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Agriculture

**Forest  
Service**

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2007



# **Environmental Assessment**

## **Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project**

### **Non-Significant Forest Plan Amendment #49**

**McKenzie River Ranger District  
Willamette National Forest  
Linn County, Oregon**

**Legal Location: T.13S, R.7E, T.13S, R.7 1/2E, T.14S, R.7 1/2E, and T.14S, R.7 1/2E;  
W.M.**

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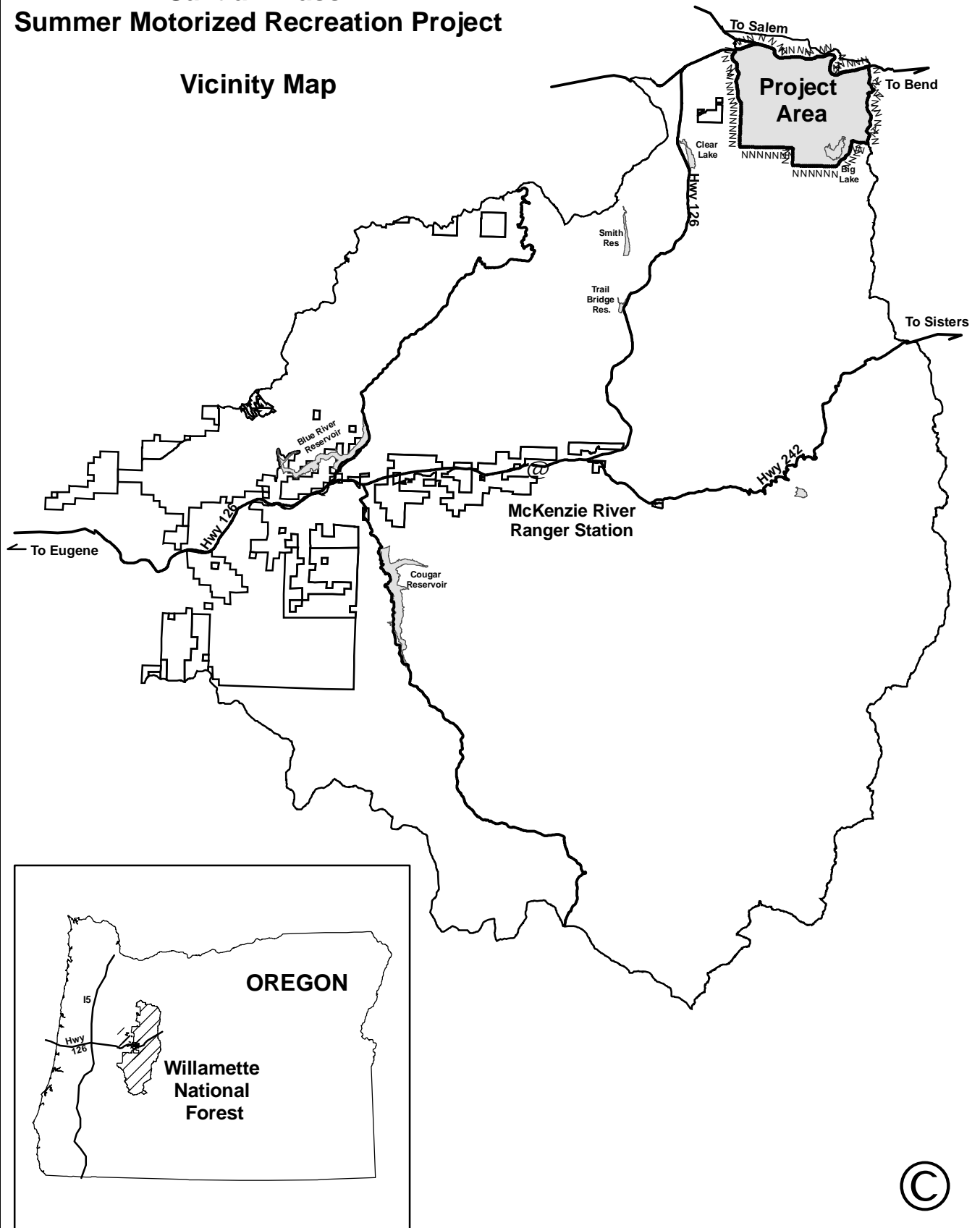
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**Figure 1**

**Willamette National Forest  
McKenzie River District**

**Santiam Pass  
Summer Motorized Recreation Project**

**Vicinity Map**



## Table of Acronyms:

ACS	Aquatic Conservation Standards
ATV	All Terrain Vehicle
DN/FONSI	Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
HPMP	Historic Properties Management Plan (Santiam Wagon Road)
IDT	Inter-disciplinary Team
MIS	Management Indicator Species
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFS	National Forest System
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
ORV	Off-Road Vehicle
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PETS	Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive species
PCT	Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
ROD	Record of Decision
SEIS	Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIA	Special Interest Area
SOPA	Schedule of Proposed Actions
SWR	Santiam Wagon Road
TES	Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDI	United States Department of Interior
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WA	Watershed Analysis
WNF	Willamette National Forest

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1. Purpose and Need for Action .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Document Structure .....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Purpose and Need for Action.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Proposed Action.....</i>	<i>6</i>
Non-Significant Forest Plan Amendment #49 .....	7
<i>Decision Framework.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Issue Development.....</i>	<i>10</i>
Scoping and Public Involvement .....	10
Significant Issues .....	12
Other Issues and Concerns.....	14
<i>Relationship to the Forest Plan .....</i>	<i>18</i>
Northwest Forest Plan Amendments.....	19
Watershed Analysis .....	19
Management Areas .....	20
<b>Chapter 2. Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Alternatives Considered but Not Fully Developed .....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Alternatives Considered in Detail .....</i>	<i>28</i>
Alternative 1 – The Current Management Situation (No Action) .....	28
Actions Common to All Action Alternatives .....	33
Actions Specific to Alternative 2 – The Proposed Action.....	37
Actions Specific to Alternative 3 .....	45
Actions Specific to Alternative 4.....	51
<i>Mitigation Measures and Design Elements Common to All Action Alternatives .....</i>	<i>57</i>
Other Actions Analyzed.....	59
<i>Comparison of Alternatives.....</i>	<i>61</i>
<b>Chapter 3. Environmental Consequences .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<i>Transportation Systems.....</i>	<i>63</i>
Affected Environment.....	63
Environmental Consequences .....	64
<i>Soils.....</i>	<i>66</i>
Affected Environment.....	66
Environmental Consequences .....	67
<i>Heritage Resources.....</i>	<i>69</i>
Prehistoric Use.....	69
Affected Environment – Historic Use, Santiam Wagon Road SIA (Issue 1) .....	70
Environmental Consequences .....	71
<i>Recreation.....</i>	<i>76</i>
Affected Environment – OHV Spectrum of Opportunity (Issue 2).....	76
Environmental Consequences .....	78
Affected Environment – Recreation User Conflicts (Issue 3).....	82
Environmental Consequences .....	83
<i>Botany .....</i>	<i>88</i>
Affected Environment.....	88
Environmental Consequences .....	89

**Fisheries** ..... 93  
 Affected Environment ..... 93  
 Environmental Consequences ..... 94

**Wildlife** ..... 95  
 Affected Environment – Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, and Other Wildlife Species of Concern (TES) ..... 95  
 Environmental Consequences – Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, and Other Wildlife Species of Concern (TES) ..... 96  
 Affected Environment – Migratory Land Birds ..... 96  
 Environmental Consequences – Migratory Land Birds ..... 97  
 Affected Environment – Wildlife Management Indicator Species ..... 98  
 Environmental Consequences – Management Indicator Species ..... 98  
 Affected Environment – Elk Habitat ..... 99  
 Environmental Consequences – Elk Habitat ..... 100  
 Survey and Manage Wildlife Species ..... 100

**Scenic Quality** ..... 101  
 Affected Environment ..... 101  
 Environmental Consequences ..... 101

**Mt. Washington North and West Inventoried Roadless Areas** ..... 104  
 Affected Environment ..... 104  
 Environmental Consequences ..... 105

**Fire and Fuels** ..... 107  
 Affected Environment ..... 107  
 Environmental Consequences ..... 107

**Compliance with Other Laws, Regulations and Executive Orders** ..... 109

**Glossary** ..... 114

**References** ..... 116

**Chapter 4. Consultation and Coordination** ..... 119  
 Federal, State, and Local Agencies: ..... 119  
 Tribal Governments: ..... 119  
 Organizations and Individuals: ..... 119  
 Interdisciplinary Team and List of Preparers: ..... 121

