

# Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage

## Recreation Resource Report

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## Abstract

This analysis describes the existing condition of the recreation setting and recreation opportunities within the project area and discloses the potential effects of the alternatives on recreation resources for consideration in determining whether or not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

The majority of effects to recreation resources are short-term in duration. Some temporary and short-term displacement of recreationists during the time when harvest activities take place is anticipated.

No significant issues were identified for recreation resources in the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Project. Alternative 3 would be consistent with Forest Plan goals, standards, and guidelines for recreation. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to recreation settings or overall recreation opportunities are expected from harvest activities in the long term. There are no irreversible or irretrievable commitments related to recreation resources from this project.

## Introduction

This analysis describes the existing condition of the recreation setting and recreation opportunities within the project area and discloses the potential effects of the alternatives on recreation resources for consideration in determining whether or not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

## ***Regulatory Framework***

The Forest Service uses a nationally recognized classification system called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) to describe different recreation settings, opportunities, and experiences to help guide recreation management activities (USDA FS 1986).

The Lolo National Forest has recognized the importance of recreation by providing management direction for recreation in the Lolo National Forest Plan. The Forest Plan direction listed below pertains to the project area.

### Forest Plan Direction

#### *Goals for Recreation*

Provide for a broad spectrum of dispersed recreation involving sufficient acreage to maintain a low user density compatible with public expectations.

#### *Desired Future Condition of the Forest*

#### **The Forest in 1995**

Recreation will have been provided that allowed for all types in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. Developed recreation will have been maintained at the current levels. Capacity for dispersed recreation will exceed the projected use for primitive/semiprimitive recreation and roaded natural recreation. Approximately 223,600 acres of the roadless resource will have been proposed for wilderness, with an additional 181,000 acres to remain roadless.

#### **The Forest in 2035**

Recreation will have been provided that includes all types in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. The demand for developed recreation will have reached the capacity of the developed sites. A substantial number of the developed sites will have been reconstructed resulting in a slight increase in capacity. Capacity for dispersed recreation will still exceed the projected use for primitive/semiprimitive recreation and roaded natural recreation. Essentially all of the 371,590 acres of the roadless area available for development will have been developed; the roadless areas remaining will be the 363,308 acres of wilderness and the 181,000 acres managed for roadless.

#### *Forest-wide Standards for Recreation*

The Lolo National Forest will provide for a wide spectrum of Forest-related dispersed recreation activities and range of skill levels available to Forest visitors including the elderly and handicapped. The program will provide for use of the Forest on a year-round basis in areas that will minimize conflicts between user groups and other Forest resources.

The following items will be emphasized on the Forest to increase communication and service to the public:

- Inform public of Forest activities through use of the media;
- Modify timber sale contracts to avoid disturbance to Forest visitors during key periods;
- Increase frequency of road maintenance on popular recreation routes;

### *Management Area Direction*

#### **Management Area 13 – (Lakes, second order streams and adjoining lands)**

##### Goals

Manage riparian areas to maintain and enhance their value for wildlife, recreation, fishery and aquatic habitat, and water quality.

##### Standards

Encourage and develop opportunities for dispersed recreation. Design trails for wildlife viewing and interpretation. When possible, locate facilities out of flood plains. Any new development that must be located in these areas will be designed to be flood proof without stream alteration.

Activities designed to enhance fish and aquatic habitat, wildlife, water quality, or recreation shall be mutually compatible to assure long-term maintenance of these resource values.

#### **Management Area 16 – (suitable for timber management)**

##### Goals

Provide for dispersed recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and livestock use.

##### Standards

A variety of dispersed recreation activities are permitted and may be supported by construction of trails and trailhead facilities. Developed campgrounds and similar facilities will not be constructed.

#### **Management Area 17 – (steep lands similar to MA 16)**

##### Standards

A variety of dispersed recreation activities are permitted and may be supported by construction of trails and trailhead facilities. Developed campgrounds and similar facilities will not be constructed.

#### **Management Area 23 – (timbered lands with medium visual sensitivity)**

##### Standards

A variety of dispersed recreation activities are permitted and may be supported by construction of trails and trail head facilities. Developed campgrounds and similar facilities will not be constructed.

**Management Area 25 – (lands with a medium degree of visual sensitivity)**Standards

A variety of dispersed recreation activities are permitted and may be supported by construction of trails and trail head facilities. Developed campgrounds and similar facilities will not be constructed.

***Methodology for Analysis***

ArcMap geographic information system (GIS) was used to analyze the proposed activities in regards to recreation use and facilities, dispersed recreation sites, and the recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes assigned to the area. The potential impacts to recreation resources from this project were determined based on site visits to the project area and adjacent recreation facilities, use and interpretation of GIS data and review of research and analysis of similar projects. The recreation analysis considered the area within the project area boundary, unless otherwise noted.

