



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Executive Summary

Beartooth Travel Management

Beartooth Ranger District
Custer National Forest



Forest
Service

Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Park Counties of Montana

June 2008



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**BEARTOOTH RANGER DISTRICT
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT
Final Environmental Impact Statement**

Custer National Forest - Beartooth Ranger District

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Abstract: District-wide travel planning was last addressed in 1987. Since that time, changes in land management policies, increases in use and demand for recreation opportunities, new developments and improvements in recreation-related technology, and increases in concerns about travel-related impacts to natural resources have occurred. These events have led to the need to re-examine travel management planning on the District.

The purpose of this project is to: 1) identify routes for public motorized use on the District, 2) provide for a variety of motorized and non-motorized opportunities, 3) minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources, and 4) have enforceable travel management guidelines.

The new travel management decision would designate system roads and trails for public motorized uses and specify the type of vehicle and season of use for each route. Motorized off-route travel would be prohibited, except where designated for access to dispersed vehicle camping. Minor changes to the non-motorized trail system are proposed. Over-snow vehicle use is not part of the decision to be made in this analysis. The four action alternatives considered in this EIS represent a broad range of public sentiment regarding road and trail management, and frame the significant issues related to the decision to be made. The alternative of taking no action is also considered in this EIS. The preferred alternative is Alternative B - Modified.

Comments on this FEIS. Public review and comment was solicited on the “draft” environmental impact statement (DEIS), and utilized in the preparation of this final environmental impact statement (FEIS). No further public review or public comment is being sought on this “final” EIS.

Appeal of Decisions. Reviewers whom disagree with information presented in this FEIS may appeal any decision based upon it. Decisions based upon this FEIS are described in separate documents. It is the reviewer’s responsibility to obtain those decision documents and follow procedures described in them to appeal the decision(s).

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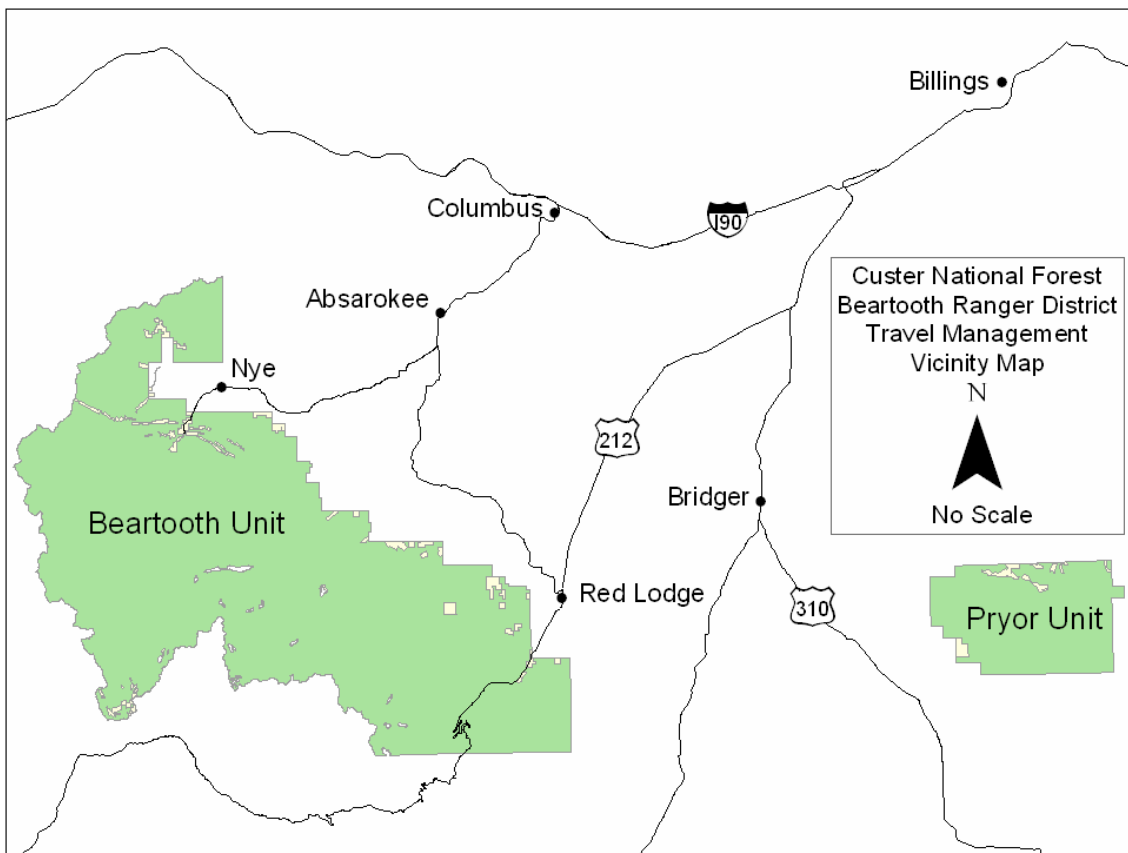
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ES 1 INTRODUCTION

This executive summary was written to provide an overview of the contents of the Beartooth Ranger District Travel Management Planning Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS discloses the potential environmental, cultural, social, and economic consequences of implementing alternatives to change travel management within the Beartooth Ranger District (District), Custer National Forest (Forest), Montana. The consequences of taking no action are also disclosed. The EIS, in conjunction with public comments, legal requirements, and existing management direction, will be used to establish travel management direction for the District.

ES 1.1 GENERAL LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

The Beartooth Ranger District, situated in south-central Montana, is composed of two separate and unique geographic units, known as the Beartooth and Pryor units. The Beartooth Unit consists of approximately 512,943 federally administered acres. Approximately thirty miles to the east is the Pryor Unit which consists of approximately 74,932 federally administered acres.



ES 2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to: 1) identify routes for public motorized use on the District, 2) provide for a variety of motorized and non-motorized opportunities, 3) minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources, and 4) have enforceable travel management guidelines.

District-wide travel planning was last addressed in 1987. Since that time, changes in land management policies, increases in use and demand for recreation opportunities, new developments and improvements in recreation-related technology, and increases in concerns about travel-related impacts to natural resources have occurred. These events have led to the need to re-examine travel management planning on the District. More detailed information about these events and the needs that stem from them is presented below.

ES 2.1 2001 TRI-STATE OFF-HIGHWAY (OHV) VEHICLE DECISION

In 2001, the Forest Service issued a decision that addressed unmanaged motorized cross-country travel on all National Forest System lands in Montana, North Dakota and parts of South Dakota (Bosworth, 2001). It also directed National Forests within this area to set up a schedule for completing site-specific planning that would designate appropriate uses on motorized routes. The Custer National Forest implemented a forest order in response to the Tri-State OHV Decision that prohibited cross-country motorized vehicle travel except for dispersed vehicle camping within 300 feet of motorized routes (Curriden, 2001). In addition, the Forest initiated travel management planning in 2003 on the Beartooth Ranger District in response to the direction in the 2001 Tri-State OHV Decision. There is a need to complete this effort to comply with the objective set forth in this decision.

ES 2.2 2005 MOTORIZED TRAVEL RULE

In December 2005, a new travel management rule took effect for all National Forest System lands (Appendix A). The new rule directs National Forests to designate roads, trails, and areas suitable for motorized travel. The actions described in this document are part of the planning process to select routes for designation under the new regulation. All National Forests are expected to complete the planning and designation process by 2009. The Chief of the Forest Service committed to completing the District motorized travel management planning by October 2008. This commitment is displayed in the Chief's schedule for completion of travel management planning for National Forests and Grasslands available on the internet at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/summary07.pdf>. The Custer needs to complete travel management for the District to fulfill this commitment.

ES 2.3 MANAGE RECREATION USE

Former Chief Dale Bosworth recognized unmanaged recreation as one of the four threats facing sustainable management of the National Forests. Although recreation is a valid use of National Forest System lands, unmanaged recreation use, whether motorized or non-motorized, has the potential to result in unintended consequences, such as undesirable resource impacts and unnecessarily elevated user conflict. Certain aspects of travel management on the District have at times been unmanaged or management has been limited. The presence of several miles of non-system roads on the District are an indication of this. This situation has resulted in concerns that routes and activities may be adversely impacting resources and users. There is a need to manage forest visitor travel to reduce potential resource impacts and user conflicts, while still providing a diversity of recreation opportunities.