**Appendices** ..... 123

## LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1: Vicinity Map, Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation EA** ..... xvii  
**Figure 2: Widening of the Santiam Wagon Road by ATVs.** ..... 5  
**Figure 3: 1990 Willamette Forest Plan Management Areas** ..... 25  
**Figure 4. Map of Alternative 1.** ..... 31  
**Figure 5: Management Area Changes, Forest Plan Amendment #49.** ..... 39  
**Figure 6. Map of Alternative 2.** ..... 43  
**Figure 7. Map of Alternative 3.** ..... 49  
**Figure 8. Map of Alternative 4.** ..... 55

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1: Management Areas in the Project Area.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 2: Comparison of Roads Open or Closed by Alternative.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Table 3: Comparison of Trails by Alternative.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Table 4: Comparison of Alternatives – Santiam Wagon Road SIA.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 5: Comparison of Alternatives – OHV Spectrum of Opportunity. ....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 6: Comparison of Alternatives – Recreation User Conflicts.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 7: Acres of Road and Road-related Recreation Soil Disturbance. ....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Table 8: Cumulative Effects of Road and Road-related Recreation Soil Disturbance. ....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Table 9: Potential for Occurrence of PETS Species in the Project Area. ....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Table 10: Habitat Effectiveness Index Analysis. ....</b>	<b>99</b>





# Chapter 1. Purpose and Need for Action

## Document Structure ---

The Forest Service has prepared this environmental assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This EA discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and alternatives. The document is organized into four parts:

- **Purpose and Need for Action:** The section includes information on the history of the project proposal, the purpose of and need for the project, and the agency’s proposal for achieving that purpose and need. A section is included that details how the Forest Service informed the public of the proposal and how the public responded. This section also includes the relationship of the proposal to the 1990 Willamette Forest Plan, as amended.
- **Comparison of Alternatives, including the Proposed Action:** This section provides a more detailed description of the agency’s proposed action as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. These alternatives were developed based on significant issues raised by the public and other agencies. This discussion also includes possible mitigation measures. Finally, this section provides a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.
- **Environmental Consequences:** This section describes the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and other alternatives. This analysis is organized by first disclosing the effects on significant issues, followed by the other issues addressed during scoping. Within each section, the affected environment is described first, followed by the effects of Alternative 1 – No Action, which provides a baseline for evaluation and comparison, and then the effects from action alternatives.
- **Consultation and Coordination – Agencies and Persons Consulted:** This section provides a list of agencies, tribal governments, and public consulted during the development of the environmental assessment and the list of preparers.
- **Appendices:** The appendices provide more detailed information to support the analyses presented in the environmental assessment.

Additional documentation, including detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the McKenzie River Ranger District Office in McKenzie Bridge, Oregon.

## Introduction

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The Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project EA analyzes and discloses the proposal to designate roads, trails, and other areas for motorized recreation vehicle use within the 13,850-acre project area. The Santiam Pass Semiprimitive Motorized Management Area is a popular destination for off-highway vehicle (OHV)<sup>1</sup> enthusiasts, and the use of recreational OHVs has steadily increased in the Santiam Pass area over the last decade.

Scoping on the current initiative began in February 2005, with the release of a project scoping letter to interested public, agencies, and tribal governments. The letter presented the Proposed Action and preliminary issues arising from the proposal. The project area is located on the McKenzie River Ranger District (Figure 1) and bounded by Forest road 2676 on the west (roadway is included), U.S. Highway 20 on the north, the Willamette National Forest boundary and Pacific Crest divide on the east, and the Mt. Washington Wilderness Area boundary on the south. Public access into this area from U.S. Highway 20 is primarily by use of the paved Big Lake Road, or Forest road 2890.

Approximately 10,539 acres of the project area is identified as Management Area 10b, by the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended, which is meant to provide Semiprimitive Motorized recreation opportunities. In addition to OHV recreation, the area is popular for many dispersed recreation activities such as dispersed camping, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, mountain-biking, highway legal vehicle driving for pleasure, and visiting the Sand Mountain Lookout.

In 1999, the McKenzie River Ranger District and Sisters Ranger District on the Deschutes National Forest, began a joint effort to create a plan for ORV management in a project area that included both sides of the Cascade Crest, to the south of Santiam Pass. This joint effort was cancelled in 2003, after public scoping and preliminary analysis indicated unique challenges for managing ORV use on each administrative unit. The National Forests concluded it was more appropriate to prepare separate plans for each ranger district. The Sisters Ranger District is in the process of analyzing a proposal motorized recreation management plan east of the Cascade Crest.

The project area currently has 68 miles of existing Forest system roads. Unmanaged OHV use has resulted in more than 10 miles of user-created tracks within the project area. Many dispersed day-use and overnight-use camping sites are located along Forest road 2890 and on portions of the historic Santiam Wagon Road, which runs through the project area from east to west. The Santiam Wagon Road is represented as Forest roads 2676-866, 2690-810, and 2690-811 within the project area. Approximately 3.4 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) is situated along the Cascade Crest on the east side of the project area. Other recreation sites in the project area include the Hoodoo Ski Area, under a special use permit, and the Big Lake Campground Complex (Big Lake Campground and Big Lake West Campground).

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<sup>1</sup> The terms off-highway vehicle (OHV) and off-road vehicle (ORV) will be used interchangeably throughout this document.

**Legal description of the project:** T.13S, R.7E, Sections 13-15, 22-27, 34-36; T.13S, R.7 1/2E, Sections 21-28, 33-36; T.14S, R.7 1/2E, Sections 1-3, 10-12; and T.14S, R.7 1/2E, Sections 1-4, 9-12, 15 and 16; Willamette Meridian; Linn County, Oregon.

## Purpose and Need for Action

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In 2003, then Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth called unmanaged recreation, including OHV use, one of the top four threats to forest health in the nation (Bosworth. 2003). There has been an increase in OHV use in the Santiam Pass area over the past decade for all types of all-terrain vehicles or ATVs<sup>2</sup> as the popularity of this recreation has increased nationally. This increase in demand for OHV use has prompted this analysis of methods to manage motorized recreation while also maintaining a diversity of recreational opportunities unique to the area.

The purpose of this initiative is to develop and implement formal management of OHV use in the project area, which includes areas within the Santiam Wagon Road and Sand Mountain Special Interest Areas, the Big Lake Campground Complex, and the Hoodoo Ski Area. Actions that respond to this need must include protection of heritage resources and other natural resources in the area. The following specific needs have been identified for this project and are discussed in detail in this section:

- **There is a need to designate a system of roads and trails for motorized recreation vehicle use within the Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project Area, as directed by the Willamette Forest Plan and existing policy.**
- **There is a need to rehabilitate existing motorized recreation vehicle-impacts to the Santiam Wagon Road, and to protect this important heritage resource from future impacts.**
- **There is a need to provide recreation opportunities in the project area that offer a quality family-oriented experience.**

### **1. There is a need to designate a system of roads and trails for motorized recreation vehicle use within the Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project Area, as directed by the Willamette Forest Plan and existing policy.**

Forest Service policy, as stated in Forest Service Manual, FSM 2355, is to provide a diversity of off-road recreational opportunities when use is compatible with established land and resource objectives, use is consistent with resource capability and suitability, the off-road opportunity is an appropriate National Forest Recreation Activity, and there is a demonstrated demand for these opportunities

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<sup>2</sup> All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) as discussed in this analysis meets the definition of a Class I All Terrain Vehicle, described in Forest Service Manual 7730-2005-2, as a motorized off-highway recreational vehicle 50 inches or less in width, with a dry weight of 800 pounds or less, which travels on three or more low pressure tires, has a saddle or seat for the operator, and is designed for, or capable of, cross-country travel on, or immediately over, land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland or other natural terrain (USDA Forest Service, 2005). The Glossary in this EA provides definitions for Class I, II, and III ATVs.

(USDA Forest Service. 2004). Forest Service Policy, as stated in Forest Service Manual 7731.03 (USDA Forest Service. 2005), directs managers to accept OHV use on roads when in accordance with state laws and regulations (36 CFR 212.5, E.O.11644) and when consistent with the Forest Plan. Use must be done safely, while protecting resources. Regulations at 36 CFR 212.51, directs designation of roads, trails, and areas open to motorized use (US Code of Federal Regulations 2006).