**Project Description**

The Lolo National Forest is proposing to salvage timber within the area burned by the Jocko Lakes Fire of 2007 in order to recover economic value and meet the goals of the Lolo National Forest Plan. The Forest's proposed salvage logging would be limited to approximately 14 percent (approximately 1,648 acres) of the total area of National Forest System (NFS) Lands burned by the fire. Other National Forest Lands (almost 9,582 acres) would remain in their current post-fire condition. The Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Project proposes to conduct the following activities:

- Salvage approximately 1,648 acres using skyline and ground-based removal systems for removal of timber from burned areas. Tree mortality within the project area is the direct result of the fires, post-fire stress (root, bole, crown scorch), or pre- and post-fire insect damage. Trees would be planted in areas that would be salvaged. Planting could include up to 2,000 acres.
- Conduct ground-based noxious weed herbicide treatments on approximately 55.1 miles of NFS Road. Weed treatments would help to reduce post-fire weed spread on established transportation corridors.
- Construct approximately 4 miles of short-term specified or temporary roads to provide access to proposed salvage areas. These roads would be decommissioned (fully recontoured and restored) following salvage activities. Long-term specified (permanent) roads would not be constructed under this project.
- Maintain approximately 55.1 miles of NFS Road which would be used as haul-routes for the salvaged timber. Best Management Practices, including road reshaping, aggregate surfacing, drainage improvements, and culvert replacements would be applied with maintenance of these roads.
- Store or decommission approximately 10.7 miles of classified and unclassified NFS Road that is not needed for current or near-future National Forest Land management. Road restoration activities would help to recover the burned area and reduce road related impacts on other resources including water quality, wildlife habitat, and native plant populations.

## Affected Environment

The project area provides a range of recreation opportunities for the public. The area is accessed by Archibald Loop Road 2192 in the northeast portion of the project area, Placid Creek Road 349 through the center of the project area, and Beaver-Finley Creek Road 9974 in the southern portion of the project area. Archibald Loop Road is also used for driving for pleasure and is a popular groomed snowmobile route. Placid Creek Road is used for driving for pleasure, a main groomed snowmobile route, and as the west-side bypass to Jocko River Valley.

The Seeley Lake area is a year-round recreation destination. People are drawn to this area for its diverse high quality recreation opportunities, natural settings, and scenic quality. The natural settings and seasonal variations provide opportunities from summer water-based recreation to winter snow play including snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

### ***Existing Condition***

The primary recreation activities occurring in the project area include driving for pleasure on roads, snowmobiling, dog sledding, dispersed camping, hunting, picking and gathering, hiking, fishing, and cross-country skiing. Dispersed campsites are used during summer and hunting seasons and are mostly located near Hidden Lake and near Placid Creek along Beaver-Finley Creek Road 9974.

Hidden Lake and its associated dispersed campsites are located outside of the project area, but are connected recreation resources. Forest Road 17662 is presently used to access dispersed recreation sites on the west end of Hidden Lake. Dispersed recreation at Hidden Lake increased after the Forest Service acquired land from Champion Timber Company in 1992 in the Deep Creek Exchange. This recreation site has a long history of use with car campers and fishermen. Recreation use at this site is expected to continue to rise.

About 1.7 miles of designated system trails are located within the project area which includes about 0.8 miles of the Boles Creek Trail and about 0.9 miles of the Boles Point Trail. These designated system trails are the only existing recreation infrastructure and receive low use. There are no developed recreation facilities within the project area.

Snowmobile use is the most popular winter recreation activity with some cross-country skiing, skate skiing, and dog sledding occurring. The following routes are used as groomed snowmobile routes: Placid Creek – Jocko Pass, Archibald Loop, Slippery John, Fawn Peak, and Gold Creek. A portion of the Beaver Creek intermittent groomed snowmobile route is also located within the project area. In total about 16.6 miles of groomed snowmobile routes are located within the project area and about 0.6 miles of intermittent groomed snowmobile routes are located within the project area. Currently there are three Special Use Permits for guided snowmobiling on groomed trails within the Jocko Salvage Project area.

Recreational activities occur in lands with a variety of management area designations. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) for the project area can be described as Roaded Natural with opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. Generally, a natural appearing environment with moderate evidences of sights and sounds of humans characterizes this ROS classification. Vegetation management activities, road building and other developments are apparent, and evidence of other users is noticeable. Wheeled summer motorized travel is permitted on designated routes. Winter motorized travel is permitted. There are no inventoried roadless areas located within the project area.