ES 2.4 ENFORCEMENT OF TRAVEL MANAGEMENT RESTRICTIONS

The need to evaluate travel management planning at this time is also driven by a need to improve the enforceability of restrictions on motorized recreation. Over the years, procedural issues with implementation of portions of the 1987 Travel Plan have surfaced, which have hampered enforcing the plan, especially the absence of a map produced at the time the plan was prepared. The inability to clearly determine when violations of the 1987 Travel Plan restrictions have occurred has resulted in some undesirable resource impacts and the potential for more. In addition, there are inconsistencies between the 1987 Travel Plan and the 2001 Tri-State OHV Decision, especially with respect to non-system routes. Resolving these inconsistencies and implementing travel management planning that are consistent with the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule would improve the District's ability to enforce travel management restrictions.

ES 2.5 ROADS IN DEVELOPED RECREATION SITES

There is a need to convert several non-system routes associated with developed recreation sites to system roads. These routes are considered part of the basic administrative infrastructure of the District, but have never formally been identified as National Forest System roads. They include routes in campgrounds, trailheads, recreation residence tracts, and day use areas that provide public recreation opportunities. These non-system routes cannot be designated for public use under the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule unless they are first converted to system roads.

There is also a need to restrict the use of roads within gated campgrounds when they are closed, to protect facilities and resources in the campgrounds.

ES 3 PROPOSED ACTION

The *Beartooth Ranger District Travel Management Proposal* (Proposal) was distributed in 2004. The Proposal reflected the guidance at that time to include all system and non-system roads and trails in the proposal and display the intended use for all of them. In other words, the Proposal contained routes where changes were proposed and routes where no changes were proposed. The following year the agency finalized the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule. Guidance associated with this Rule recommended that travel management proposals focus on proposed changes to the system so that the public, responsible official and the interdisciplinary team can focus on those areas where changes are proposed. This was different than the approach used to prepare the Proposal.

To comply with the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule, the 2004 proposed action was re-formatted. As a part of this re-formatting effort, interdisciplinary team members went through the original proposed action to determine if each of the proposed actions was reasonable and still desirable, and supplemented rationale for proposed actions wherever appropriate. Some actions were dropped because conditions or use had changed, or the original basis for the proposal was not clear and could not be substantiated. The original proposed action has been dropped from further analysis (see section 2.5.1). However, the proposed action was the basis for Alternative B and represents the re-formatting effort, updates, and input that transpired between distribution of the 2004 proposed action and the 2007 DEIS. Specific actions associated with Alternative B are contained in Appendix C, Table C-2, and include the following types of actions that the Forest Service is proposing to implement:

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- Designate a system of roads and trails on the District for motorized public use.
- Designate the type of vehicle and season of use for each system road and motorized system trail.
- Change certain system roads to motorized trails or mixed motorized use roads.
- Change certain unauthorized (non-system) routes to system roads and/or system trails that address administrative, utilization, or protection needs.
- Change certain system road, non-system routes, and motorized system trails to non-motorized system trails.
- Identify those system roads and non-system routes to be used for administrative use only.
- Designate dispersed vehicle camping along motorized routes.
- Change system roads for which there is no administrative, utilization, or protection need identified to Maintenance Level 1 system roads available for potential decommissioning in the future.

The Custer National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) would be amended to change guidance related to public road designation and restrictions on the District in order to be consistent with the route designation decisions made in the Record of Decision (ROD). These proposed amendments can be found in Appendix B. They generally involve deleting site-specific management direction related to a few specific routes. Management of these routes in the future would be through the site-specific decisions, like this analysis, associated with producing the MVUM. The proposed amendments to the Forest Plan are considered minor and would not require Regional Forester approval to implement.

ES 4 SCOPE OF DECISION TO BE MADE

ES 4.1 DECISIONS TO BE MADE

The decision to be made is to designate a system of roads and trails on the District for public motorized use. In addition, some unauthorized (non-system) routes could be converted to system roads and trails, and some system motorized routes may be changed to system non-motorized trails. The type of vehicle and season of use would also be designated for each system road and motorized system trail. Dispersed vehicle camping distances or site specific restrictions will be determined.

The 1986 Forest Plan would be amended to change guidance related to public road designation and restrictions on the Beartooth Ranger District in order to be consistent with the route designation decisions made in the ROD. Related existing orders that are not consistent with the decision made in the ROD would be rescinded and any new ones that are necessary for implementation would be issued.

ES 4.2 DECISIONS THAT WILL NOT BE MADE

There were several subjects that commenters on the proposed action and DEIS thought should be decided through this process, including cross-country game retrieval, exemptions for accessibility, changes to rights of access, over-snow vehicle use, designated cross-country motorized areas, decommissioning or obliterating routes, construction of routes, and route designation for the Upper Stillwater Basin. The Deciding Official has determined that these actions are outside the scope of the analysis for this process. The specific rationale for this determination can be found in Appendix G.

ES 5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Chapter 2 of the FEIS details the public participation to date. The initial scoping document (Project Record) was sent on February 2, 2004 to approximately 91 individuals, government agencies, tribal governments, news media, businesses, and organizations that have shown interest in similar projects on the Custer National Forest. The public comment period ended on May 1, 2004. A legal advertisement inviting comments was placed in the Billings Gazette (Billings, MT) in February 2, 2004, summarizing the information provided in the document. News releases were sent to local newspapers.

Public meetings were held in Red Lodge, Pryor, Bridger, Billings, and Columbus, Montana and Lovell, Wyoming from February to May 2004 to discuss the scoping document. Public meetings were also held in Red Lodge, Bridger, Billings, and Columbus, Montana and Lovell, Wyoming in July 2006.

Seven collaboration meetings were held over a period of four months in early 2007 (January through April). The attendance at the collaboration sessions ranged from 65 to 159 individuals. The attendees worked together during these seven half day sessions reviewing information and maps to identify points of agreement. While no specific collaborative alternative was developed, several points of agreement on roads and trails were reached (see Chapter 2, Table 2-1).

In response to these efforts, over 5000 letters, personal comments, or phone calls were received. Collaborative group session information was documented and reviewed. The analysis of electronic, written and verbal comments preliminarily identified several potential issues. Eleven of these issues were identified as significant or important issues.

The Notice of Availability for the Draft EIS was published in the Federal Register October 5, 2007 which began a 60 day comment period (original 45 day comment period with a 15 day extension). News releases were provided to local news media at the beginning of the comment period. The DEIS was distributed to the public on September 24, 2007. The Forest conducted five public open houses and attended two interest group's meetings to provide information and encourage input on the DEIS (see Table 2-1). The public open house meetings included a brief overview of the DEIS and the process, and opportunities for the public to ask questions in a group setting and one-on-one with interdisciplinary team members and the District Ranger. In response to the comment period, the Forest received 513 comment letters, e-mails, and documented phone conversations on the DEIS. Three of the 513 letters were received after the deadline. Further information on commenters and substantive comments identified in the letters, e-mails, and phone conversations can be found in Chapter 4. A content analysis of the comments was conducted and response to comments is found in Chapter 5.

ES 6 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

One purpose of scoping is to identify the significant issues that should be analyzed in depth within an EIS (40 CFR 1501.7). The significant issues become the focus of the analysis and guide alternative development. All public scoping comments were considered by the interdisciplinary team and Responsible Official, and are documented in the project record.

As a result of reviewing and analyzing agency and public responses, the following significant issues were identified. These were used to develop the range of alternatives and are analyzed in detail in Chapter 3.

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ES 6.1 RECREATION

Concern about motorized recreation opportunities. Reductions in the amount of routes available for motorized use could reduce the opportunities available for motorized recreation, reduce the opportunities to take motorized trips on routes that loop back to the starting point, and potentially increase motorized congestion. There are particular concerns with these motorized opportunities in the Pryor Unit. Alternative A was developed to respond to this issue.

Concern about non-motorized recreation opportunities. Increases in the amount of routes designated for motorized use could reduce the quality of non-motorized recreation experiences and reduce the opportunities for solitude, away from noise generated by motorized vehicles. There are particular concerns with these opportunities in the Pryor Unit. Alternative C was developed in response to this issue.

Concern about opportunities for off-highway vehicle operation. The use of unlicensed off-highway vehicles on roads is not consistent with State of Montana motor vehicle laws. Designating roads (as opposed to motorized mixed use roads or motorized trails) would limit opportunities for off-highway vehicle use. This issue was used in designing Alternatives A, B, and B Modified.

Concern about impacts on personal recreation experiences. The Forest Service and commenters recognized the potential for travel management changes to not only impact individual's personal experiences and connection to forest lands, but it also has the potential to increase or decrease conflict between forest users, particularly between motorized and non-motorized uses. The polarized nature of visitor preferences related to motorized vehicle use contributed to the development of Alternative B and Alternative B Modified as compromises between Alternative A and Alternative C which tend to favor one visitor preference over another.

Concern about the impacts of noise from motorized recreation activities. Commenters expressed concern about the potential increase of noise effects on non-motorized recreationist's experience due to the addition of motorized routes to the National Forest System.