The amended 1990 Willamette Forest Plan recognizes the need for semiprimitive motorized use and it designates this project area for “*Dispersed Recreation, Semiprimitive Motorized with Timber Harvest*” (MA-10b). In addition, Forest-wide Standard and Guideline, FW-024, states that “A diversity of off-road vehicle recreational opportunities should be provided across the Forest where consistent with the criteria specified in FSM 2355.12. These criteria include:

- The use is compatible with established land management and resource objectives.
- The use is consistent with the capability and suitability of the resource.
- There is demonstrated demand which cannot be better satisfied elsewhere.

In designating this area as MA-10b, the Willamette Forest Plan demonstrates that this area is both compatible with established land management and resource objectives, and consistent with the capability of the resources. The popular use of the Santiam Pass area for motorized recreation by the public indicates that the project area satisfies a demand for OHV recreation not met elsewhere. However, the extent of development in any area will be based on an analysis of the resource conditions and resource protection needs of the site (Willamette Forest Plan pages IV-184 to IV-187).

There is a need to designate a system of roads, trails, and other areas within the project area to be consistent with Willamette Forest Plan management direction for MA-10b, to provide for maximum use for a range of activities that provide semiprimitive motorized experience.

Acknowledging the ongoing impacts to other forest resources that result from the unregulated OHV use of the area, there is now a need to restrict OHVs to the designated roads, trails, and site-specific areas. Recreational off-road vehicles are currently free to access many established Forest roads and trails and may go cross-country. User-created tracks from Class I, II, and III ATVs exist throughout the project area, connecting many of established roads and trails, and the network of user-created tracks increases annually.

## **2. There is a need to rehabilitate existing motorized recreation vehicle-impacts to the Santiam Wagon Road, and to protect this heritage resource from future impacts.**

The Eno and Sand Mountain segments of the historic Santiam Wagon Road lie within the project area as delineated by the Santiam Wagon Road Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) (Lindberg and Kelly. 2006). This 6.0 mile portion of the wagon road is identified as Forest system roads 2676-866, 2690-810, and 2690-811 along its historic route in the Willamette Forest Roads Analysis (See Chapter 2, Figure 5). Current use of these portions of the Santiam Wagon Road by recreational OHVs has altered the original historic profile and width of the road through road surface material displacement.



**Figure 2: Widening of the Santiam Wagon Road by ATVs.**

The vigorous, high speed use of Class I ATVs and Class III ATVs has resulted in a widening and deepening of the road bed, exposure of large rocks and the build up of sand moguls. Many user-created OHV trail crossings along the wagon road have also contributed to road surface material displacement and road widening.

Considering that this historic road is eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places, there is a need to rehabilitate Santiam Wagon Road to the original profile and width. There is also a need for action to protect this heritage resource from further impacts from recreational OHV use.

**3. There is a need to provide recreation opportunities in the project area that offer a quality, family-oriented experience.**

The Santiam Pass area offers opportunities for both motorized recreational vehicle riding, and for non-motorized recreation, which includes driving passenger vehicles for sightseeing, and hiking and horseback riding on the Pacific Crest Trail, Patjens Lake Trail, or several other less popular trails. Sand Mountain Lookout is a popular destination for sightseeing and can be accessed most of the way

to the lookout by Forest road 2690-810. The project area is adjacent to Inventoried Roadless Areas and Wilderness Areas, and it is a popular destination for big game hunting in the fall.

The area has become known as a destination for both day-use and overnight OHV recreation. Visitors that come to this area to enjoy OHV riding choose dispersed camping at many of the existing sites along the Big Lake Road and Santiam Wagon Road, or they may use developed camp sites at Big Lake Campground Complex.

Considering the high use of the project area for dispersed recreation of all types, there is a need to manage for a range of activities that contribute to a semiprimitive motorized experience, consistent with the Willamette Forest Plan. This range of activities should blend motorized and non-motorized to provide for recreational opportunities for a quality family-oriented experience.

## **Proposed Action**

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The District Ranger on the McKenzie River Ranger District proposes to implement actions in response to the needs stated above. The Proposed Action, essentially represented by Alternative 2 in this EA, proposes to designate a system of Forest roads and trails for recreational OHV use along with other actions listed below. This Proposed Action satisfies the need to provide a designated system of roads and trails for motorized recreation within the project area as directed by the Willamette Forest Plan and agency policy, to rehabilitate existing motorized recreation vehicle-impacts to the Santiam Wagon Road while protecting this heritage resource from future impacts, and to provide recreation opportunities in the project area that offer a quality family-oriented experience.

Alternative 2 was described in the scoping letter of February 3, 2005, although several route locations and ATV class designations for roads were altered in the IDT review process and after field surveys. Other refinements included moving the staging area at the junction of the Big Lake Road and Santiam Wagon Road to a location to the north and outside of the Santiam Wagon Road SIA corridor (junction of 2690 and 2690-810), reducing the size and moving the Open Play Area to outside of the Santiam Wagon Road SIA (junction 2676-866 and 2690-810), and reducing the size of and moving the Kiddie Loop youth learning trail to outside the Santiam Wagon Road SIA. The Regulated Camping Zone has been expanded to include the entire Santiam Wagon Road SIA within the project area, the Big Lake Road from Ray Benson Sno Park south, and the Big Lake Campground Complex.

Alternative 2 was also changed to include posted speed limits on the historic Santiam Wagon Road, which would be enforced as specified in a Forest Order signed during implementation. The speed limits are intended to protect historic resources by reducing the displacement of road surface material that occurs from high speed motorized mixed-use travel. Speed limits would provide for a safer environment near congested areas near dispersed camping areas in the Regulated Camping Zone.

Alternative 2 includes Non-significant Forest Plan Amendment #49, which would take actions specified in a Forest Order signed during implementation. Implementation would begin in the summer of 2008.

## Non-Significant Forest Plan Amendment #49

This non-significant amendment includes three components:

### 1. A One-time Exemption of Management Area Standard and Guideline MA-5a-01 and MA-10b-01.

**MA-5a-01:** An Implementation Guide shall be prepared for each SIA describing the site specific management objectives, enhancement programs, and other acceptable uses and activities.

Implementation Guides have not been completed for either of the Special Interest Areas in the project. However, management of the Santiam Wagon Road SIA would follow management recommendations included in the Santiam Wagon Road Historic Properties Management Plan (see Chapter 3, Heritage). Alternatives were designed to consider the same elements of restoration and enhancement of the historic features that would be inherent in the Implementation Guide to be completed for the Santiam Wagon Road SIA.

The Sand Mountain SIA is currently under Forest Closure Order #110, which prohibits the possession or use of a vehicle, pack animal, or bicycle off Forest road 2690-810. Action taken in this SIA are limited to different options for travel access on Forest road 2690-810 within the SIA .

**MA-10b-01:** An Implementation Guide shall be prepared for each Semiprimitive Motorized area describing the site specific management objectives, enhancement programs, and other acceptable uses and activities.

An Implementation Guide has not been completed for MA-10b within the project area. However, all action alternatives were developed while considering site specific management objectives, enhancement programs, and other acceptable uses and activities within this management area. These criteria will be incorporated into the Implementation Guide that will be subsequently prepared for the project area to guide future management.

### 2. The Addition of Management Area Standard and Guideline MA-10b-04a.

For Alternative 2, Management Area Standard and Guideline **MA-10b-04a** would be added to the Willamette Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service. 1990, page IV-185). This amendment would restrict OHV use in the project area to only designated roads, trails, and other specified areas, meeting the need to protect resources from unregulated OHV use. This action would change the “Open” designation, as mapped in the 1990 Willamette Forest Plan Map, to “Closed” for all of Management Area 10b within the Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project Area. The exceptions to this change would be made for the designated Open Play Area north of Sand Mountain SIA in Alternative 2 (see Chapter 2, Figure 6 – Map of Alternative 2).

Existing Standard and Guideline MA-10b-04:

**MA-10b-04**, Access by motorized vehicles shall be limited to snowmobiles, trail bikes and ORVs not greater than 45 inches in width. The general area is open to off-road vehicle use off designated roads and trails.

Proposed Standard and Guideline **MA-10b-04a**, only applicable to the project area:

**MA-10b-04a**, Within the Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Area, access by wheeled motorized vehicles on designated Forest Service trails shall be limited to trail bikes and ORVs not greater than 50 inches in width or over 800 pounds vehicle weight. The general area is **not** open to off-road vehicle use off designated roads, trails or other specified areas.