Most travel corridors that provide access to recreation activities are gravel-surfaced, one-lane, and native surface routes. Mushroom gathering is expected to greatly increase in 2008 and then taper off in the following years. Viewing scenery is a component of all the recreation activities occurring in the area.

In August 2007, a portion of the Jocko Lakes Fire burned through the project area. Approximately 50 percent of the area burned with high severity resulting in greater than 75 percent estimated crown mortality. Due to the high burn severity of the fire, the landscape and recreational experiences have changed, and the fire area likely will not meet visitors' expectations over the next decade until grasses and shrubs begin to return and the landscape returns to a more forested, vegetated condition. Some isolated dispersed campsites may have been destroyed by the Jocko Lakes Fire.

The effects of wildfire on recreation activities and opportunities have been studied. A study by Vaux, Gardner, and Mills (1984) on the impact of fire on forest recreation suggests higher intensity fires had negative effects on recreation values but also caution that the impact of fire was not always negative among their respondents, and preferences of recreationists change over time. Taylor and Daniel (1984) found that camping was the recreational activity most affected by severe fire while hiking and nature study were less affected by severe fire. In studying the effects of fire on recreation demand in Montana, Hessel, Loomis and Gonzalez-Caban (2004) found a slight decrease in hikers' demand in areas recovering from crown fire and also found that as burned area increased and the amount of burned area viewed increased, recreation demand decreased suggesting size and extent of burns affect visitation.

The desired condition of recreation resources, as described in the Forest Plan over the next 30 years, is to provide a variety of recreation opportunities including all types of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. Management Area goals specific to the project area also provide more information on the desired condition of recreation resources.