ES 6.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Concern about protection of archeological sites, traditional cultural properties and traditional practices. Actions associated with designation, such as converting non-system routes to system routes, have the potential to adversely impact the scientific, traditional, cultural, and intrinsic values of archeological, cultural, and historic sites. In addition, proposed actions in the Pryor Unit could have an adverse effect to certain areas of traditional importance to the Crow Tribe. Components of Alternative B and Alternative B-Modified were developed in response to this issue.

ES 7 OTHER ISSUES

The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act states that agencies should discuss, "only briefly issues other than significant ones" (40 CFR 1500.4[c]). The following issues were determined to not be significant issues because they did not drive development of alternatives or major components of alternatives, there were no significant effects associated with the proposed actions, or both.

ES 7.1 WATER QUALITY, FISHERIES, AND AQUATICS

The action of adding routes to the system has the potential to influence water quality indirectly through on-site erosion and sediment delivery to streams. Actions can also influence water quality and channel processes as a result of improper route location. Minor components of Alternative B and B Modified were developed in response to this issue.

ES 7.2 WILDLIFE

Human use associated with system and non-system road and trail designation has the potential to disturb wildlife through noise and visual effects. Human use can disrupt activities such as foraging habits, resting location selection and duration, nesting, and denning. In addition, changes in road densities can affect the quality of wildlife habitat. The Forest Service identified and analyzed the effects of travel management alternatives on federally threatened, Forest Service sensitive, big-game and other wildlife species and their habitat. Minor components of Alternative B, Alternative B Modified, and Alternative C were developed in response to wildlife concerns.

ES 7.3 SOILS

Adding routes to the system on high and medium risk soils could increase the potential to compact, displace, or erode soils such that there is a loss of soil productivity. Dispersed vehicle camping associated with system changes has the potential to disturb soil crusts.

ES 7.4 VEGETATION

Concerns have been expressed about the effects of designating routes on native and rare vegetation found on the District. Designation of additional system roads and trails, along with the associated dispersed vehicle camping, has the potential to cause ground disturbance that could lead to noxious weed establishment and/or encouraging spreading.

ES 7.5 INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS

Actions such as converting non-system routes to system routes have the potential to degrade the character and resources within inventoried roadless areas.

ES 7.6 ECONOMICS

Proposed changes in motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities could reduce forest visitation, which could potentially diminish the economic contribution forest visitors make to communities in the vicinity of the District. This may also have an adverse impact on regional economies.

ES 7.7 AIR QUALITY

There is concern that the addition of routes to the system may lead to an adverse impact on air quality. Air quality across the District is considered good to excellent. All areas within and immediately adjacent to the District currently meet all state and federal air quality standards (Story, 2000; Story et. al., 2008; and MTDEQ, 2005). The nearest area of non-attainment is Laurel, MT (approx. 30-50 miles

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N/NE) and concerns SO(2) levels. Implementation of any of the alternatives is expected to maintain air quality conditions due to 1) good dispersion characteristics across the District, 2) low inversion potential across the District, 3) low emissions from vehicles relative to other potential sources, and 4) reduced or equivalent route miles open to motorized vehicles under all alternatives compared to the existing condition. Compliance with State and Federal air quality standards would occur under all alternatives.

ES 8 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL

In response to agency and public issues, four action alternatives were developed. Alternatives A, B, C, and B Modified were analyzed in detail along with the No Action Alternative. A general description of each of the alternatives is provided below.

ES 8.1 ALTERNATIVE A

Under this alternative, the recreation experience in slightly less than three-quarters of the Pryor Unit would have a motorized recreation experience emphasis based on Recreation Opportunity Spectrum criteria. OHV riders and drivers would find a diversity of terrain, as well as, quality of trails and roads to experience. OHV users would have multiple options for loop experiences, especially on Big Pryor Mountain. The primary use is expected to be families and groups out for day long rides of 20-60 miles, for sightseeing, picnicking, and non-technical riding. On weekends, riders could expect to encounter other groups of riders throughout the day. Hikers, bicyclists, and horseback riders using portions of the Pryor Unit, are likely to hear or see OHVs during portions of their travels.

Recreationists' experiences in the Beartooth Unit are not expected to be appreciably different than the No Action Alternative.

Alternative A would propose to designate public motorized use on the majority of routes (system and non-system) identified during the 1999-2000 inventory. This alternative approximates the existing condition (e.g. use of existing system and non-system routes). The only roads that would not be designated for public motorized use under this alternative would be those identified for administrative uses, those that the Forest Service does not have a legal right-of-way for use, and one road that has revegetated and no longer exists (see Table 2-2 in the FEIS for more information on these).

This alternative largely reflects the motorized road and trail elements of an alternative submitted by the Custer Partnership, a coalition of area groups interested in this project, including Families for Outdoor Recreation, Treasure State ATV, and other individuals. Other elements in the group's proposal were not included in Alternative A because they were outside the scope of the analysis (e.g. construction) or were not consistent with guidance related to the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule (e.g. designation of roads with no legal right-of-way).

ES 8.2 ALTERNATIVE B

OHV recreationists would find multiple motorized loop opportunities in the Pryor Unit for year-round use under this alternative – approximately two-thirds of the unit would be in motorized settings. In addition, several seasonal, high-elevation loops would be available for their use during the June 15-April 15 season of use for the Pryor Unit. Vehicle operators would find many choices for day-long

rides during the majority of the year that offer a diversity of terrain, but may find it slightly more difficult to find these opportunities from April 15-June 15.

Hikers and horseback riders would find large areas or “enclaves” in the Pryor Unit with very little motorized use, including portions of Big Pryor Mountain, Punchbowl, and Lost Water Canyon. These areas would expand dramatically in size during the time of year when motorized use is prohibited at higher elevations (April 15-June 15). Recreationists could expect to take day-long hikes or horseback rides without hearing or seeing OHVs during the April 15-June 15 period; but may have a little more difficulty finding this type of experience the remainder of the year.

Pack and saddle stock users could still expect to find many opportunities for riding and camping in the Beartooth Unit, and could expect to use the Meyers Creek and Lodgepole Creek areas without hearing or seeing motorized use.

Motorcyclists could expect to have opportunities to ride in both the Beartooth and Pryor units, but would not find opportunities for single track motorcycle experiences.

This alternative specifically addresses key resource concerns identified through internal and external scoping by not designating routes for public motorized use where concerns exist (see below). This alternative identifies slightly less motorized routes than no action for designation, but more than Alternative C.

The primary resource concerns that are addressed by this alternative include:

- In Alternative B, the Dryhead Vista Loop (Road #2308B) would not be designated for public motorized use or administrative use, and would be converted to a non-motorized system trail. Forest visitors would be able to access the vista through non-motorized means. This action is being proposed to minimize impacts to traditional cultural practices in the area that are easily disturbed by motorized vehicle access and/or vandalism.
- The 300 foot access to dispersed camping allowance would not apply to the Main Fork of Rock Creek (Road #2421). Dispersed vehicle camping would continue to be allowed, but measures would be used to limit the expansion of existing sites and the creation of new sites to minimize impacts on cultural and natural resources.
- Portions of routes where cultural resources are of concern were removed from designation consideration due to potential of continued site degradation and vandalism. (See route specific information in Appendix C.)
- Portions of routes where soil and water resources are of concern were removed from designation consideration due to unacceptable erosion with little opportunity for engineered drainage without extremely high investment. (See route specific information in Appendix C.)
- Meyers Creek (Trail #27) and Lodgepole (Trail #22) trails were proposed not to be designated for motorized travel in favor of non-motorized opportunities and wildlife habitat emphasis.
- Season of use designations on roads above approximately 8,000 feet elevation to minimize road and resource damage during spring breakup or thawing of frozen soils and snow melt.

ES 8.3 ALTERNATIVE C

Under this alternative, the majority of the Pryor Unit would have larger areas or “enclaves” with very little motorized use. Approximately half of the unit would be in motorized settings and half in non-motorized settings. Recreationists could expect that some effort would be required to walk or ride to

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certain destinations – for example Bear Canyon, King Canyon, and the Punchbowl area – and certain activities, such as hunting, could be expected to require more effort to find game. There would be multiple opportunities to walk or ride a horse or mountain bike without seeing or hearing OHVs on adjacent ridges. You might encounter the occasional motorized vehicle being utilized for weed spraying or grazing permit administration on roads and trails identified for administrative uses.

Recreationists accustomed to dispersed vehicle camping would find less opportunities and fewer desirable sites for this activity since fewer motorized routes would be designated and access to dispersed vehicle camping sites within 300 feet of motorized routes would not be allowed under this alternative.

