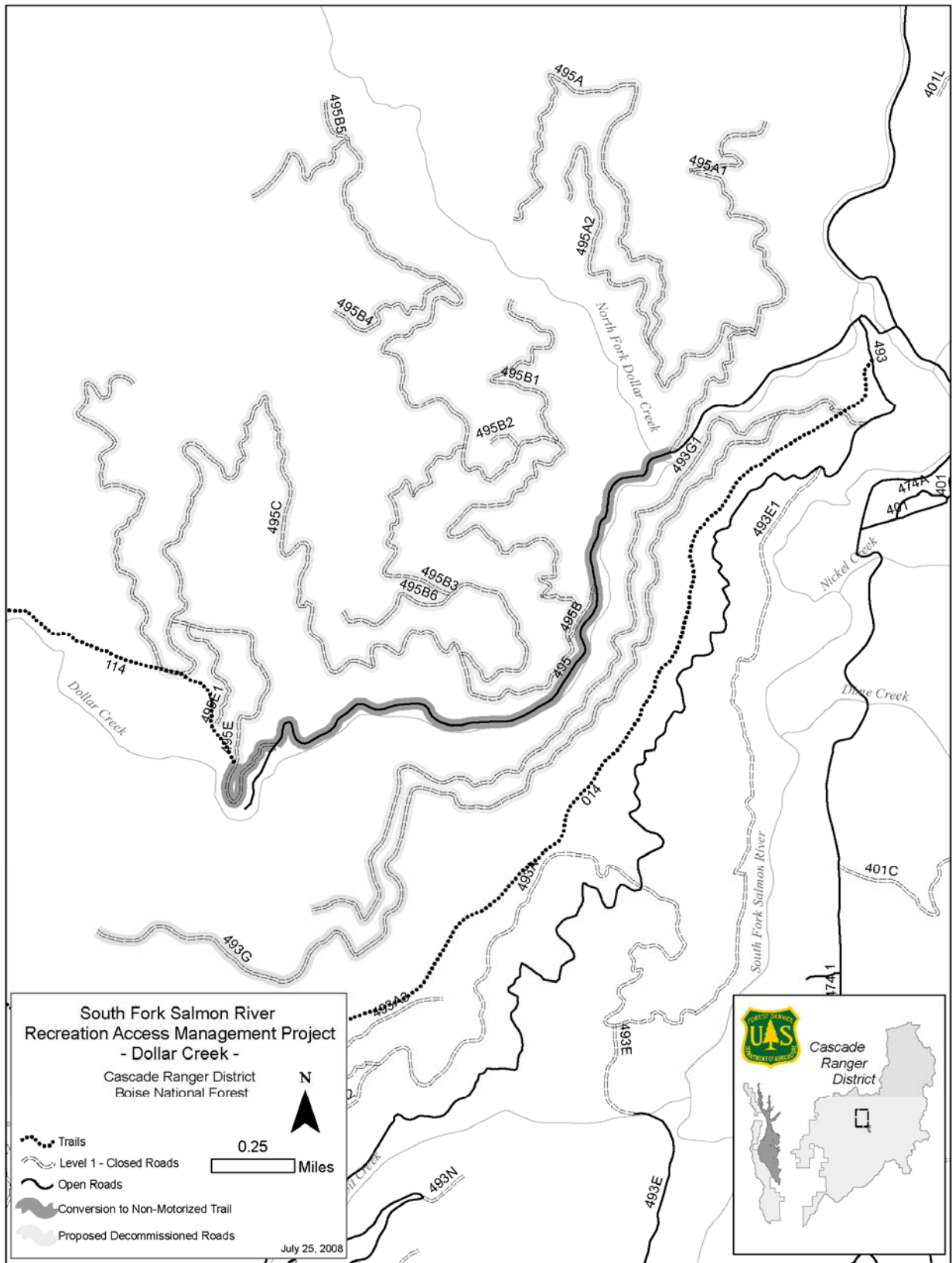


Figure 2-2. Dollar Creek Drainage Proposed Action Activities



2.3.2.2 Recreation Facility Improvements

Recreation facilities would be improved at Cupp Corral, Telephone Ridge, and North Fork Dollar trailheads, as well as new facilities installed along the proposed designated route near Bear Creek. Improvements would include vault restrooms, permanent fire rings, hardened/gravel surface parking, and horse hitching rails.