### **3. Management Area Change from MA-10e, to MA-10b Along Forest Winter Trail #3558 and Forest Road 2690-910.**

For Alternative 2, Forest Plan Amendment #49 also changes the Management Area designation of two corridors of National Forest System land from MA-10e, Dispersed Recreation, Semiprimitive Nonmotorized, to MA-10b, Dispersed Recreation, Semiprimitive Motorized (Willamette Forest Plan, page IV-184 to IV-195):

- a) **A 12 foot wide corridor would be re- designated as MA-10b on the location of winter snowmobile trail #3558, from the east termini of Forest road 2690-920 near the Pacific Crest Trail to the Willamette National Forest boundary at the Cascade Crest. This change in Management Area allocation would be implemented with the construction of a designated OHV trail for Class I and III ATVs on existing user-created tracks.**
- b) **A 60 foot wide corridor would be re-designated as MA-10b along Forest road 2690-910 from the intersection of Forest road 2690-928 to the Forest boundary at the Cascade Crest, and it is designated for highway legal vehicles only.**

As previously mentioned, Sisters Ranger District of the Deschutes National Forest is currently involved in road management planning, which may result in designated roads and trails for OHV use on the Deschutes, east of the Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project area. Both of these travel corridors could provide connecting routes to the east side of the Cascade crest for access to existing roads and trails on the Sisters Ranger District.



**Alternative 2 also implements these actions:****ATV Trail System Designation**

- Designate 37.3 miles of Forest Road open to Motorized Mixed Use.
- Designate 7.6 miles of Forest Road open to ATV Class I & III only.
- Close 16.3 miles of Forest Road to motorized use.
- Reconstruct 4.4 miles of user created tracks, which would be open to ATV Class I & III.
- Construct 7.9 miles of new motorized trails open to ATV Class I & III.
- Close 5.6 miles of user-created tracks to all motorized use and rehabilitate.

**Santiam Wagon Road**

- Designate approximately 6.0 miles of the Santiam Wagon Road as open to Motorized Mixed-Use.
- Rehabilitate all 6.0 miles of the Santiam Wagon Road as needed to the approximate historic route, profile, and width, and close and rehabilitate some user-created OHV crossings.
- Designate 8 clearly marked OHV crossings to protect the wagon road.
- Establish and post speed limits on the Santiam Wagon Road that applies to the Eno and Sand Mountain road segments within the project area (HPMP). A Forest Order for speed limits would include Forest road 2676-866 from the Eno road 2676 to the junction with 2690-810, Forest road 2690-810 from the junction of 2676-866 to the junction the Big Lake Road 2690, and Forest road 2690-811 from the junction of 2690 to the Forest boundary.

**Staging Area Development**

- Establish two day-use staging and parking areas for off-loading OHVs from trailers, with one located along the junction of the Big Lake Road 2690 and south side of 2690-860 and the other north of the junction of Forest roads 2690 and 2690-810, but outside of the Santiam Wagon Road SIA. User education and information kiosks and toilet facilities would be included at each site.

**Dispersed Camping in the Regulated Camping Zone**

- Designate 34 dispersed campsites within the Regulated Camping Zone along Big Lake Road 2690, and along the Santiam Wagon Road, Forest roads 2690-810 and 811. All 34 designated campsites would access the motorized trail system.
- Block and rehabilitate 13 existing dispersed campsites that are not incorporated into this action (21.9 acres restored).

**Open Play Area**

- Designate approximately 22 acres as Open Play Area within the sand blowout feature that exists at the junction of the Sand Mountain lookout road 2690-810 and Santiam Wagon Road 2676-866 portion.

**Kiddie Loop**

- Establish a Kiddie Loop youth learning trail on approximately 18 acres north of Big Lake Campground, and between the Big Lake Road 2690 and Santiam Wagon Road, 2690-810.

## Decision Framework ---

The Responsible Official for this proposal is the Forest Supervisor of the Willamette National Forest. Considering the purpose and need stated above, the Responsible Official reviews the proposed action and the other alternative actions in order to make the following determinations:

- The proposed actions as analyzed, comply with the applicable standards and guidelines found in the Willamette Forest Plan and all laws governing Forest Service actions, except where standards and guidelines are modified by the action.
- Sufficient site-specific environmental analysis has been completed.
- The proposed actions benefit the public and are in their best interest.

With these assurances the Responsible Official must decide:

- Whether or not to accept the Proposed Action or one of the alternatives, which includes Alternative 1 – No-Action, and what, if any, additional actions should be required.
- Whether the selected alternative is consistent with the Willamette Forest Plan, if the Forest Plan shall be amended in this action, and whether or not the context and intensity of the Forest Plan amendment constitutes a significant effect.

## Issue Development ---

### Scoping and Public Involvement

Scoping is the process for determining issues relating to a proposed action and includes distribution of information about the project, review of written and oral comments, interdisciplinary Team (IDT) review, public meetings, local news releases, and tribal consultation.

The first initiative began as the Santiam Pass Dispersed Recreation project on March 19, 2002, with District Rangers from both the McKenzie River Ranger District and the Sisters Ranger District, Deschutes National Forest co-signing a Project Initiation Letter (PIL). It was listed in the November 2002 Willamette Forest Focus, the quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) for the Willamette National Forest.

In 2004, the decision was made to prepare a separate analysis for each Ranger District, and a second PIL was signed by the McKenzie River Ranger District Ranger on June 15, 2004. This PIL revised the scope of the project to only include National Forest System lands west of the Cascade crest, or on the McKenzie River Ranger District.

A public scoping letter was mailed on February 3, 2005, to a mailing list that included four tribal governments, and other state and federal agencies, and individuals (see Chapter 4). The scoping letter described the revised proposed action, preliminary issues, and a timeline for completion, and a map of the proposal. Public response to this mailing resulted in over 200 comments in letters and emails.

The 2005 proposed action was presented to the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians at annual McKenzie River District program of work meetings, from 2005 through 2007.

Two public meetings were held in 2005. The first meeting occurred on Saturday, May 14, 2005, at the Red Lion Hotel in Eugene, Oregon. A second meeting was held on Tuesday, May 24, at the Camp Sherman Fire Station in Sisters, Oregon. A wide range of concerns were raised early in the scoping process, both from letters and emails received as well as from those attending the two public meetings. All scoping comments have been reviewed by the IDT and Responsible Official, and were taken into consideration to refine the proposed action (Alternative 2 in this analysis), and were instrumental in developing action alternatives. Comments received in response to the proposed action indicated a very polarized public on the topic of managing roads and trails for motorized recreation on the National Forest in general, and in particular, within the Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation project area.

Several individuals, groups, and representatives of state agencies, such as the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council, advocate protecting and restoring the Santiam Wagon Road by reducing the use of ATVs on or near the wagon road. Several letters urged eliminating ATVs entirely from the Santiam Wagon Road since it is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Many comments were in support of the proposed action and favored further development of OHV use in the project area. Several proponents voiced concern about the lack of opportunities for four-wheeled vehicles, or Class II ATVs. Many of the supporters of the proposed action recognized the need to educate OHV users on appropriate riding behavior and resource protection. Proponents of OHV use also identified the need for adequate maps, signs, and for staging areas that include sanitation facilities.

A comment repeated in several letters and vocalized during the two public meetings was that user conflicts sometimes exist between motorized and non-motorized recreation in the area. Conflicts identified in scoping were between OHV user and horseback riders, mountain bikers, hikers, and non-motorized recreation campers at both the Big Lake Campground and at dispersed campgrounds along the Big Lake Road and Santiam Wagon Road. Many expressed the need to protect the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) from incursion by ATVs, and that any road and OHV trail crossing over the PCT kept to a minimum. Concerns were expressed about apparent natural resource damage from unregulated OHV use, i.e. disturbance of soil and vegetation on user-created tracks, and a continuing expansion of dispersed campsites into vegetated areas. There were also concerns about degradation of visual esthetics by user-created OHV tracks within the Santiam Pass area, particularly along the two main travel routes, the Big Lake Road and Santiam Wagon Road.

Hoodoo Ski Area expressed a concern that the proposal would not only encourage but increase cross country travel on Hoodoo Ski runs. Hoodoo Recreation Services Inc. expressed concerns about impacts to Big Lake Campground Complex from use of the campground facilities by adjacent dispersed campers who do not pay campground fees but use facilities including toilets and dumpsters. Visitors and staff at Sand Mountain Lookout, as well as from campers at Big Lake Campground also find that the noise and dust from OHVs adversely affect their recreation experience.

Sand Mountain Society, whose members staff the Sand Mountain Lookout in the summer, also expressed a concern about continued violations of an existing Forest Order which prohibits off-road and off-trail use by motor vehicles, mountain bikes, or stock within the Sand Mountain Special Interest Area. Sand Mountain Society also stated concerns about traffic hazards and close calls from meeting speeding ATVs that travel Forest road 2690-810, the narrow and steep access road to Sand Mountain Lookout.