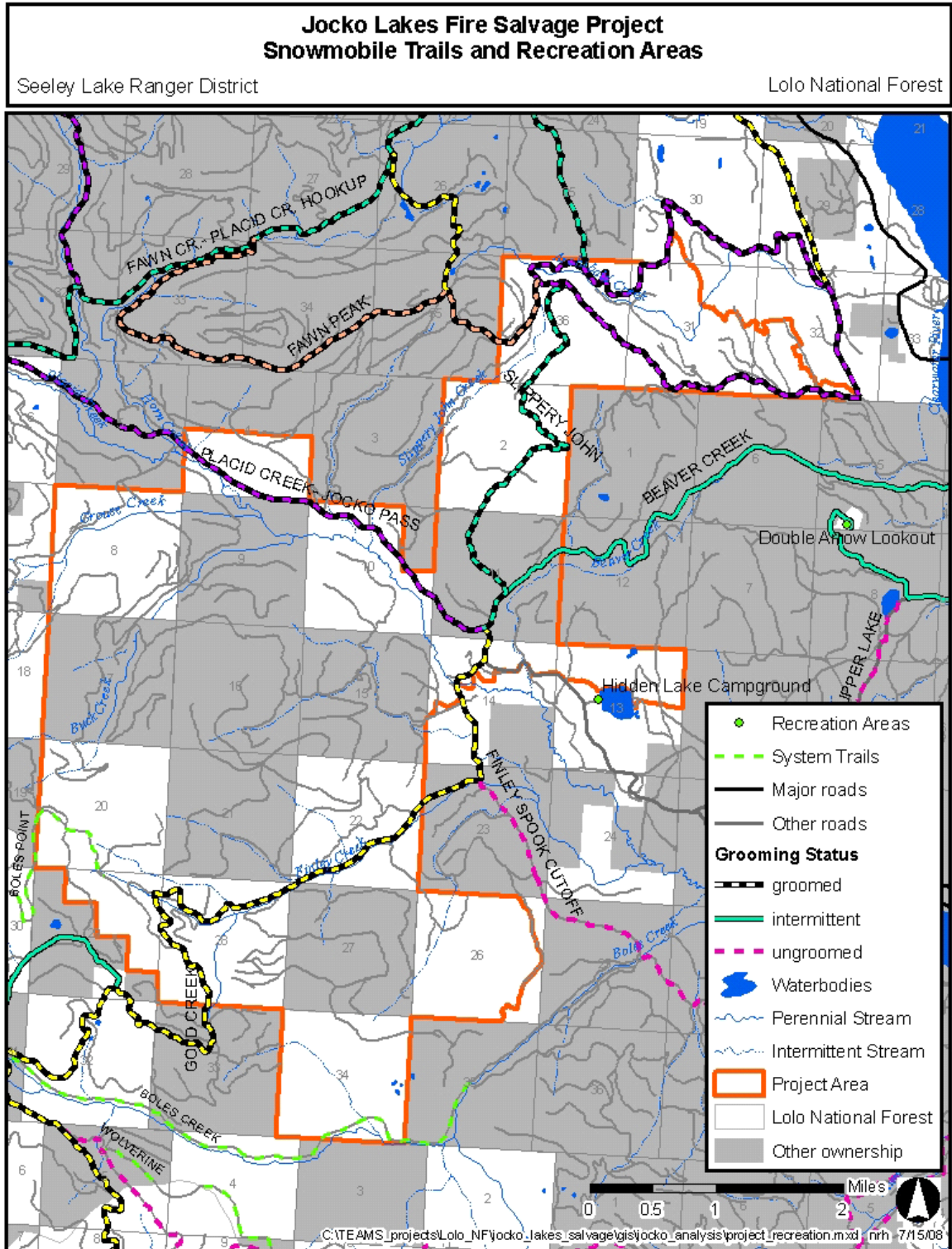


Figure 1. Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Snowmobile Trails and Recreation Areas

## Project Design Features

- Establish haul restrictions to allow for winter-time weekend snowmobile use on haul routes on designated trails. (Placid Creek Road 349 (Placid Creek-Jocko Pass Snowmobile Trail), Beaver-Finley Creek Road 9974 (Gold Creek Snowmobile Trail), Archibald Loop Road 2192 (Archibald Loop Snowmobile Trail), Archibald Placid Road 2191 (Slippery John Snowmobile Trail), and Westside Bypass Road 2190 (Westside Bypass Snowmobile Trail).
- When plowing the road, feather the edges of each snowmobile trail crossing in order to prevent impassable vertical snow walls and maintain a 4 inch snow depth on groomed snowmobile trails.
- Notify the recreating public if there will be area, road, and trail closures due to the harvest activities that will be occurring in the project area. There will be public notifications at the major access roads, local newspaper, and Forest Web Page.
- Signs would be posted advising trail users when project activities are going to take place.
- Protect trails and trailheads during harvest operations in units 15, 201, and 202. Rehab trail tread if damaged during operations.
- Skid trails, non-system roads, and paths created during mechanical harvesting would be covered with sufficient slash and/or barriers placed to deter unauthorized motorized use.
- Monitoring should be conducted to determine if illegal off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is occurring in areas where treatments have been performed. If monitoring reveals this is occurring, steps should be taken to prohibit the use (i.e. signing, barrier installation, increased law enforcement).

## Environmental Consequences

### ***Alternative 3 – Modified Proposed Action***

#### Direct and Indirect Effects

##### *Salvage Harvest*

Salvage harvest would cut and remove dead and fire-damaged trees not having a high probability of survival. Some fire-damaged trees with green needles may be designated for removal, because these trees have a high probability of not surviving due to delayed mortality. For more detailed information on the definition of dead trees and how trees would be designated for removal, see Chapter 2.

The salvage harvest would not dramatically affect or alter recreation opportunities or experiences in the area. Certain recreation experience needs may not be satisfied, based on the extent to which the natural environment has been modified, the degree of outdoor skills needed, and the relative density of recreation use. Some motorized recreation opportunities may be decreased, as existing roads may be closed to motorized use during and after harvest activities. Seasonal opportunities may be affected during the short term due to public safety concerns such as temporary road

closures during ongoing harvest activities. No known dispersed campsites are located within proposed harvest units.

The reduced level of standing dead trees in Alternative 3 may reduce safety concerns for people who enjoy dispersed recreation activities throughout the area such as hunting and hiking. By reducing the amount of standing dead trees that would eventually fall to the ground, Alternative 3 also makes traveling cross-country by foot easier for hunters and other recreationists in the long term.

Portions of the Boles Point Trail pass through proposed salvage units 15, 201, and 202. Signs would be posted advising trail users when project activities are going to take place. It is anticipated that conflicts with trail users would be minimal since most activities are proposed in the winter. Boles Creek Trail does not pass through any proposed salvage harvest units.

### *Logging Removal Methods and Associated Facilities*

The removal methods for salvage harvest include skyline and ground-based systems throughout the project area. Approximately 55.1 miles of NFS Road would be used as haul-routes for the salvaged timber. Best Management Practices, including road reshaping, aggregate surfacing, drainage improvements, and culvert replacements would be applied with maintenance of these roads. The log hauling routes for the majority of the timber removal includes Placid Creek Road 349, Beaver-Finley Creek Road 9974, Archibald Loop Road 2192, Archibald Placid 2191, and other Forest Roads located off these main routes including but not limited to the following Forest Roads: Grouse Creek 4342, Buck Creek 4347, Ten Elk 4367, Lost Prairie Creek 9975, Para 16899, Two Moose 16892, Little Boles 16001, Fairway 17457, and Gibbet 17458. See the Modified Proposed Action Recreation Analysis map (Figure 2) for haul route locations.