Pack and saddle stock users could still expect to find many opportunities for riding and camping in the Beartooth Unit, and could expect to use the Meyers Creek and Lodgepole Creek areas without hearing or seeing motorized use.

Motorcyclists could expect to have opportunities to ride in both the Beartooth and Pryor units, but would not find opportunities for single track motorcycle experiences.

The Pryor Unit portion of this alternative basically reflects the alternative proposed by the Pryors Coalition, a coalition of groups including the Eastern Wildlands Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, Our Montana, Inc., The Frontier Heritage Alliance, and Beartooth Back Country Horsemen. However, not every element of the proposal has been included in the alternative analyzed for this project. The primary difference is exclusion of the game retrieval season of use for Punchbowl Road (see Section 2.5.4 for more information).

ES 8.4 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative consists of designation of the existing system roads¹ on the District. This is different from Alternative A (existing condition) which proposes to designate both existing system and non-system routes. This No Action Alternative largely reflects the set of system roads identified in the 1987 Travel Plan along with modifications that have been made to the system since 1987. The No Action Alternative also includes the existing vehicle types and seasons of use currently in force on the District (see Table 2-6 for details).

Designation of the existing network of system roads would not require any further NEPA and represents the starting point for any proposed changes to the routes or areas available for public motorized use. Based on this information, no action was determined to be designation of the existing system roads and trails.

¹ The decision to use existing system roads as the foundation for no action stems from 2005 Motorized Travel Rule guidance, including the following:

- The Travel Management: Designated Routes and Areas for Motorized Use guide prepared by the Forest Service to aid in implementing the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule affirms that the starting point for travel analyses is the current network of system roads.
- The Motor Vehicle Route and Area Designation Guide (version 111705) states, “There is no need to initiate a NEPA process to designate those NFS roads, NFS trails, and areas on NFS lands that are already managed for motor vehicle use where that use will continue unchanged, or to retain existing restrictions on motor vehicle use.”

ES 8.5 ALTERNATIVE B MODIFIED (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

Alternative B was modified in response to the public and internal comments to create Alternative B Modified. Alternative B Modified contains many of the same elements as Alternative B and would provide many of the same types of experiences. The elements of Alternative B Modified that are different from Alternative B are described in the following Table, and provided in further detail in Appendix C.

Table ES-2 summarizes important features and rationale for each of the alternatives. Detailed information on the alternatives is displayed on the comparison maps (see Map Package) and in the route specific tables provided in Appendix C of the FEIS.

Tables ES-3 through ES-6 are intended to provide readers with comparative information about the alternatives that is not strictly focused on changes from no action. For the action alternatives, the figures in the tables represent the total miles available under each table category if that alternative is implemented. The figures used for the No Action Alternative represent the current miles for each of the categories listed.

ES 8.6 ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

ES 8.6.1 Public Safety

The primary focus of public safety associated with route designation is related to mixing licensed and unlicensed vehicle use on District roads and trails. Commenters expressed an interest in having opportunities to operate unlicensed vehicles, while others have expressed safety concerns with permitting this activity. The 2005 Motorized Travel Rule lists public safety as one of the general criteria to be considered during the designation of roads, trails and areas. The Forest Service believes that both mixed motorized use roads and motorized trails are legitimate and appropriate uses of the national forests.

Public safety on Forest roads and trails depends on many factors including the condition of the facility, speed traveled, type of vehicles, human factors like driver expectations, and environmental factors such as weather, noise, and/or visual distractions. National Forest System roads are designed primarily for use by highway-legal vehicles (motor vehicles that are licensed or certified for general operation on public roads within the State) such as a passenger car or log truck. Motorized mixed use is defined as designation of a National Forest System road for use by both highway-legal and non-highway-legal motor vehicles. Currently all roads on the District require the use of highway-legal vehicles. No roads are currently designated as motorized mixed use.

Designating National Forest System roads for motorized mixed use involves safety and engineering considerations. A motorized mixed use analysis must be completed by a qualified engineer. The level of analysis is to be based on personal knowledge, expertise, and experience. During the analysis the engineer will review crash probability and crash severity. Routes designated as trails do not require a motorized mixed use analysis, only system roads proposed for mixed motorized use. An engineering analysis has been completed for the roads designated for motorized mixed use in the preferred alternative and is in the project record.

Table ES-1. Alternative B Modified Elements Different From Alternative B and Rationale for Modification.

Alternative B Modified	Alternative B	Rationale for Modification
Meyers Creek (Trail #27) and Lodgepole (Trail #22) trails would be designated as motorcycle trails with a season of use of June 15 to December 1.	Meyers Creek and Lodgepole trails would be converted from motorcycle trails to non-motorized trails.	In response to public comment, these trails are proposed to remain motorcycle trails in order to continue to provide this opportunity on the District. The season of use is to address concerns about disturbance to moose calving and mule deer winter range, and would have the additional benefit of providing spring and early summer season, low elevation non-motorized trail opportunities.
A 2.2 mile section of Shriver Peak Road (#2088) would not be designated for public motorized use (see Alternative B Modified map).	The entire length of Shriver Peak Road would be designated for public motorized use.	This action is intended to reduce potential for impacts on cultural resources and traditional cultural practices, and would provide additional area for district-wide non-motorized recreation opportunities in response to public comment.
The season of use dates for the following routes in the Pryors would be adjusted to 5/22 to 4/15: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and motorized trails on Big Pryor Mountain previously identified with a season of use of 6/15 to 4/1. • Pryor Mountain Road (#2038) from the junction with Crooked Creek Road to the Dryhead Vista. • Commissary Ridge Road (#2092). • Island Ridge Road (#2093). 	These routes would have a season of use of 6/15 to 4/15.	The change reflects more accurate information used to develop the dates and due to the fact that these routes area generally located in lands with a southern aspect that result in more rapid snowmelt and soil drying.
The eastern most approximate ½ mile of Punch Bowl Road (#2144) would be designated for vehicles less than 50 inches in width contingent upon the completion of trail maintenance work necessary to alleviate soils and water resource concerns with that section of trail.	Route would not be designated for public motorized use.	This change is being proposed in response to public comment and for the following reasons: Route was not proposed to be designated in Alt. B because of costly mitigation necessary to correct resource issues. If these resource issues are addressed, no other issues were identified that would prevent designation.
Road #21415 would be converted from non-system to system road, and identified for administrative use only.	Route would be identified for non-motorized trail use.	This route would be designated in response to coordination efforts with the State of Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to provide motorized access to state lands.
Graham Trail (#2013) would be designated as a trail open to all OHVs.	Road would not be designated for public motorized use.	Commenters indicated this route was in better condition and preferable to other routes in the vicinity.

Table ES-1. Alternative B Modified Elements Different From Alternative B and Rationale for Modification.

Alternative B Modified	Alternative B	Rationale for Modification
Piney Creek (#2012) east of the quarry would not be designated for public motorized use.	Road would be designated for public motorized use.	This route would be dropped in response to designating the adjacent Graham Trail. These two changes would keep the overall number of routes the same as Alternative B, consolidate designated routes into a more confined corridor, and increase the size of a consolidated defacto non-motorized area.
The southern ¾ mile of Commissary Ridge (#2092) would be designated for public motorized use.	Portion of road would not be designated.	This change is being proposed in response to public comment and because there are no identified resource concerns with designating the route.
The first ½ mile of Roberts Bench (#20972) beginning at the junction with Punch Bowl Road (#2144) would be designated for public motorized mixed use, but the remainder of the route would not be designated.	Entire route would be designated for motorized use.	Fence was constructed across the route in the past preventing motorized use of the full route, which also reduces concerns about potential impacts to heritage resources beyond the fence line.
Picket Pin Sawmill Roads #21401A and #21401B would not be designated for public motorized use.	These two routes would be designated for public motorized use.	Not designating these routes will help reduce the routes impact on water quality. This issue was highlighted by commenters.
Road #241412 would not be designated for public motorized use.	This route would be designated for public motorized use.	Not designating this route will help reduce the routes impact on water quality. This issue was highlighted by commenters.
Picket Pin Spur #21407 would be designated for public motorized use contingent upon the completion of road maintenance work necessary to alleviate water resource concerns associated with the route.	This route would be designated for public motorized use.	Not designating this route until mitigation is completed will help reduce the routes impact on water quality. This issue was highlighted by commenters.
The season of use for Picket Pin Road (#2140) would be yearlong.	Season of use would be July 16 to March 31 to be consistent with Gallatin National Forest.	The need for a season of use on Picket Pin Road is on the Gallatin National Forest. There are no resource concerns that necessitate a season of use on the Custer National Forest's portion of Picket Pin Road.
No pack and saddle stock restrictions are proposed for the Lake Fork, Lost Lake, Lake Mary, Keyser Brown, or Crow Lake trails.	Pack and saddle stock restrictions are proposed for the Lake Fork, Lost Lake, Lake Mary, Keyser Brown, or Crow Lake trails.	In response to public input, the Forest determined that resource issues may be more effectively and appropriately addressed through site-specific Forest Order closures, additional Wilderness management planning, and/or other mechanisms.
Nichols Creek (#2478) would be identified as administrative use only.	Nichols Creek would not be designated and would be identified as a ML 1 system road.	The District has identified administrative needs for this route.