Comments from supporters and those not supporting the proposal have both expressed concerns about the lack of management and enforcement of current OHV use in this area. The majority of the public have expressed safety concerns relating to motorized mixed-use along the two main travel routes. Many commenters question how a designated OHV area as proposed, could be effectively managed as the Forest Service recreation budgets declines, and what alternative funds would be available for on-site presence of law enforcement to enforce the new rules.

## Significant Issues

The Forest Service has separated issues into two groups: significant and non-significant issues. Significant issues were defined as those directly or indirectly caused by implementing the proposed action. Non-significant issues were identified as those: 1) outside the scope of the proposed action; 2) already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations require this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3)..." A list of non-significant issues and reasons regarding their categorization as non-significant may be found in the project record.

In addition to significant issues identified by the IDT, the EA includes "other analysis issues" addressed in the effects analysis and often used to compare alternatives. For example, heritage resources would always be addressed in actions that are site-specific and ground-disturbing. Although alternatives may not be designed specifically to address heritage resources, the consequences of all the alternatives must be measured against compliance with direction to provide adequate protection for these resources (see Other Analysis Issues and Concerns).

Significant Issues are tracked through issue identification (in this chapter), alternative description in Chapter 2, and environmental consequences in Chapter 3, and have measurement indicators to allow members of the public and the Responsible Official to determine how well issues are addressed by the alternatives. The Forest Service identified three issues raised during scoping that are considered to be Significant Issues.

### Issue 1. Santiam Wagon Road Special Interest Area (SIA)

The proposed action may affect qualities of "significance of eligible and potentially eligible historic properties" in the Santiam Wagon Road, and may also affect the Santiam Wagon Road SIA. Specifically, by designating motorized use for all classes of ATVs, numerous OHV crossings, dispersed camping, staging areas, the open play area, and the Kiddie Loop youth learning trail area,

there may be continuing, long-term adverse effects to the Santiam Wagon Road and the Special Interest Area.

The Santiam Wagon Road within the project area is designated as a Forest system road from Eno Road, 2676, onto the Deschutes National Forest at the cascade crest. The route is represented as Forest roads 2676-866, 2690-810, and 2690-811, which are currently open to motorized mixed use. These roads are native surface and do not receive regular road maintenance. In 1990 the Willamette Forest Plan designated the land along the Santiam Wagon Road as a 660 foot wide SIA corridor, recognizing it as a unique historic feature on the Forest. Because the primary emphasis of the SIA is recreation, the Forest Plan states that management activities will be directed toward resource protection, and the extent of development of any area will be based on an analysis of the resource conditions and protections needs of the site (Willamette Forest Plan, page IV-138).

The effects of this project on the Santiam Wagon Road SIA will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- Miles of wagon road that is restored to the historic width and profile.
- Number of designated OHV crossings provided.
- Number of designated dispersed camp sites provided in the SIA, and acres of dispersed camp sites removed and restored.

## **Issue 2. OHV Spectrum of Opportunity**

The current management situation in the project area allows unregulated OHV use. The proposed action of designating a system of trails for OHVs on Forest roads and on constructed trails, while restricting travel to the designated trail system with Forest Plan Amendment #49, is likely to reduce the spectrum of opportunity for recreational OHV use in this area.

The OHV user is expected to experience a change in opportunity and riding experience due the extent of miles the designated trail system provides for each class of ATV. There may be a change in the level of challenge for riders on the designated motorized trail system, and in the opportunity for vistas available from the trail system. Constructing the day-use staging areas, and designating the open play area and the Kiddie Loop youth learning trail area may add opportunities for OHV recreation for some users.

The effects of this project on OHV Spectrum of Opportunity will be evaluated by:

- Miles of roads open to Class I and III ATVs.
- Miles of constructed trails open to Class I and III ATVs.
- Miles of roads open to Class II ATVs.

## **Issue 3. Recreation User Conflicts**

The project area has seen a steady increase in OHV use over the past decade, in part due to an increase in popularity on a national level. OHV users have made the project area a destination for weekend recreation and summer holiday gathering, sometimes camping in large groups at dispersed campsites along the Big Lake Road and Santiam Wagon Road. ATV design and handling characteristics have

improved over the past ten years which allows a wider age range of user participation and the ability to operate in more demanding terrain. Use patterns within the project area have also changed from mostly forest road use, with occasional off- road use into open areas, to wide ranging off-road use that has established an extensive system of user-created tracks in the project area.

Scoping comments have indicated there is also public concern about inappropriate intrusion of ATVs onto the Pacific Crest National Recreation Trail from multiple road intersections and user-created track crossings. The non-motorized recreating public has also expressed concerns that they are being displaced at the popular dispersed campsites and are impacted by dust and noise associated with unrestricted motorized recreation activity.

The expansion of the use of dispersed campsites along the Big Lake Road and Santiam Wagon Road by campers with ATVs, often in close proximity to Big Lake Campground has forced a change in use patterns. Identifying or designating dispersed campsites for exclusive use by either campers with ATVs or to non-motorized recreation campers would be impractical. However, where there are dispersed campsites in the regulated camping zone without direct motorized trail access, the campsites become less desirable for campers with ATVs because to gain access to the motorized trail system campers would have to trailer their ATVs to a staging area for offloading. Designated campsites without direct access to the motorized trail system may become available to non-motorized recreation campers.

The effects of this project on the issue of Recreation User Conflicts will be evaluated by:

- Designated dispersed camping sites with direct access to motorized trail system.
- Designated dispersed camp sites without direct access.
- Motorized intrusions, or crossings along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

## Other Issues and Concerns

These *other issues* were addressed in project development. The issue statements below are followed by reasons why they were not considered significant to the development of alternatives and were not fully analyzed in the EA. However, they may serve as important factors to qualitatively evaluate differences between alternatives.

### Soils

As a result of recreational OHV use, soils displacement has occurred along a network of existing user-created tracks adjacent to native surfaced Forest roads and trails, in and near dispersed camping sites, and near the sand blow-out area adjacent to Sand Mountain SIA. The public has expressed concerns that the proposed action to allow OHV use to continue within these areas would contribute to additional damaging soil displacement.

The young volcanic terrain originating from eruptions of vents in the Sand Mountain complex has experienced little subsequent glacial alteration. Consequently, this landscape has relatively low relief and is composed of recent basalt and andesite flows with coarse volcanic cinder soils. These soils are

droughty and cold, and develop vegetative cover very slowly. The soils are prone to mechanical displacement when disturbed, but due to high infiltration rates that limit runoff, they typically do not travel far as a result of water borne erosion. Streams are relatively scarce in this landscape due to the lack of glaciation, and to the relative youth of the terrain where erosion has not yet created a drainage network.

Mechanical displacement associated with disturbance has little real effect on soil productivity in these young coarse-textured soils, and the lack of runoff and low stream density in the area minimizes concerns relating to sediment yield. However, soil disturbance resulting from OHV use results in long lasting alteration of the natural visual landscape. This disturbance also tends to disrupt or destroy fragile plant communities in this harsh environment and the integrity of archaeological sites.

This issue was not considered significant for development of alternatives because all action alternatives would include the rehabilitation of some of the user-created tracks that are not incorporated into this action, and rehabilitation of other areas of displaced soil. All designated roads and trails would be designed to minimize future impacts resulting from soil displacement, or the displacement of road surface material onto adjacent areas. In addition, all alternatives include a non-significant amendment to the Willamette Forest Plan that would restrict motorized recreational vehicles to designated roads and trails in MA-10b.

### **Sand Mountain Special Interest Area (SIA)**

The Sand Mountain Special Interest Area was designated in the Forest Plan because of special geological features. This 363-acre SIA consists of a pair of volcanic cinder cones, with a restored and operating fire lookout on one of the cones. Members of the Sand Mountain Society serve as fire lookouts during the summer months under a cooperative agreement with the Forest Service.

The proposed action would continue the current level of OHV access to areas within the Sand Mountain SIA. The proposed action would designate Forest road 2690-810 as open for motorized mixed-use that includes Class I, II, and III ATVs and highway legal vehicles. Road 2690-810 provides access to the saddle below the cinder cone where the fire lookout is located.