Haul routes would be closed to motorized and non-motorized recreation use during log hauling activities for public safety during harvest operations. Project design features are in place to reduce impacts to snowmobile use during harvest operations. Hauling would be restricted on the weekends to allow for winter-time weekend snowmobile use on haul routes. Approximately 24.4 miles of designated snowmobile routes are proposed for use as haul routes. These road closures could affect the hunting and other recreation opportunities during fall and winter seasons and would have a short-term direct effect to all recreationists.

Ground-based noxious weed herbicide treatments on approximately 55.1 miles of NFS Road would also be conducted. Weed treatments would help to reduce post-fire weed spread on established transportation corridors. Weed herbicide treatments would have minor effects on recreation use, settings, and patterns.

Boles Point Trail would also be closed during harvest activities due to safety concerns and would mostly affect hunting opportunities in this area. The public would be given as much advanced notice as possible as to when these closures would take place. Some delays of 30 to 60 minutes on other main system roads are possible during harvest activities.

### **Removal Methods**

Ground-based removal methods would take place throughout the project area. Where ground-based logging would be used to salvage trees, evidence of logging would be apparent. Approximately 1,571 acres of ground-based removal is planned in Alternative 3. Skyline removal methods would occur in the southern portions of the project area. About 77 acres of skyline

removal is planned in Alternative 3. Changes to the recreation setting due to the effects of these removal methods would be minor. Roded Natural ROS indicators would be met. Once project activities are complete or closures are no longer in effect, the existing recreation patterns would continue.

Approximately 128 landings are proposed in Alternative 3. The average landing would range in size from 1/3 to 1/2 acre. Creation of a few new potential dispersed campsites may occur due to log landings and other activities that could create level areas. Some of these potential sites may be along existing open roads and may remain accessible by vehicle after project completion, but the majority would be away from open roads.

Skids trails left by ground-based removal may open up access to OHVs where vegetation and standing dead trees had previously prevented access. Design features are in place to monitor if illegal OHV use begins to occur in areas with salvage harvest. If monitoring reveals this is occurring, steps would be taken to prohibit the use.