Table ES-1. Alternative B Modified Elements Different From Alternative B and Rationale for Modification.

Alternative B Modified	Alternative B	Rationale for Modification																
<p>The following roads in the vicinity of the upper end of the Benbow and Stillwater Plateau Trailhead areas would be designated for public motorized use contingent upon obtaining a legal right-of-way to access them.</p> <p>Benbow (#2414) (.08 miles) Benbow-Stillwater Road (#2014) #20142 The Golf Course (#20144) Stillwater Plateau Trailhead (#20144B)</p>	<p>Roads would be designated for public motorized use.</p>	<p>There is no legal right-of-way to the identified roads. However, it is desirable to obtain a right-of-way to provide access Stillwater Plateau Trailhead.</p>																
<p>The following routes in Tie Flats, Beaverslide, and Punchbowl areas would be designated for public motorized mixed use (see Alternative B-Modified map):</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="121 613 968 857"> <tr> <td>#2097A-Guard Station Green Cabin</td> <td>#2097-Beaverslide</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#2144-Sage Creek Road (4 mile section)</td> <td>#20972-Roberts Bench</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#2073-Stephens Draw (2 mile section)</td> <td>#2104-Tie Flats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#2073H</td> <td>#2104A</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#2085-Crooked Creek Road (1.24 mile section)</td> <td>#2002</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#2308-Pryor Mountain Road (0.84 mile section)</td> <td>#2002A</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#2308C</td> <td>#2002A1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#230811</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	#2097A-Guard Station Green Cabin	#2097-Beaverslide	#2144-Sage Creek Road (4 mile section)	#20972-Roberts Bench	#2073-Stephens Draw (2 mile section)	#2104-Tie Flats	#2073H	#2104A	#2085-Crooked Creek Road (1.24 mile section)	#2002	#2308-Pryor Mountain Road (0.84 mile section)	#2002A	#2308C	#2002A1	#230811		<p>The subject routes would be designated for highway legal vehicles.</p>	<p>In response to public comment, these routes would be changed from a highway legal vehicle designation to mixed motorized use to provide additional motorized recreation opportunities. A few of the listed routes are improved roads and lend themselves to a mixed motorized use designation than a motorized trail designation. Therefore, this network is proposed to for mixed motorized use designation.</p>
#2097A-Guard Station Green Cabin	#2097-Beaverslide																	
#2144-Sage Creek Road (4 mile section)	#20972-Roberts Bench																	
#2073-Stephens Draw (2 mile section)	#2104-Tie Flats																	
#2073H	#2104A																	
#2085-Crooked Creek Road (1.24 mile section)	#2002																	
#2308-Pryor Mountain Road (0.84 mile section)	#2002A																	
#2308C	#2002A1																	
#230811																		
<p>The Burnt Timber Road (#2849) would be designated for motorized mixed use.</p>	<p>Burnt Timber Road would be designated for highway legal vehicles.</p>	<p>This route would be designated as mixed motorized use to provide consistency where the route connects to BLM routes.</p>																
<p>A 1.24 mile section of Crooked Creek Road (#2085) (see Alternative B-Modified map) would be designated for motorized mixed use.</p>	<p>The subject portion of Crooked Creek Road would be designated for highway legal vehicles.</p>	<p>This segment of Crooked Creek Road would be designated as mixed motorized use to provide a loop opportunity for unlicensed vehicles using the proposed #2096 motorized trail. Unlicensed vehicles would be able to travel south on Crooked Creek Road to BLM land where there would be multiple opportunities for loops.</p>																
<p>The Benbow Jeep Trail (#2415) would be designated for motorized mixed use.</p>	<p>Benbow Jeep Trail would be designated for highway legal vehicles.</p>	<p>In response to public comment, this route would be changed from a highway legal vehicle designation to mixed motorized use to provide an additional motorized recreation opportunity.</p>																
<p>A 2.2 mile section of Shriver Peak Road (#2088) west of Crater Ice Cave and east of its junction with 2095A would not be designated for public motorized use.</p>	<p>This portion of Shriver Peak Road would be designated for motorized use.</p>	<p>This action is proposed in response to public comment and concerns about cultural resources.</p>																

Table ES–2. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B-Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Administrative Use	Roads identified for administrative use are not designated for public motorized use to protect the public from hazardous situations, protect facilities and/or materials, or due to permit terms and conditions. Examples of these types of administrative routes include certain system roads within the Rock Creek Work Center, Red Lodge Ski Area, Lions Camp, and some areas with active mining. Appendix C includes all non-system roads that would be converted to system roads and identified for administrative use. Existing administrative use system roads area not proposed to be changed.	Same as Alternative A.	Same rationale as Alternative A. This alternative contains the largest number of administrative roads. This is because several roads that were not proposed to be designated for public use were identified as needed for administrative use.	Existing roads identified for administrative use.	Same as Alternative A.
Legal Access	The Motor Vehicle Route and Area Designation Guide states that designation for public motorized use should be avoided in instances where the Forest Service does not have legal access. This guidance was applied to all instances where the situation occurred in this alternative, with one notable exception. The Stillwater Plateau Trailhead, a Forest Service developed trailhead,	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A	System roads that the Forest Service does not have legal access to use will be included in this alternative, unlike the action alternatives. This is because not designating these system roads would constitute an action, which would be inconsistent within the context of this No Action Alternative.	The Motor Vehicle Route and Area Designation Guide states that designation for public motorized use should be avoided in instances where the Forest Service does not have legal access. This guidance was applied to all instances where the situation occurred in this alternative.

Table ES–2. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B-Modified (Preferred Alternative)
	<p>can only be accessed by crossing private land for which the Forest Service does not have a right-of-way to cross. The Forest Service has pursued a right-of-way, but the landowner has not been interested in granting an easement. However, the landowner has been willing to continue to allow public use of the existing road that accesses the trailhead. Given the circumstances, the District has determined that in this situation the Forest Service portions of the road accessing the trailhead should be designated so that the public may continue to access the trailhead.</p>				
<p>Pack and Saddle Stock Use</p>	<p>There would not be any new restrictions on pack and saddle stock use on system trails proposed in this alternative.</p> <p>Existing pack and saddle stock restrictions would not be changed.</p>	<p>Pack and saddle stock would be limited to day use only on the Lake Fork Trail (Trail 2), Lost Lake Trail (Trail 2A), Keyser Brown Trail (Trail 2C), and Lake Mary Trail (Trail 1A). Pack and saddle stock would be prohibited from using the Crow Lake Trail (Trail 13B). These changes are reflected in Appendix C.</p> <p>Existing pack and saddle stock restrictions would not be changed.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>	<p>The existing pack and saddle stock restrictions on the West Rosebud, Huckleberry, Basin Lake, and Glacier Lake trails are included in this alternative.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative A.</p>