The Sand Mountain Society has expressed several concerns about OHV use within the SIA. They have a particular concern for safety on Forest road 2690-810. Class I and III ATV use on the narrow one-lane access road has lead to accident near-misses in the past. SMS also has concerns with the disturbance of soil resources from off-road use in the SIA. The steep, upper slopes of the volcanic craters have been affected by ATVs on occasion in the last decade, which has resulted in several deep vertical ruts.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because although the proposed action would not change current access to the saddle below the lookout for motorized mixed-use travel, existing safe driving laws will be enforced on the Sand Mountain access road as they are for all Forest roads. In addition, Forest Order #110 (a Special Closure Order) signed by the Forest Supervisor in September 1997, currently prohibits any type of off-road or off-trail travel within the Sand Mountain SIA by motorized vehicles, mountain bikes, or stock. Forest Order #110 would remain in effect under any alternative.

Alternative 3 would close Forest road 2690-810 at the junction of 2690-860 except for administrative use. Public access to the saddle below the lookout would be limited to non-motorized means. Alternative 4 would allow access to the saddle below the lookout by highway legal vehicles only.

### **Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, and Other Wildlife Species of Concern (TES)**

Development of roads and trails for OHV use may disturb TES wildlife species and their habitat in the Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project area.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because location of OHV trails within forested habitat would be required to follow conservation and protection guidelines in the Willamette Forest Plan. Trail development would not occur in the vicinity of nest sites of threatened or endangered or sensitive wildlife species. Design measures and mitigation measures address this issue in Chapter 2. The effects of the proposed action and the other alternatives on TES species are addressed in Chapter 3. In addition, the proposed action and all action alternatives would include a non-significant amendment to the Willamette Forest Plan to restrict OHV travel to designated roads and trails within MA-10b.

### **Hoodoo Ski Area/Hoodoo Recreation Services**

Hoodoo Ski Area, a developed Special Use Permit Area (MA-12b) is entirely within the project area. The special use permit holder for Hoodoo Ski Area submitted scoping comments and expressed concerns that the proposal to designate OHV routes adjacent to or within the special use permit area may lead to cross-country recreation OHV use on ski runs.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because the proposed action and all action alternatives would designate Forest roads and trails for OHV use. All alternatives address this issue by providing informational kiosks at staging areas to educate and inform the public of posted rules and Forest Orders, which would be enforced. Proposed designated OHV routes near Hoodoo lodge could enhance commercial opportunities for Hoodoo Ski Area and offer added benefits to the public. Forest Plan standards and guidelines do not allow off-road vehicle use within MA-12b, which would be enforceable through a Forest Order upon implementation.

Another issue emerged from comments by the same permit holder, who also manages Hoodoo Recreation Services Inc, and presently holds the concessionaire permit for Big Lake and Big Lake West campgrounds. Hoodoo Recreation Services is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the developed sites in this campground complex. Services available at the campgrounds include potable water, toilets, dumpster service, as well as a campground host. Hoodoo Recreation Services' concern is that continued dispersed camping near Big Lake Campground would continue the impacts of unauthorized use of the facilities by dispersed campers, particularly use of the toilets and garbage dumpsters within the campground. At this time, many of the favored sites for dispersed camping lie along the Santiam Wagon Road in close proximity to Big Lake Campground.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because the concern relates to activities that depend on enforcement of existing regulations. In addition, the proposed



action and all action alternatives would restrict dispersed camping adjacent to the campgrounds, reduce the current number of adjacent dispersed sites, and regulate dispersed camping along the Santiam Wagon Road.

### **Heritage Resources**

Implementation of the proposed action may result in a continuation of ground disturbance that could affect unknown heritage sites. Undiscovered cultural resource sites may be subject to Section 106 documentation of effect for Heritage Resources due to the location on Forest Service land.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because the project area was surveyed for heritage resources, and all action alternatives would avoid known sites. Should previously unknown sites be found during ground disturbing activities such as constructing new trails or staging areas, contract provisions would provide protection measures and the McKenzie River District Archaeologist would be immediately notified. In addition, all alternatives would include a non-significant amendment to the Willamette Forest Plan to restrict OHV travel to designated roads and trails in MA-10b to reduce the likelihood that unknown sites would be impacted by future OHV use.

### **Sensitive Plants and Special Habitats**

Designation of OHV routes may affect sensitive plants species and unmapped special habitats that may exist in the project area. Three of the known trail locations and some user-created tracks are located in bunchgrass habitat, which has the potential to contain plants that are considered sensitive.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because no sensitive plant species were discovered during surveys of potential habitats. No designated OHV roads or trails are located within areas that are known to contain sensitive plants. The proposed action and all action alternatives include a non-significant amendment to the Willamette Forest Plan that would restrict ATV travel to only designated roads and trails in MA-10b, which would improve protection of undiscovered sensitive plants that may be present in the bunchgrass meadows.

### **Noxious Weeds**

The proposed action may continue the spread of noxious weeds in the project area from the use of recreational OHVs on designated roads and trails. Noxious weeds are plants not native to the ecosystem and considered invasive.

Currently, unregulated OHV use is creating favorable conditions for noxious weeds in the area by disturbing soils and carrying seeds in the organic debris often found on ATVs brought in from other locations. Soil displacement during off-road or cross-country OHV use can have an adverse effect on native plant communities associated with the volcanic soils of the area because they are generally shallow-rooted and not capable of withstanding mechanical disturbances. The existing disturbance is providing the opportunity for noxious weeds to be established.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because prevention measures would be used for all action alternatives to prevent expansion of existing populations. (See Mitigation Measures and Design Measures in Chapter 2.) Control under the Willamette National Forest Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment provides for on-going treatment of

the existing populations (USDA Forest Service. 2007). In addition, all action alternatives include a non-significant amendment to the Willamette Forest Plan to restrict OHV travel to designated roads and trails within MA-10b in the project area.

### **Visual Quality**

A concern was received during scoping that past and current recreational OHV use has an adverse affect on visual quality. The project area has numerous user-created tracks that intersect and parallel both the Big Lake Road and the Santiam Wagon Road.

Almost all of the designated OHV routes proposed would be within Management Area 10b, Dispersed Recreation – Semiprimitive Motorized. The scenic resources standard and guideline at MA-10b-05 states “All design and implementation practices should be modified as necessary to meet the VQO (Visual Quality Objective) of partial retention” (USDA Forest Service. 1990). Forest roads and trails designated for OHV use may also be within the Santiam Wagon Road SIA. Standard and guidelines for the Santiam Wagon Road SIA at MA-5a-05 states “All design and implementation practices should be modified as necessary to meet the VQO of retention.” Small created openings to construct the staging area on the Big Lake Road and realign designated OHV trails would only be made within MA-10b, but outside of any visual management areas.

This issue was not considered significant for development of alternatives because the proposed action and other action alternatives are designed to be consistent with Management Area standards and guidelines for scenic resources. The proposed action and action alternatives would be designed to remain consistent with Forest Plan standards and guidelines for a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) of Roaded Natural in all areas.

### **Mt. Washington Inventoried Roadless Area**

The Mt Washington North and Mt. Washington West Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA) are within the project area. Unregulated OHV use has affected portions of the project area within the IRAs and user-created tracks. This OHV use within and adjacent to the IRAs may diminish the roadless values that exist within this area.

This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because none of the action alternatives proposed to build roads in either of the areas. The action alternatives would designate and manage OHV trails built over existing user-created tracks or winter trails within Mt. Washington West IRA, which is allowable in the January 12, 2001, Roadless Area Final Rule (36 CFR Part 294, Special Areas, Roadless Area). The action alternatives also include a non-significant amendment to the Willamette Forest Plan that would restrict OHV travel to only designated roads and trails.

## **Relationship to the Forest Plan** \_\_\_\_\_

This environmental assessment tiers to and relies upon the analysis in the 1990 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Willamette Forest Plan or Forest Plan). The Willamette Forest Plan, as amended, provides resource management goals and desired future conditions for managing dispersed recreation. Key to this

initiative is the goal to “provide a range and amount of dispersed recreation opportunities which is consistent with public demand for a variety of activities and settings.”

The proposed action and all action alternatives detailed in Chapter 2 are designed to be consistent with direction in the Willamette Forest Plan, as amended by the following documents:

## **Northwest Forest Plan Amendments**

In April 1994, the “Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Spotted Owl” (USDA, USDI Northwest Forest Plan ROD, 1994) modified the Willamette Forest Plan with overlaying management areas and their accompanying standards and guidelines.

In January 2001, the Forest Plan was further amended by the, “Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines” (USDA, USDI Survey and Manage ROD, 2001). This Record of Decision amended a portion of the Northwest Forest Plan by adopting new standards and guidelines for Survey and Manage and Protection Buffer species, and other mitigating measures.

The March 2004, Record of Decision “To Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines in Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl”, amended a portion of the Northwest Forest Plan by removing the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines. The decision is based on information and analysis in the Final SEIS to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines.