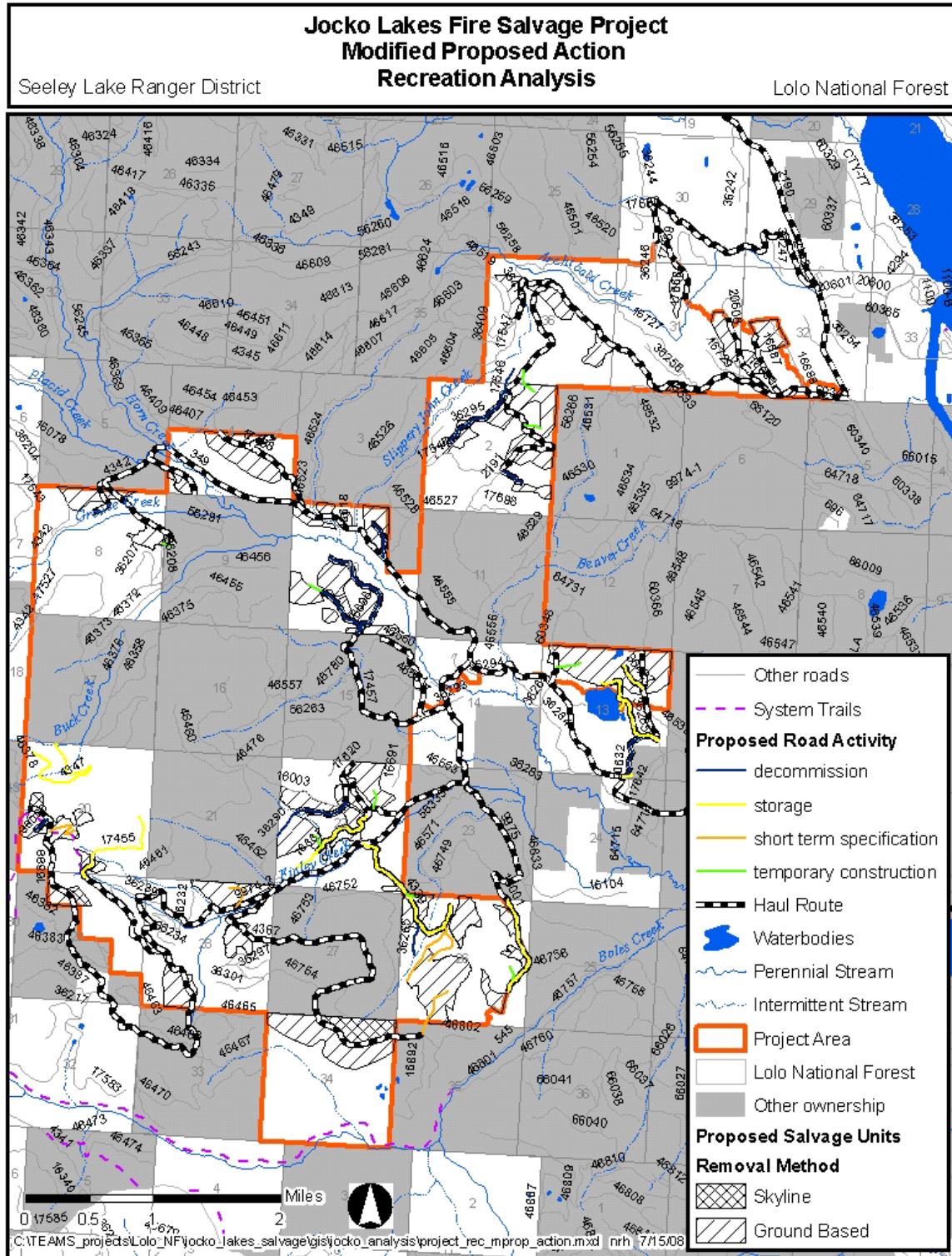


Figure 2. Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Modified Proposed Action Recreation Analysis Map

*Temporary and Short Term Specification Road Construction*

Approximately 4 miles of short-term specified and/or temporary roads would be constructed to provide access to proposed salvage areas. These roads would be decommissioned, fully recontoured and restored, following salvage activities. Long-term specified or permanent roads would not be constructed under this project.

These routes would not be considered open for public access, and decommissioning of these routes would make OHV use difficult after the project activities are complete. There is potential that these temporary routes may open up access to OHVs where vegetation and standing dead trees had previously prevented access. Design features are in place to monitor if illegal OHV use is occurring in areas with salvage harvest. If monitoring reveals this is occurring, steps would be taken to prohibit the use.

*Road Decommissioning and Storage*

Approximately 10.7 miles of classified and unclassified NFS Road not needed for current or near-future National Forest land management would be stored or decommissioned. Road restoration activities would help to recover the burned area and reduce road related impacts on other resources including water quality, wildlife habitat, and native plant populations. About 7.2 miles of roads proposed for storage or decommission are currently closed to public access from October 15 to December 1 for snowmobiles and yearlong for other motorized vehicles. About 3.5 miles of roads proposed for storage or decommission are currently open for public access and would have a change in access due to the proposed road decommissioning and storage associated with this project.

The roads proposed for storage or decommission are primarily used to access areas for hunting or firewood cutting. Forest Roads 17546 and 16887 are currently used for multiple recreation activities in several seasons. Other roads in these areas would remain open to provide recreation access in the Slippery John and Finley Creek areas. The following roads are used regularly for seasonal motorized and non-motorized access: Forest Road 17455, Forest Road 4339, and Road 36295. With the storage or decommission of these roads, there is potential to displace some recreationists who traditionally use the roads for hunting, firewood cutting, etc. Some recreationists may find the road to their favorite hunting spot closed. Other roads would remain open to provide recreation access in the area. Stored and decommissioned roads would continue to provide non-motorized access, although travel by foot would be difficult the first five years following restoration activities. The remaining roads proposed for storage or decommission receive limited use or are rarely used for recreation access. The following table summarizes the change in access of roads proposed for storage or decommission.

**Table 1. Summary of road access changes due to proposed road storage or decommissioning.**

|  | <b>Miles of Road</b> |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>Access changed from open to closed</b>                      | 3.5                  |
| <b>No change in access (currently closed to public access)</b> | 7.2                  |
| <b>Total Miles proposed for storage or decommission</b>        | 10.7                 |

*Summary of Direct/Indirect Effects – Alternative 3*

The Modified Proposed Action Alternative would result in little change from the existing condition and the ROS classification would remain the same. Some improvements to road



systems such as surface and draining structures may be noticed. Improvements to roads would increase opportunities for recreationists who prefer an easily accessed setting and improve access for hunting, viewing scenery, and other recreational use of the area. Hunting may be less desirable for some people until new understory vegetation is established. Some short-term and temporary displacement of recreationists, particularly snowmobile users, during the time management activities take place would occur. Prohibiting log haul activities on weekends would reduce these impacts to recreation traffic.