Table ES–2. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B-Modified (Preferred Alternative)
<p>Season of Use Designations (See Appendix F)</p>	<p>Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong except for the following seasons of use. Existing season of use designations would not be changed.</p> <p>May 15 through September 30 season of use would be designated for currently gated campgrounds: Palisades, Cascade, Basin, Sheridan, Greenough Lake, Limber Pine, Woodbine, Pine Grove, Lower Pine Grove, Emerald, and Jimmy Joe.</p> <p>The following season of use designation would be implemented under this alternative to protect roadbeds when they tend to be particularly wet and to discourage visitors from driving around wet or muddy sections of roads.</p> <p>July 16 through March 31 season of use would be designated for Picket Pin – Iron Mountain and related spur roads (#2140 series). Maintains consistency with the Gallatin National Forest.</p>	<p>Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong except for the following seasons of use. Existing season of use designations would not be changed.</p> <p>May 15 through September 30 season of use would be designated for currently gated campgrounds: Palisades, Cascade, Basin, Sheridan, Greenough Lake, Limber Pine, Woodbine, Pine Grove, Lower Pine Grove, Emerald, and Jimmy Joe.</p> <p>The following seasons of use designations would be implemented under this alternative to protect roadbeds when they tend to be particularly wet and to discourage visitors from driving around wet or muddy sections of roads.</p> <p>July 16 through March 31 season of use would be designated for Picket Pin – Iron Mountain and related spur roads (#2140 series). Maintains consistency with the Gallatin National Forest.</p> <p>June 15 through April 15</p>	<p>Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong except for the following seasons of use. Existing season of use designations would not be changed.</p> <p>May 15 through September 30 season of use would be designated for currently gated campgrounds: Palisades, Cascade, Basin, Sheridan, Greenough Lake, Limber Pine, Woodbine, Pine Grove, Lower Pine Grove, Emerald, and Jimmy Joe.</p> <p>The following seasons of use designations would be implemented under this alternative to protect roadbeds when they tend to be particularly wet and to discourage visitors from driving around wet or muddy sections of roads.</p> <p>July 16 through March 31 season of use would be designated for Picket Pin – Iron Mountain and related spur roads (#2140 series). Maintains consistency with the Gallatin National Forest.</p> <p>June 15 through April 15</p>	<p>Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong except for the following documented existing seasons of use.</p> <p>April 15 through December 1 season of use designations include West Fork, Lake Fork, Basin Trailhead, Silver Run, Wild Bill Lake, and Robertson Draw areas of the Beartooth Unit.</p> <p>June 30 through September 1 season of use designation includes Mill Hollow Road #2085T in the Pryors Unit.</p> <p>September 1 through December 1 season of use is currently designated for pack and saddle stock use only on West Rosebud Trail #19, Huckleberry Trail #19A, and Basin Lake Trail #61.</p>	<p>Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong except for the following seasons of use. Existing season of use designations would not be changed.</p> <p>May 15 through September 30 season of use would be designated for currently gated campgrounds: Palisades, Cascade, Basin, Sheridan, Greenough Lake, Limber Pine, Woodbine, Pine Grove, Lower Pine Grove, Emerald, and Jimmy Joe.</p> <p>The following seasons of use designations would be implemented under this alternative to protect roadbeds when they tend to be wet from snowmelt and to discourage visitors from driving around snow banks.</p> <p>May 22 through April 15 season of use would be designated for higher elevation roads in the Pryor Unit with southern aspects. See the Map Package and Appendix C for more details.</p> <p>June 15 through April 15</p>

Table ES–2. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B-Modified (Preferred Alternative)
		<p>season of use would be designated for higher elevation roads on Big Pryor Mountain and on Big Ice Cave Road (Road # 2308) from the junction with the Beaverslide (Road # 2097) east to the forest boundary. See the Map Package and Appendix C for more details.</p> <p>June 1 through April 1 season of use would be designated on Red Lodge Creek Road (Road #2141) and Pole Road (Road #21416).</p> <p>April 15 through December 1 season of use designation consistent with season of use for West Fork of Rock Creek Road (Road #2071) would be implemented for non-system roads converted to system roads accessed by West Fork of Rock Creek Road.</p>	<p>season of use would be designated for higher elevations in the Pryor Mountains on portions of Red Pryor Divide Road #2091, Miller Trail #2496, and Stockman Trail #2850; and on Big Ice Cave Road (Road # 2308) from the junction with the Beaverslide (Road # 2097) east to the forest boundary. See the Map Package and Appendix C for more details.</p>		<p>season of use would be designated for higher elevation roads in the Pryor Unit with northern aspects. See the Map Package and Appendix C for more details.</p> <p>May 1 through March 1 season of use would be designated on Red Lodge Creek Road (Road #2141) and Pole Road (Road #21416).</p> <p>April 15 through December 1 season of use designation consistent with season of use for West Fork of Rock Creek Road (Road #2071) would be implemented for non-system roads converted to system roads accessed by West Fork of Rock Creek Road.</p>
Type of Vehicle Designations	System roads in the following areas would be converted to system motorized trails and designated for use by all motorized vehicles:	The majority of system roads south of Sage Creek Road and west of Crooked Creek Road would be converted to system motorized trails and designated for use by all	System roads would be designated for use by highway legal vehicles. Under this alternative, there would be only highway legal roads; no motorized trails.	System roads would be designated for use by highway legal vehicles.	The majority of system roads south of Sage Creek Road and west of Crooked Creek Road would be converted to system motorized trails and designated for use by all

Table ES–2. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B-Modified (Preferred Alternative)
	<p>Tie Flat/Stephens Draw/Mill Hollow. This is a popular dispersed camping area for families. These roads would be converted to provide several smaller loop opportunities that could be enjoyed by families.</p> <p>Big Pryor/Red Pryor. This area would be converted to provide motorized recreationists with a variety of experiences, challenging terrain, and loop opportunities.</p> <p>Benbow. This is a popular dispersed camping area for motorized recreationists. System roads that make a connection between dispersed camping areas and the Benbow Jeep Trail would be converted to allow recreationists, particularly families, to ride from camp to the jeep trail. The jeep trail would also be converted to allow all types of motorized vehicles.</p> <p>Iron Mountain. The upper portion of Picket Pin and all routes along Iron Mountain would allow all types of motorized vehicles.</p>	<p>motorized vehicles. In general, all other designated system roads in the Pryors and Beartooth units would be designated for use by highway legal vehicles.</p> <p>Lodgepole and Meyers Creek would be converted from motorized single track trails to non-motorized trails.</p> <p>Appendix C provides a complete list of all type of vehicle designations.</p>	<p>Appendix C provides a complete list of all type of vehicle designations.</p>		<p>OHVs.</p> <p>Lower Red Pryor/Crooked Creek, Punchbowl, Tie Flats area, and Beaverslide area would have mixed use.</p> <p>Lodgepole and Meyers Creek trails would remain motorized single track trails.</p> <p>Benbow. The jeep trail would be converted to allow all types of motorized vehicles.</p> <p>In general, all other designated system roads in the Pryors and Beartooth units would be designated for use by highway legal vehicles.</p> <p>Appendix C provides a complete list of all type of vehicle designations.</p>

Table ES–2. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B-Modified (Preferred Alternative)
	<p>In general, all other designated system roads would be designated for use by highway legal vehicles.</p> <p>Appendix C provides a complete list of all type of vehicle designations.</p>				
<p>Dispersed Vehicle Camping</p>	<p>Access for dispersed vehicle camping would be allowed within 300 feet of all designated system roads and motorized trails on the District. See Appendix D for further details regarding Dispersed Camping.</p>	<p>Under Alternative B, access to dispersed vehicle camping would be allowed within 300 feet of all designated system roads and motorized trails on the District, except along system road #2421 Main Fork of Rock Creek.</p> <p>Along the Main Fork Rock Creek road, the goal is to continue to provide dispersed vehicle camping while not allowing further dispersed site establishment. Current use has been evaluated and is generally acceptable. Water quality, cultural, and aesthetic resource concerns exist with expansion of dispersed vehicle camping site establishment and recurring use. Elements of Alternative B address these concerns.</p> <p>Along the Main Fork Rock Creek Road #2421, dispersed vehicle camping</p>	<p>Alternative C would not allow the use of motor vehicles within a specified distance of designated motorized routes solely for the purposes of dispersed vehicle camping. However, parking would be allowed within one vehicle length from the edge of system roads and motorized trails. See Appendix D for further details regarding Dispersed Camping.</p>	<p>Access to dispersed vehicle camping would be allowed within 300 feet of all designated system roads and motorized trails on the District. See Appendix D for further details regarding Dispersed Camping.</p>	<p>Under Alternative B-Modified, access to dispersed vehicle camping would be allowed within 300 feet of all designated system roads and motorized trails on the District, except along system road #2421 Main Fork of Rock Creek.</p> <p>Along the Main Fork Rock Creek road, the goal is to continue to provide dispersed vehicle camping while not allowing further dispersed site establishment. Current use has been evaluated and is generally acceptable. Water quality, cultural, and aesthetic resource concerns exist with expansion of dispersed vehicle camping site establishment and recurring use. Elements of Alternative B-Modified address these concerns.</p> <p>Along the Main Fork Rock Creek Road #2421, dispersed vehicle camping would be allowed on or</p>