The Vulcan/Tyndall Trailhead and recreation facilities (currently FR 474Q) would be relocated across FR 474, which would also provide dispersed camping accessible via motorized vehicles. Improvements would include a vault restroom, permanent fire rings, hardened/gravel surface parking, and horse hitching rails.

“Recreation Access” signs providing information on designated motorized/non-motorized vehicle routes, dispersed camping, and other recreational opportunities would be maintained at the Warm Lake Kiosk, Vulcan/Tyndall and Cupp Corral trailheads, and north and south boundaries of the Stolle Dispersed Camping Corridor.

2.3.2.3 Roads and Trails

Designate a non-motorized trail (about 12.1 miles) that would connect the Warm Lake area and the Vulcan/Tyndall Trailhead. The trail would access the Fish Viewing site (adjacent to FR 483) and the Stolle Meadows cabin, and add a loop to the Cougar Rock trail route (FR 483A/Trail #109). The proposed non-motorized route would require minimal new construction as the approximate location in Figure 2.1 uses existing authorized roads and trails and existing unauthorized routes.

This proposal would change type of use on 5.2 miles of the Tyndall Trail (#107) from motorized single track to motorized two track vehicles. This would authorize operation of motorized vehicles 50 inches or less in width on the route.

Decommission and convert to a non-motorized trail, approximately 2.3 miles of FR 495 (Dollar Creek Road) beginning at the North Fork Dollar Creek to the end of the road. A trail bridge would be constructed over the North Fork Dollar, and management of this route would be consistent with the existing nonmotorized trail system in the Dollar Creek drainage. Decommissioning FR 495 would effectively decommission an additional 18.5 miles of existing spur roads to FR 495.

Decommission FR 493G and FR 493G1. These roads, about 6.6 miles, are currently closed to motorized vehicle travel. All roads specified for decommissioning are currently closed to motorized travel. All metal culverts have been removed and the majority of the roads have naturally revegetated (except where removed by fire). Decommission activities would involve limited ground disturbance to reshape/contour and revegetate the beginning road prism for minimal distance to eliminate unauthorized motor vehicle access.

2.4 Design Features Common to the Proposed Action Alternative

In addition to Forest Plan standards and guidelines designed to mitigate impacts, the Interdisciplinary Team identified the following preliminary measures that may be applicable to the Proposed Action Alternative. Additional design features may be developed and included if an individual resource analysis identifies unexpected outcomes or effects. The design features are intended to reduce or prevent undesirable effects resulting from proposed management activities.

2.4.1 Cultural Resources

Documented Native American sites and other historic properties that coincide with proposed activities would be avoided during project implementation. The Forest Archaeologist and/or her representative review of these sites prior to implementation would identify (i.e. flag) site boundaries needed to avoid impacts. Additionally, the Forest Archaeologist and/or her representative would conduct reconnaissance of all other activity areas to evaluate presence/absence of cultural evidence prior to proceeding with ground disturbing work.

2.4.2 Soil, Water, and Fisheries

All refueling of equipment conducting rehabilitation work would take place outside of riparian conservation areas (RCAs). Petroleum product storage locations would be designated by Forest Service personnel outside of streamside RCAs. Storage containers with capacities of more than 200 gallons would be maintained in a leakproof condition and located within dikes, berms, or embankments lined with impervious material, and sufficient in size to contain 125% of the volume stored at the site. Refueling sites for ground-based equipment would also be designated by Forest Service personnel outside of streamside RCAs and have an approved spill containment plan. In the event of any leakage or spill of petroleum products, the operator would be required to immediately notify the Forest Service and actions taken to control or clean up the spill.

Disturbed areas that may need seed to obtain desired revegetation conditions would have an approved seed mixture applied after September 1st.