There is potential to displace some recreationists who traditionally use the area through the closing of some forest roads in areas that were previously open. Some motorized recreation opportunities would be decreased by the storage or decommission of open forest roads. Although Alternative 3 proposes to close some roads after management activities, other roads would remain open to provide motorized recreation opportunities. No direct or indirect effects to recreation settings or overall recreation opportunities are expected from the proposed activities in the long term.

## ***Alternative 5 – No Action***

### **Direct and Indirect Effects – Alternative 5**

The No Action Alternative may result in some changes to the recreation opportunities that exist after the fire. Although recreational visits within the analysis area would remain near the same levels as previous years, some impacts to traditional use patterns and recreational opportunities may occur.

Large, high burn severity fires tend to be dangerous for forest visitors and modify the quality of the recreation setting. These changes often cause recreation use patterns to decline or shift to other areas that have not been impacted by the fire. Day use activities such as sight seeing and driving for pleasure may decrease due to hazard trees. Any hazard trees located around dispersed campsites along Placid Creek would increase public safety risks. Due to these hazardous situations, recreationists may create new dispersed camping areas to replace the traditional sites, which may increase ground disturbance in areas not previously impacted by dispersed camping.

Standing dead trees eventually fall to the ground resulting in recreationists having to maneuver over more downed material. As more dead and damaged trees fall, cross country travel would be more difficult. Safety concerns increase as people would have to crawl over downed material to get from one place to another and as people may step into deep holes created by burned out tree root wads. The effects on recreation resources would continue over the next ten to fifteen years as dead trees fall to the ground and vegetation begins to reestablish. No changes in road access would occur. The ROS classification did not change as a result of the fire, so it would not change as a result of this alternative.

## **Cumulative Effects**

The cumulative effects analysis area for recreation resources is the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Project Area and the Finley-Slippery 6<sup>th</sup> order HUC which includes connected recreation resources and opportunities associated with this project. Past harvest of timbered slopes in general only directly affected recreation use during the time of implementation but can affect the recreation setting until the units begin to develop the characteristics of a closed canopy, which generally occurs after 15 to 30 years depending on soils, aspect, and vegetative species



composition. Areas affected by wildfire generally affect recreation resources for 10 to 15 years as trees fall to the ground and vegetation reestablishes. A complete list of potential cumulative actions can be found in Appendix D of the Jocko Lakes Fires Salvage Project EA.

### ***Past Activities***

Past activities in the project area include: livestock grazing, a power line easement, mineral extraction, noxious weeds sites and control, wildland fire, fire suppression activities, Burned Areas Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (BAER) activities, and past timber harvest. Fire suppression activities generally include fire line construction, danger tree felling for fire fighter safety, aerial retardant use, and safety zone clearing. Past timber sales include harvesting using a variety of prescriptions on National Forest, state, and private ownership. Harvesting on state owned lands occurred in the 1990s and 2007. Harvesting on private lands has occurred from 1999 through 2007 using both regeneration and intermediate harvest prescriptions. Harvesting on NFS land has occurred from 1950s to present. See Appendix D in the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage EA for a complete listing of past harvest activities on NFS land.

Livestock grazing, the power line easement, mineral extraction, and noxious weeds sites and control generally have not affected recreation use patterns. Large, high burn severity fires tend to be dangerous for forest visitors and modify the quality of the recreation setting. See the No Action Alternative effects for information on the effects of wildland fire on recreation resources. Fire suppression and rehabilitation activities and past timber sales typically affected recreation opportunities while the activity was being implemented. Occasionally, skid trails from past tractor logging may be used by recreationists and hunters. The removal of some cut timber associated with Jocko Lakes Fire suppression and hazard reduction has occurred. The removal of these trees benefits the recreationists since it decreases the amount of downed material people have to maneuver over. Past fire and harvest activity has shaped the existing physical settings of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes available in the area.

Other additional activities include: road building and maintenance, road storage and decommissioning, firewood cutting, forest product gathering, personal use mushroom harvest, fish stocking of Hidden Lake, and summer, fall, and winter recreation including hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, dispersed camping, and driving on open roads. Motorized recreation opportunities are generally decreased by road storage and decommissioning, but non-motorized opportunities are generally increased by this activity. These past activities have formed the current recreation settings and provide the recreation opportunities in the area.

### ***Present Activities***

Present activities in the project area include: firewood cutting, forest product gathering, personal use and commercial mushroom harvest, fish stocking of Hidden Lake, livestock grazing, use and maintenance of forest roads, a power line easement, fire suppression, BAER activities, noxious weed assessment and control, summer, fall, and winter recreation including hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, dispersed camping, outfitter guide permits, and driving on open roads. Livestock grazing, the power line easement, and noxious weeds sites and control generally have not affected recreation use patterns. Fire suppression and rehabilitation activities would likely affect recreation opportunities while the activity was being implemented. The removal of cut timber associated with Jocko Lakes Fire suppression and hazard reduction would benefit recreationists since it decreases the amount of downed material people have to maneuver over. The other present activities listed provide recreation opportunities and access for recreation.