In March 2004, another Record of Decision titled, “Amending Resource Management Plans for Seven Bureau of Land Management Districts and Land and Resource Management Plans for Nineteen National Forests Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl”, amended a portion of the Northwest Forest Plan by clarifying the proper spatial and temporal scale for evaluating progress toward attainment of Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives and by providing clarification that no project level finding of consistency with ACS objectives is required.

The Forest Plan, as amended, contains Forest-Wide Standards and Guidelines as well as Management Area Standards and Guidelines for specific land allocations.

## **Watershed Analysis**

The Aquatic Conservation Strategy in the Northwest Forest Plan included a requirement to prepare comprehensive watershed analyses for all fifth field watersheds. Watershed Analysis documents (WAs) were completed for most watersheds on the Forest in the succeeding two to four years following release of the Northwest Forest Plan in 1994. The Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project area is within the Upper McKenzie Watershed. The Upper McKenzie WA was completed in August 1995.

The March 2004, Decision to Clarify Provisions Relating to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, requires that “a project record for a project with Riparian Reserves must: (1) describe the existing condition, including the important physical and biological components of the fifth field watersheds in

which the project area lies; (2) describe the effect of the project on the existing condition; and (3) demonstrate that in designing and assessing the project the decision maker considered and used, as appropriate, any relevant information from applicable watershed analysis.”

This initiative does not propose disturbances within Riparian Reserves in the project area. Projects descriptions can be found in Chapters 2. Consistency Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives is addressed in the disclosure of effects on soils and the watershed in Chapter 3.

## Management Areas

Table 1 displays Management Area acres within the McKenzie River Ranger District (MRRD) portion of the project area, as designated in the amended Willamette Forest Plan. The table also includes the overlying land allocations from the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan. Four of the Northwest Forest Plan allocations are present within the project area and consist of Administratively Withdrawn, Late Successional Reserves, Matrix, and Riparian Reserves. However, Riparian Reserves (outside of MA-10f, Lakeside Setting) overlap the other land allocations, and therefore are not represented in the following table.

**Table 1: Management Areas in the Project Area**

<i>Willamette Forest Plan Management Areas</i>	<i>Northwest Forest Plan Land Allocations</i>	<i>Acres</i>
5a – Special Interest Areas	Administratively Withdrawn	823
9b – Wildlife Habitat – Northern Spotted Owl	Administratively Withdrawn	166
10b – Dispersed Recreation – Semiprimitive Motorized	Matrix	10,539
10e – Dispersed Recreation – Semiprimitive Nonmotorized	Administratively Withdrawn	725
10f – Dispersed Recreation – Lakeside Setting	Riparian Reserves	460
11f – Scenic - Retention Foreground	Matrix	171
12b – Developed Recreation – Special Use Permits	Administratively Withdrawn	817
13a – Special Use Permit Areas	Administratively Withdrawn	40
16b – Late Successional Reserve	Late Successional Reserves	109
<b>Total Acres</b>		<b>13,850</b>

Actions are proposed within MA-5a, Special Interest Areas (SIAs), MA-10b, Dispersed Recreation, Semiprimitive Motorized Use, MA-10e, Dispersed Recreation, Semiprimitive Nonmotorized Use, and Management 12b – Developed Recreation – Special Use Permits.

### MA-5a, Special Interest Areas

**Management Area Goals:** The goals for these areas are to 1) Preserve lands in Special Interest Areas (SIAs) that contain exceptional scenic, cultural, biological, geological, or other unusual characteristics, and 2) to foster public use and enjoyment in selected Special Interest Areas through facility development.

The project area contains two SIAs: 1) The Santiam Wagon Road SIA is an important historic feature in the project area that is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. It is currently used as a Key Forest Road travel route for public recreation for all vehicles, including OHVs. 2) The Sand Mountain SIA is also in the project area and is designated because of unique geologic features. Sand Mountain Lookout attracts Recreationists throughout the summer traveling by a variety of motorized vehicles, including OHVs, to enjoy vistas and to visit the restored fire lookout.

**Key Management Area Standards and Guidelines for this Project:**

**MA-5a-01:** An Implementation Guide shall be prepared for each SIA describing the site specific management objectives, enhancement programs, and other acceptable uses and activities.<sup>3</sup>

**MA-5a-02:** Area management practices should result in a physical setting that meets or exceeds the Roded Natural ROS class.

**MA-5a-03:** Trails should be designed to accommodate the type and numbers of users specified in the Implementation Guide.

**MA-5a-11:** New road and trail construction should be permitted to meet site-specific objectives identified in the Implementation Guide. Roads that distract from the special values of the area shall not be developed.

**MA-5a-12:** In sites selected for facilities development the physical, cultural, and biological attributes of the management area shall be maintained.

**Proposed Actions Within this Management Area:**

**Santiam Wagon Road SIA:** The Proposed Action, Alternative 2, would designate all portions of the Santiam Wagon Road within the project area as motorized mixed-use, and dispersed camping would be allowed at designated locations within the regulated camping zone. Alternative 2 also designates 8 OHV route crossings and would rehabilitate the roadway and unincorporated user-created tracks within the Santiam Wagon Road SIA.

Alternative 3 would close a portion of the Santiam Wagon Road to all motorized vehicles from the Eno Road 2676 along road segment 2676-866 and 2690-810 to the junction of 2690-860. The remaining portions of the Santiam Wagon Road along 2690-810 and 2690-811, from the junction of 2690-860 to the Forest boundary at the Cascade crest, is open to motorized mixed-use. Alternative 3 designates 4 OHV trail crossings and allows dispersed camping in the regulated camping zone at several designated locations, and it would rehabilitate the roadway and unincorporated user-created tracks within the Santiam Wagon Road SIA.

Alternative 4 would allow only highway legal vehicles on the Santiam Wagon Road, designates 2 trail crossings and allows dispersed camping at designated locations.

**Sand Mountain SIA:** On September 27, 1997, the Forest Supervisor of the Willamette National Forest signed Special Closure Order #110 which prohibits the possession or use of a vehicle, pack animal, and bicycle off Forest road 2690-810. The order exempts persons with a permit or easement specifically authorizing the prohibited act or omission and any Federal, State, or local officer, or

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<sup>3</sup> Implementation Guides have not been completed for either Special Interest Area. Non-significant Amendment #49 would provide a one-time exclusion of this Standard and Guideline (see page 7.)

member of an organized law enforcement, rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of official duty. This Closure Order will continue to be in effect to protect the geological features of the SIA, specifically the fragile soils of the Sand Mountain cinder cone that are easily displaced by mechanical disturbance, and the fragile plant community associated with this environment.

The Proposed Action, Alternative 2, would not change current access or management of the Sand Mountain SIA.

Alternatives 3 would close the Santiam Wagon Road at the junction of 2690-810 and 2690-860, thus eliminating public vehicle access by the Sand Mountain Lookout road to all but administrative vehicles.

Alternatives 4 would allow access by highway legal vehicles only on Forest road 2690-810, and allow public access to the parking area below the lookout, prohibiting Class I and III ATVs. See Chapter 2 for details of these alternatives.

### **MA-10b, Dispersed Recreation – Semiprimitive Motorized Use**

**Management Area Goals:** The goals of this management area are to 1) Provide a full spectrum of recreation opportunities meeting the criteria for a Semiprimitive Motorized experience through the management of user activities and natural resource settings. 2) Provide users the opportunity to experience a sense of solitude, tranquility, self-reliance and closeness to nature. These experiences are provided through activities involving the application of outdoor skills in an environment that offers some challenges and risk. 3) Provide for wood fiber production, watershed protection, scenic quality, and maintenance of wildlife habitats.

#### **Key Management Area Standards and Guidelines for this Project:**

**MA-10b-01:** An Implementation Guide shall be prepared for each Semiprimitive Motorized area describing the site specific management objectives, enhancement programs, and other acceptable uses and activities.<sup>4</sup>

**MA-10b-02:** This management area shall be available for maximum use for a range of activities that provide Semiprimitive Motorized experiences.

**MA-10b-04:** Access by motorized vehicles shall be limited to snowmobiles, trail bikes, and ORVs not greater than 42 inches in width. The general area is open to off-road vehicles and mountain bikes.

**MA-10b-22:** Structures and improvements shall be provided to facilitate use, protect resource values, and aid administration.

**MA-10b-23:** Road Development should include measures to protect or enhance effectiveness of the area to provide for Semiprimitive Motorized recreation.