Table ES–2. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B-Modified (Preferred Alternative)
		<p>would be allowed on or within a vehicle’s length from the edge of designated spurs off system road #2421.</p> <p>Six of about 30 existing dispersed camp areas along Main Fork of Rock Creek Road #2421 would not be open for public use due to water quality and cultural resource concerns under Alternative B. The location identifier in Appendix D, Table D-1 can be cross-referenced to its location in Figures D-1 through D-3.</p> <p>Also under Alternative B, access to dispersed vehicle camping along the West Fork Rock Creek Road #2071 would continue to be allowed within 300 feet of all designated system roads and motorized trails. However, per Forest Plan direction, there would be a 100 foot dispersed vehicle camping prohibition from the West Fork Rock Creek live streams.</p> <p>See Appendix D for further details regarding dispersed vehicle camping.</p>			<p>within a vehicle’s length from the edge of designated spurs off system road #2421.</p> <p>Six of about 30 existing dispersed camp areas along Main Fork of Rock Creek Road #2421 would not be open for public use due to water quality and cultural resource concerns under Alternative B-Modified. The location identifier in Appendix D, Table D-1 can be cross-referenced to its location in Figures D-1 through D-3.</p> <p>Also under Alternative B-Modified, access to dispersed vehicle camping along the West Fork Rock Creek Road #2071 would continue to be allowed within 300 feet of all designated system roads and motorized trails. However, per Forest Plan direction, there would be a 100 foot dispersed vehicle camping prohibition from the West Fork Rock Creek live streams.</p> <p>See Appendix D for further details regarding dispersed vehicle camping.</p>

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TableES-3. Summary of Miles² of Roads and Trails by Alternative

Route Designation			Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action	Alternative B Modified
National Forest System Roads	Designated for public motorized use	Pryor Unit	77	74	78	150	75
		Beartooth Unit	148	137	120	129	135
		District	225	211	198	279	210
	Administrative use only	Pryor Unit	6	13	27	1	13
		Beartooth Unit	36	38	38	28	40
		District	42	51	65	29	53
	Not designated	Pryor Unit	14	34	59	12	10
		Beartooth Unit	7	10	13	7	34
		District	21	44	72	19	44
Non-System Routes	Not converted to system roads or trails	Pryor Unit	2	26	33	37	27
		Beartooth Unit	17	30	43	54	30
		District	19	56	76	91	57
National Forest System Trails	Non-motorized use	Pryor Unit	2	2	2	2	2
		Beartooth Unit	277	284	286	271	271
		District	279	286	289	273	279
	Designated for public motorized use	Pryor Unit	100	51	0	0	50
		Beartooth Unit	18	2	0	8	8
		District	118	53	0	8	58

TableES-4. Summary of Miles of System Roads and Trails by Type of Public Use Designation by Alternative

Type of Use	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action	Modified Alternative B
Road Designation Type					
All types allowed (motorized mixed use)	28	27	0	0	52
Highway legal vehicles	197	185	198	279	158
Subtotal	225	212	198	279	210
Motorized Trail Designation Type					
All types allowed	110	50	0	0	49
Less than 50 inches only	2	2	0	2	2
Motorcycles only	6	0	0	6	6
Subtotal	118	52	0	8	57
Motorized - Total Miles	341	261	198	287	267
Non-Motorized Trail Designation Type					
All types allowed	91	98	96	88	88
Pedestrian/hiking use only	8	9	9	6	6
Pedestrian/hiking, and pack and saddle stock use only	177	177	183	177	176
Pedestrian/hiking and mechanized use only	3	3	0	3	3
Non-Motorized - Total Miles	279	287	288	274	273

² Comparison between tables may not be exact due to rounding error.

Table ES-5. Miles of System Roads and Trails Designated for Public Motorized Use by Proposed Season of Use Designation for each Alternative

Season of Use	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action	Modified Alternative B
Yearlong	310	167	148	269	177
April 15 – December 1 (Wildlife - Robertson Draw; Winter Recreation - Routes added off of West Fork of Rock Creek and Ingles Creek)	15	19	15	15	19
May 15 – March 8 (Spring Thaw - Red Lodge Creek)	0	0	0	0	3
May 15 – September 30 (Protection - Ten Gated Campgrounds)	7	7	7	0	7
May 22 – April 15 (Spring Thaw - Pryors High Elevation)	0	0	0	0	43
June 15 – April 15 (Spring Thaw- Pryors High Elevation)	0	60	19	0	15
June 15 – December 1 (Wildlife – Meyer/Lodgepole)	0	0	0	0	6
June 30 – September 1 (Timber Sale Mitigation - Mill Hollow)	0	0	0	3	0
July 16 – March 31 (Consistency with Gallatin NF)	12	12	7	0	0

Table ES-6. Miles of non-motorized system trails with pack and saddle stock day-use restrictions for each alternative.

Season of Use	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action	Modified Alternative B
Day Use – Pack and Saddle Stock	0	12	12	0	0

Designating system trails for motorized use does not require a motorized mixed use analysis. Trail characteristics, such as slower speeds than roads, generally mean that crash severity and crash frequency are lower than for roads. Although the District only has a limited number motorized trails at this time, nationally the Forest Service estimates that it has 47,000 miles of motorized trails (Holtrop, 2008)

It should be noted that designation of roads or trails for motor vehicle use by a particular class of vehicle under 36 CFR 212.51 should not be interpreted as encouraging or inviting use, or to imply that the road, trail, or area is passable, actively maintained, or safe for travel. Designation only indicates the types of vehicles that are permitted to be used on that route.

Montana State Law. The Forest Service defers to state laws in regard to operation of vehicles on roads and trails. State laws related to roads fall under: Montana Code Annotated, Title 61. Motor Vehicles. State laws related to trails fall under: Montana Code Annotated, Title 23 Parks, Recreation, Sports, and Gambling, Chapter 2 Recreation.

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The Forest would not deviate from State of Montana motor vehicle law by proposing motorized mixed use on National Forest System roads and motorized trails.

To operate a motor vehicle (highway-legal) on National Forest System roads, the vehicle must be registered with a valid license plate and the operator must possess a State drivers license and when operating a motorcycle must have a “motorcycle endorsement” on the licenses.

Montana State Law does provide exemptions for use of non-highway-legal (off-highway aka unlicensed) vehicles on National Forest System roads if the forest has designated and approved that road for such use (i.e. designated for motorized mixed use). The exemptions allow the operator of a non-highway-legal vehicle to be *under 16 years of age but at least 12 years of age* if at the time of driving the vehicle the operator has in their *possession a certificate* showing the successful completion of an off-highway vehicle safety education course approved by the State of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and is in the *physical presence of a person who possesses a drivers license*.

Montana State Law does not require that motor vehicles be licensed to operate on trails, but they are required to have an OHV sticker.

ES 8.6.2 Implementation

In order to implement this project, the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule requires the Forest to make a free Motor Vehicle Use Map available to the public. The Forest also expects to install signs on all designated routes, undertake an estimated two year education campaign regarding new travel management direction and rules, and patrolling. These activities, other than publishing the MVUM, may vary in extent subject to the availability of funding.

Until the Record of Decision (ROD) for this project is implemented, the current decisions for the existing network of system roads and trails remain in effect. The ROD and its implementation will supercede the existing network of motorized system roads and trails when the Motor Vehicle Use Map is published and associated orders are in place. The ROD will supercede the current decisions for the existing network of non-motorized system trails when the resulting forest orders are issued for the associated non-motorized system trails. The forest order associated with the 1987 Travel Plan will be rescinded. Over-snow vehicle use would be permitted consistent with 1986 Forest Plan direction and existing NEPA decisions for prohibitions; a forest order would be used to enforce these prohibitions.

ES 8.6.3 Enforcement

Public comment related to law enforcement issues focused on enforcing regulations, providing more law enforcement presence and providing the public with signing and education. These comments tended to concentrate on motorized activities on the forest, and were raised by both motorized and non-motorized recreationists. A number of comments highlighted impacts associated with the lack of enforcement, such as resource damage and diminished recreation experience for other forest visitors. Some comments suggested that there was a need for additional law enforcement personnel to handle the increase of motorized use on the forest.

In 2005, the Motorized Travel Rule changed the legal authority for regulating off-route travel of motor vehicles. The final rule modified regulations in 36 CFR 295 which historically governed the management of OHVs on National Forests. In addition, the rule changed the enforcement authority

for motor vehicle restrictions from 36 CFR 261 Subpart B: Special Orders to the Subpart A: General Prohibitions section, making motor vehicle violations in the future a strict liability infraction. This change relieves the Agency of the posting and signing requirements of 36 CFR 261 Subpart B and authorizes map notification to be the enforcement tool in the future. The decision mandates that Districts and administrative units complete a travel management review with public involvement to designate motorized roads, trails, and areas and produce Motor Vehicle Use Map that identifies these designations (36 CFR 212.56). Once this is completed, travel management restrictions may be enforced under Subpart A without being required to post and maintain prohibition signs in the field.