The Hidden Lake Timber Sale, planned in 2007, includes thinning 388 acres. A portion of the area planned for thinning was burned by the Jocko Lakes Fire and is included in the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage project. Timber harvest on state-owned lands is being proposed on 34 acres of burned timber. Timber harvest is anticipated on commercial timber lands within the project area. Timber sales typically affect recreation opportunities while the activity is being implemented. Occasionally, skid trails from tractor logging may be used by recreationists and hunters. These harvest activities are not anticipated to affect recreation settings and opportunities for recreation.

### ***Reasonably Foreseeable Activities***

Reasonably foreseeable future activities in the project area include: firewood cutting, forest product gathering, fish stocking of Hidden Lake, livestock grazing, noxious weed assessment and control, use and maintenance of forest roads, road storage and decommissioning, a power line easement, wildland fire, fire suppression, summer, fall, and winter recreation including hunting, snowmobiling, hiking and dispersed camping, outfitter guide permits, and driving on open roads. Fishing and camping use at Hidden Lake is expected to continue to rise. Livestock grazing, the power line easement, and noxious weed assessment and control are not anticipated to affect recreation settings or opportunities in the area. Large, high burn severity fires tend to be dangerous for forest visitors and modify the quality of the recreation setting. See the No Action Alternative effects for information on the effects of wildland fire on recreation resources. Fire suppression and rehabilitation activities would likely affect recreation opportunities while the activity was being implemented. Other activities would continue to provide recreation opportunities and access for recreation.

DNRC plans to plant appropriate tree species in high-severity burned areas to supplement natural regeneration. Planting of trees would help reestablish the desired recreation setting for the area. About 0.5 miles of new road construction would be removed post harvest from state-owned lands. Motorized recreation opportunities are generally decreased by road storage and decommissioning, but non-motorized opportunities are generally increased by this activity. Timber harvest is also anticipated on commercial timber lands within the project area. Timber sales typically affect recreation opportunities while the activity is being implemented. Occasionally, skid trails from tractor logging may be used by recreationists and hunters. These harvest activities are not anticipated to affect recreation settings and opportunities for recreation in the long term.

### ***Summary of Cumulative Effects – Alternative 3***

Recreation activities would continue in the project area. The harvest activities along with the projects listed above would result in some short-term effects of noise and traffic associated with salvage activities. Some temporary and short-term displacement of recreationists during the time when harvest activities take place is anticipated. The activities proposed in the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Project would not dramatically affect or alter recreation opportunities or experiences in the area. Some motorized recreation opportunities may be decreased, as some existing roads would be closed to motorized use during and after harvest activities. Seasonal opportunities may be affected during the short term due to public safety concerns such as temporary road or trail closures during ongoing harvest activities.

Majority of personal-use products, such as firewood, huckleberry, and mushroom picking, would still be available. Mushrooms and firewood should be plentiful, but huckleberry bushes that burned may take several seasons to reestablish.

Design features are in place to minimize the effects of the project on recreation resources. Harvest, weed treatment, temporary road building, and road storage and decommissioning activities associated with this alternative, along with the projects and activities listed above would have no negative cumulative effects to recreation resources including recreation settings and overall recreation opportunities. There are no irreversible or irretrievable commitments related to recreation resources from this project.

### ***Summary of Cumulative Effects – Alternative 5***

Recreation values in the area have changed due to the fire, but recreation activities would continue. Some forest visitors may feel that the area is not as appealing for some recreation activities such as hunting due to the loss of vegetation cover and density. The loss of vegetation is not anticipated to deter use of driving for pleasure on roads. Majority of personal-use products, such as firewood, huckleberry, and mushroom picking, would still be available. Mushrooms and firewood should be plentiful, but huckleberry bushes that burned may take several seasons to reestablish.

### **Conclusion**

The majority of effects to recreation resources are short-term in duration. Some temporary and short-term displacement of recreationists during the time when harvest activities take place is anticipated.

No significant issues were identified for recreation resources in the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Project. Alternative 3 would be consistent with Forest Plan goals, standards, and guidelines for recreation. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to recreation settings or overall recreation opportunities are expected from harvest activities in the long term. There are no irreversible or irretrievable commitments related to recreation resources from this project.

*/s/ Nicole R. Hill*

TEAMS Enterprise – Landscape Architect

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