Where road decommissioning occurs adjacent to streams, erosion control devices, such as certified weed free straw wattles or straw bales and erosion cloth, will be used and maintained to minimize sediment delivery to stream courses. Natural materials would be allowed to deteriorate in place. Silt fences, if used, would be removed one year after completion of the decommissioning activities.

2.4.3 Road Decommissioning

Road decommissioning activities would include some or all of the following activities: 1) block access at all points from exiting roads using berms, boulders, and/or recontouring cut and fill slopes; 2) remove culverts and stabilize crossings; 3) scarify and seed/mulch all disturbed areas with approved seed mix; and 4) maintain erosion control devices during all road decommissioning activities adjacent to streams. Decommissioned roads will be removed from the Forest transportation system.

2.4.4 Noxious Weeds

Where equipment is conducting rehabilitation or facilities installation activities, avoid or reduce the introduction of weed seeds and propagates by requiring cleaning of construction equipment. Seed mixes used in rehabilitation and soil erosion prevention activities shall be comprised of certified weed free native or desirable non-native seed mix, as recommended by the botanist. All seed, straw, hay, mulch, erosion cloth, biolgs, or other organic matter brought to the project area for land management purposes shall be certified free of noxious weed seed.

2.3.2 Monitoring

Detailed monitoring plans may be developed for the selected alternative and disclosed with the project's decision document. Monitoring plans would be designed to determine the implementation and general effectiveness of Best Management Practices, design features, and/or restoration activities. Monitoring is designed to accomplish all or some of the following goals:

- Determine if assumptions made for effects analyses appear correct;
- Verify implementation of design features and the general degree of effectiveness.
- Determine if resource objectives are being achieved.

2.5 Summary Comparison of Alternatives

Table 2-1 presents a comparative summary of principle activities for the alternatives considered in detail. The summary is limited to the types of activities that are consistent with project objectives, Forest Plan standards, and other resources the Interdisciplinary Team deemed important for an informed decision. A brief discussion of the similarities and differences between the alternatives follows the table.

Table 2-1. Summary Comparison of Alternative Activities

Activity	Alternative A	Alternative B
Designated Non-Motorized Trails in the Analysis Area (miles)	42.2	56.6
Designated Motorized Trails in the Analysis Area (miles)	16.9	16.9
Designated Routes Allowing Motorized Vehicle Access for Dispersed Camping (road miles)	116.2	110.4
Trails Open to “Motorcycles Only” Changed to Trails Open to “Vehicles 50 Inches or Less in Width” (miles)	0.0	5.2
Unauthorized Road/Trail Converted to Designated Motorized Route (miles)	0.0	1.0
Unauthorized Road/Trail Rehabilitated (miles)	0.0	3.3
System Road Converted to Trail (miles)	0.0	2.3
System Road Decommissioned (miles)	0.0	24.9
Number of Sites Identified for Recreation Facility Improvements	0	5

2.5.1 Summary of Environmental Effects

The following narratives summarize the preliminary effects to key resources for the alternatives being considered in detail. The effects summaries are in reference to the types of activities being proposed and describe, in general terms, how the resource conditions are expected to either continue or change under the respective alternative.

2.5.1.1 Watershed and Fisheries

Current recreation uses under Alternative A, specifically motorized vehicle access to riparian areas in the Stolle Meadows vicinity, would continue to destabilize or not allow stabilization of eroding streambanks, which would not contribute to the restoration of habitats for Federally listed aquatic species. This alternative would not be consistent with the Forest Plan for active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial, and hydrologic resources. Further, continued inputs of sediment from dispersed uses would slow the rate at which instream conditions should be improving as identified in the EPA-approved SFSR Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plan.

Under Alternative B, it is expected that riparian and aquatic habitats would move more quickly towards desired conditions by removing or prohibiting activities that impact aquatic, terrestrial, and hydrologic resources. Mitigations and design features for the proposed activities would not generate additional sediment, the pollutant of concern, to water quality limited waterbodies in amounts that would prevent the attainment and maintenance of the instream objectives, nor would Alternative B have a measurable effect on the identified beneficial uses of domestic and agricultural water supply, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, primary and secondary contact recreation, and special resource waters.