#### **Proposed Actions Within this Management Area:**

Almost all of the proposed designated OHV routes are within this Management Area. The proposed action and all action alternatives seek to manage OHV travel within this Management Area by

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<sup>4</sup> An Implementation Guide has not been completed for MA-10b in the project area. Non-significant Amendment #49 would provide a one-time exclusion of this Standard and Guideline (see page 7.)

establishing OHV routes on existing Forest roads and by constructing OHV trails along user-created tracks and in undisturbed areas to connect Forest roads and trails.

For all action alternatives, the staging areas would be constructed on Forest road 2690 at the junction of 2690-860 or north of the Santiam Wagon Road SIA at the junction of 2690 and 2690-810. Staging areas are designed to facilitate off-loading of OHVs, provide for vehicle parking, have information kiosks, and toilet facilities. Dispersed campsites would be allowed within 100 feet of a Forest road, and at identified locations within the Regulated Camping Zone along the Big Lake Road and Santiam Wagon Road. An Open Play Area, and the Kiddie Loop youth learning trails would be located within MA-10d. A majority of the road closures and rehabilitation of user-created tracks that are not incorporated into the designated road and trail system, are also within this Management Area.

### **MA-10e, Dispersed Recreation – Semiprimitive Nonmotorized Use**

**Management Area Goals:** The goals of this management area are to 1) provide a full spectrum of recreation opportunities meeting the criteria for a Semiprimitive Nonmotorized experience through the management of user activities and natural resource settings. 2) Provide users the opportunity to experience a sense of solitude, tranquility, self-reliance and closeness to nature. These experiences are provided through activities involving the application of outdoor skills in an environment that offers some challenges and risk.

#### **Key Management Area Standards and Guidelines for this Project:**

**MA-10e-01:** An Implementation Guide shall be prepared for each Semiprimitive Nonmotorized recreation area describing the site-specific management objectives, enhancement programs, and other acceptable uses and activities.<sup>5</sup>

**MA-10e-02:** This management area shall be available for maximum use for a range of activities that provide Semiprimitive Nonmotorized ROS class experiences.

**MA-10e-04:** The general area shall be closed to off-road vehicles.

**MA-10e-13:** Existing roads shall be closed to motorized use and access.

**MA-10e-04:** No new roads shall be developed. New trails shall be developed commensurate with management objectives established in individual Implementation Guides.

#### **Proposed Actions Within this Management Area:**

All action alternatives would include a non-significant amendment to the Willamette Forest Plan that would re-designate land from MA-10e, Dispersed Recreation, Semiprimitive Non-Motorized, to MA-10b - Dispersed Recreation, Semiprimitive Motorized. The non-significant amendment proposed for Alternative 2 would designate both Forest road 2690-910 and winter trail #3558 in this reallocation.

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<sup>5</sup> An Implementation Guide has not been prepared for this Management Area within the project area (see page 7). Off-road OHV use would continue to be prohibited with Non-significant Amendment #49 with any action alternative. Neither the proposed action nor any other action alternatives include activities for this management area.

**MA-12b, Developed Recreation – Special Use Permits**

**Management Area Goals:** The primary goals of this management area are to 1) Provide a safe, healthful, aesthetic, non-urban atmosphere for the pursuit of natural resource based recreation consistent with resource protection needs and anticipated user demand. 2) Where opportunities for meaningful facilities and services according to the terms of individual special use agreements with private individuals and organizations.

The project area contains the Hoodoo Ski Area, managed under a special use agreement between the Forest Service and Hoodoo Ski Bowl Incorporated. The Hoodoo Ski Area operates under the Hoodoo Master Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1996), which was implemented following the Hoodoo Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, (USDA Forest Service, 1996a).

**Key Management Area Standards and Guidelines for this Project:**

**MA-12b-06:** The physical setting for this management area shall meet the criteria for several ROS classes ranging from Roaded Natural to Semiprimitive Nonmotorized depending on the location and the degree of development.

**MA-12b-07:** The general area shall be closed to off-road vehicle use.

**MA-12b-17:** New trails and roads may be developed and shall be commensurate with management objectives established in the site plan.

**Proposed Actions Within this Management Area:**

Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would designate roads and construct motorized trails within the Hoodoo Ski Area special use permit area for ATV Class I and III.

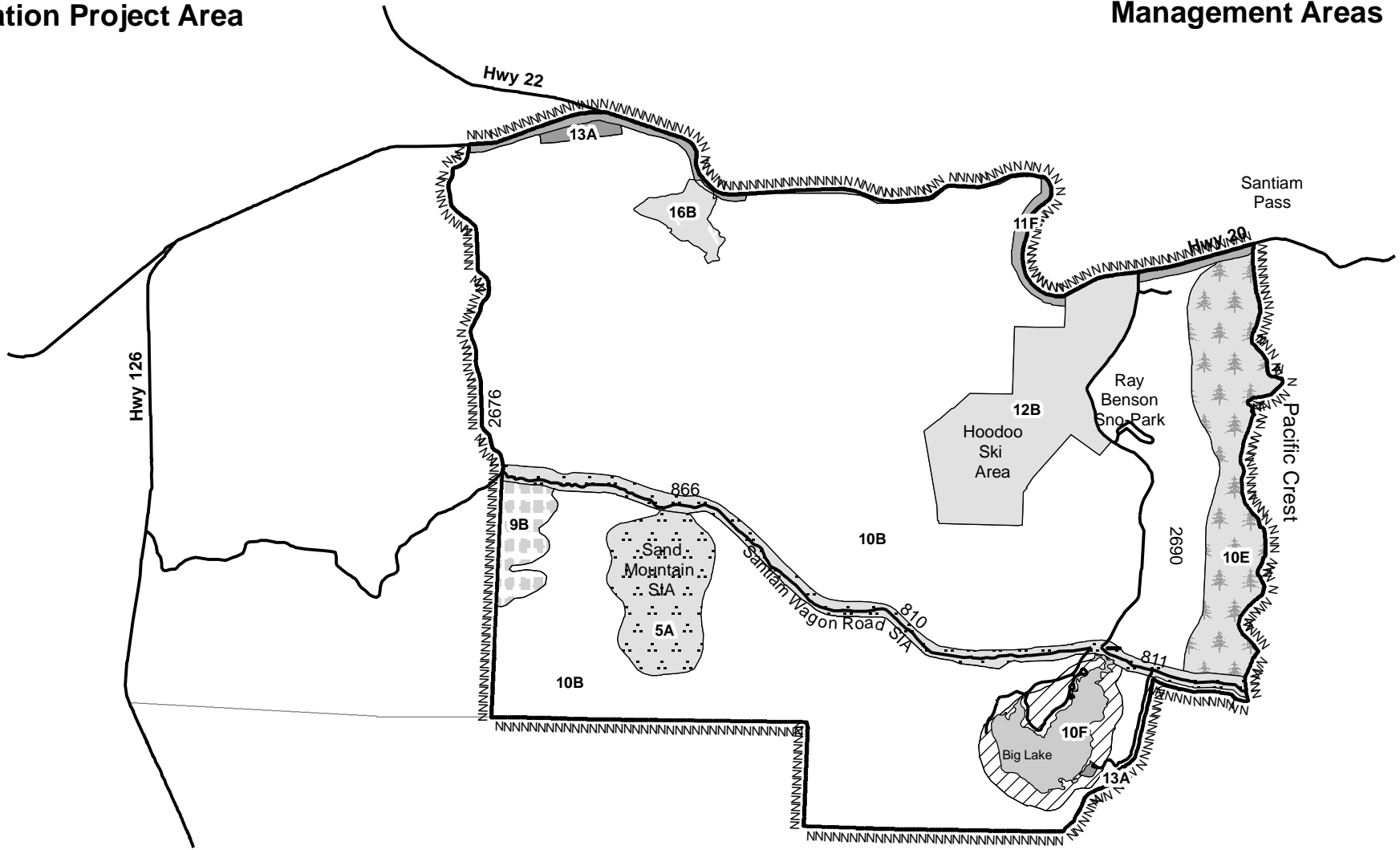
**Other Ownership**

The project area only includes National Forest System (NFS) lands.



# Santiam Pass Summer Motorized Recreation Project Area

# Willamette Forest Plan Management Areas



Project Boundary

10B - Dispersed Recreation - Semiprimitive Motorized

10E - Dispersed Recreation - Semiprimitive Non-motorized

10F - Dispersed Recreation - Lakeside Setting

5A - Special Interest Area

16B - Late Successional Reserve - 100 acre

9B - Wildlife Habitat - Pileated Woodpecker

12B - Developed Recreation - Special Use Permit

11F - Scenic - Retention Foreground

13A - Existing Long Term Special Use

Major Road