Additionally, under Alternative A, the transportation system within the project area would remain at the current level. Under Alternative B, although approximately 25 miles of roads in the Dollar Creek drainage are currently closed to motorized travel, FR 495 is a valley bottom road and decommissioning and stabilizing this single road segment is expected to have a measurable reduction in road-related sediment.

2.5.1.2 Recreation

Under Alternative A, no change in management actions would be undertaken and no effects to recreation would be anticipated. In absence of a temporary area closure prohibiting motorized access off designated routes, ongoing recreation activities would continue, with some negative impacts to other resources.

Under Alternative B, although dispersed camping sites will not be closed, there would be a reduction in the total miles of designated routes in the analysis area where motorized vehicles are authorized to access dispersed camping. Recreationists who use motorized vehicles to access dispersed camping areas along the river would be relocated to the newly designated routes.

The recreation facilities improvements would provide forest users with the amenities needed to reduce impacts to other resources. Improvements for equestrian users would decrease impacts to nearby forested areas where livestock is usually tied to trees, parking and loading improvements would reduce soil disturbance, soil erosion and subsequent sedimentation to nearby streams. Locating vault restrooms and clusters of fire rings is intended to reduce the sprawl and subsequent impacts associated with unmanaged dispersed camping.

The system roads in the Dollar Creek drainage proposed for decommissioning under Alternative B would not reduce motorized recreation opportunities because these routes are currently closed to motorized access.

The conversion of the Tyndall Trail from “motorcycles only” to “vehicles 50 inches or less in width” would change the use pattern of the trail. This would improve “loop opportunities” for all-terrain vehicle (ATV) users. However, there would still be more miles of trail available to “motorcycles only” compared to ATV users.

The development of a designated non-motorized trail in the Stolle Meadows vicinity would add a recreation opportunity that does not exist in this immediate area. It is expected that mountain biking would make up the highest use of this trail. Although there are many unauthorized routes where non-motorized recreation is allowed, the majority of designated trails surrounding the meadow are primarily open to motorized vehicle use.

2.5.1.3 Transportation System

Alternative A would not change the current long-term road system in the project area. Alternative B would reduce the long-term road system primarily in the Dollar Creek drainage. System roads in the Dollar Creek drainage would be reduced from roughly 28.2 miles to 3.1 miles in the long-term.

All except about 5.5 miles of existing roads in the Dollar Creek drainage are currently closed to motorized vehicles. The effective change in roads accessible to conventional vehicle travel from Alternative A to Alternative B is a reduction of 2.3 miles. These 2.3 miles are proposed to be decommissioned and converted to a non-motorized trail that will connect to the existing non-motorized trails in the drainage.

2.5.1.4 Wild and Scenic River

Alternative A does not propose any changes to the current management of the area and therefore would have no effect on the free-flowing nature or potential classification of the South Fork Salmon River.

Alternative B would maintain the South Fork Salmon River’s eligibility as a potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Its recommendation in the Forest Plan’s Record of Decision as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System would not be affected. The free-flowing characteristic of the river would not be altered, nor would the Recreational classification of this river segment be affected. The outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) would be maintained.

2.5.1.5 Cultural Resources

Under Alternative A, it is possible that impacts could occur to undocumented cultural resources through out the analysis area, though indirectly, as motorized vehicles would continue to access dispersed areas where site-specific inventories have not been completed or historic properties have not been previously uncovered. These same incidental impacts are possible under Alternative B throughout the analysis area. However, where ground disturbing activities are proposed and where motorized vehicle access would be prohibited under Alternative B, incorporated design features are intended to prevent impacts to cultural resources.

2.5.1.6 Noxious Weeds

Under Alternative A, no change to the current distribution or potential for introduction of noxious weeds in the analysis area would be anticipated. Under Alternative B, a decrease in designated routes where motorized vehicles access dispersed camping areas would reduce the potential for new infestations. Further, the site-specific areas where motorized vehicle access is authorized off of designated routes increase the likelihood of success for treating new, localized infestations.