Upon publishing the MVUM for the selected alternative, the new 2005 Motorized Travel Rule regulations will become enforceable on the District (36 CFR 261.13). The MVUM would display those routes open to motorized travel by the public, along with the types of vehicles and seasons of use. The District intends to post route number signs on the open routes to correspond with numbers shown on the MVUM. These actions are expected to greatly enhance the ability to enforce travel management decisions. The regulatory requirements for posting prohibitions will no longer be applicable, and the problems associated with implementing and maintaining extensive prohibition posting will be eliminated. Hard-copy and electronic versions of the MVUM will be available to forest users and will identify those roads and trails available for motorized use by the public. This is expected to reduce confusion about where motorized vehicle use is legal. In addition, Law Enforcement Officers and Forest Protection Officers will have clear authority for issuing citations for violations of motorized travel management decisions.

Although new travel restrictions may be less complex, the changes would require a period of adjustment for Forest visitors. Inadvertent violation of new travel restrictions is expected initially, but is also expected to diminish over the first several years after implementation. Enforcement of new travel restrictions would require additional emphasis by the Custer National Forest, with assistance from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the public.

Having a clear, enforceable travel plan will facilitate being able to involve groups and individuals that have expressed interest in assisting the District with volunteer “patrols” to provide an additional presence in-the-field. Volunteers can provide District visitors with information about legal motorized use, avoiding activities that have adverse impacts on natural and cultural resources, and report violations when they are observed.

ES 8.6.4 Maintenance

Commenters indicated concerns that adding system roads and trails could increase the need for maintenance. The 2005 Motorized Travel Rule also includes a criterion related to maintenance needs that must be considered. This section is intended to address that criterion by considering the maintenance of motorized routes in this section.

Based on past funding levels, the Forest is unlikely to have sufficient funding to maintain to standard all of the routes necessary for the administration, utilization, and protection of the District for the foreseeable future. As a result, the Forest prioritizes maintenance work and routinely applies for additional/supplemental funding to increase the number of miles of road and trail maintenance completed. Road and trail maintenance funding can only be applied to system roads and trails. Maintenance does not occur on every mile of road or trail every year.

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ES 8.6.5 Administrative Exemptions

Exemptions to off road travel as described in 36 CFR 212.51(a) would be allowed. Exemptions include administrative activities such as law enforcement, fire, emergencies, military operations, noxious weed control, certain special use permit provisions, and other official business purposes. All such use would require specific authorization from the appropriate Line Officer, detailing when, where, who, and under what circumstances motorized travel would be allowed.

ES 8.6.6 Forest Plan Amendment

All action alternatives would involve deleting existing Forest Plan direction regarding site-specific route management (see Appendix B for details). This has been determined to be a minor amendment that will not require Regional Forester approval. Once the Record of Decision is issued, an amendment to the Forest Plan will be executed that reflects deletion of the language identified in Appendix B.

ES 8.6.7 Administrative Sites

System roads associated with administrative sites will not be designated for public motorized use, except those roads that provide access to visitor services.

ES 8.6.8 System Roads with Forest Service Maintenance Obligations

System roads that the FS has a legal obligation to maintain will not be removed from the system, but may or may not be designated for public motorized use.

ES 8.6.9 Roads Under Permit

In instances of special use permits for ingress/egress to private inholdings, a road will generally be designated for public motorized use when the Forest Service has road maintenance responsibilities. In instances of road use permits, a road may be closed to public use when the permit holder is assigned road maintenance responsibilities.

ES 8.6.10 No Legal Right-of-Way

Routes that the Forest Service has no legal right-of-way to access will not be designated for public motorized use.

ES 8.6.11 Season of Use Flexibility

There is a range of potential season of use designations; those proposed were selected based on protecting resource values at risk, which may vary by locale but include values such as soils, hydrology, and wildlife. If conditions warrant, there may be flexibility to extend or reduce the season.

ES 8.6.12 Designated Routes Required to be Part of the National Forest System

In accordance with the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule, only system routes can be designated for public motorized use. If motorized routes that are currently non-system are desired for motorized use, an

action is required to add them to National Forest System.

ES 8.6.13 Dispersed Vehicle Camping Authorized Only Authorized on National Forest System Lands

Under Alternatives that allow access for dispersed vehicle camping within 300 feet of a motorized route, access is only authorized on NFS lands, not on private, state, or other federal lands that may be within 300 feet of designated routes.

ES 9 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DROPPED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

Federal agencies are required by NEPA to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). Public comments received in response to the Proposed Action provided suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. Some of these alternatives may have been outside the scope of travel management, duplicative of the alternatives considered in detail, incorporated into alternatives considered in detail, determined to be components that would cause unnecessary environmental harm, or area already addressed by law, regulation or policy. Therefore, a number of alternatives were considered, but dismissed from detailed consideration. These included land zoning for quiet areas, route construction, game retrieval season of use on Punchbowl Road, converting all non-wilderness trails to include motorcycle use, use of the Custer Roads Analysis for alternative development, converting all roads to Mixed Motorized Use Roads or Trails Open to All Vehicles, not designating routes in areas with high and moderate soil hazards, and specific alternatives proposed by organizations. Rationale for dismissal is found in Chapter 2.

ES 10 MONITORING

Monitoring and evaluation could be used to determine if the physical, biological, social, and economic effects of implementing any alternative occur as predicted. Monitoring may be conducted by sampling a range of projects from the entire Beartooth Ranger District as outlined in the Forest Plan monitoring section. The following table outlines Forest Plan criteria for evaluating the effects of implementation.

Table ES-7. Forest Plan Monitoring Items Relevant for Travel Management

Monitoring Item	Data Source	Monitoring Objective	Variability Which Would Initiate Further Evaluation	Corrective Measures
Off-road-vehicle use and damage and Travel Plan effectiveness. (A-3).	Travel Plan violation and incident reports, number of variances granted.	To determine compliance with travel plan direction (and, therefore, effectiveness in achieving resource protection objectives). To assist in determination of effectiveness of restriction methods, public understanding of travel plan direction.	Conflicts with Forest Management Area goals.	Review situation for change in implementation techniques such as signing, barriers, public contacts, etc.

ES 11 FOREST SERVICE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Forest Service preferred alternative is Alternative B Modified. Alternative B Modified is the “preferred” alternative based on Responsible Official and interdisciplinary team deliberations. This alternative provides the road system necessary for the administration, utilization, and administration of the District. It also appears to respond best to the significant issue of recreation preferences by providing a compromise between motorized and non-motorized recreation preferences, while reducing the overall environmental and cultural resource impacts of system roads and trails.

The Responsible Official may select any combination of travel management actions as presented and analyzed within this document.

ES 12 OVERVIEW OF CHANGES FROM THE DRAFT TO THE FINAL EIS

ES 12.1 CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND NEED, AND PROPOSED ACTION

- Additional history related to this process has been added to the Background section.
- The “Motorized Recreation Opportunities and Impacts” has been renamed “Manage Recreation Use” and the section has been re-written to more accurately convey the original concept for this section. This section was intended to convey the need to manage recreational use related to travel management to reduce impacts that result from not providing management of these activities.
- The Pack and Saddle Stock portion of the Purpose and Need section has been removed in response to public comments. Rationale for this change is provided in the Purpose and Need section.
- The section on “Decisions Outside the Scope of this Analysis” has been removed and placed in Appendix G.
- The general description of the proposed action has been clarified.
- The Inventoried Roadless Area section has been moved to Chapter 3 and expanded in response to public comments.
- Consolidated implementation information originally in the Proposed Action section of this chapter with other implementation information found in DEIS and placed it in the Elements Common to All Alternatives section of Chapter 2.

ES 12.2 CHAPTER 2: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES

- Alternative B Modified has been added to the range of alternatives considered. Alternative B Modified was developed in response to public comments regarding a variety of site-specific concerns.
- Additional details about the collaborative process have been provided, as well as the addition of information related to the public comment period for the DEIS.
- The issues section has been re-formatted to aid in identifying the significant issues and the indicators used to display differences between effects of the alternatives have been added.
- Additional alternatives considered but dropped from further analysis have been incorporated.
- Rationale for selection of the Forest Service Preferred Alternative has been added in response to public comment.
- The Safety, Implementation, Maintenance, and Enforcement sections in Chapter 3 of the DEIS have been revised and moved to the Elements Common to All Alternatives section of this

chapter. The Forest Service determined that these elements were not significant issues and represented managerial rather than environmental concerns. Consequently, they were revised and moved to this chapter.

ES 12.3 CHAPTER 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

ES 12.3.1 Recreation

- In response to public comment, the analysis identifies effects by land unit and the District, wherever possible.
- The analysis has been more sharply focused on the indicators related to recreation issues. This has allowed some of the affected environment text to be eliminated or moved to the project record, as well as a more concise presentation in the environmental consequences section.

ES 12.3.2 Human Environment

- There was no change regarding the human environment from the DEIS to the FEIS.

ES 12.3.3 Noise

- Literature review was updated.
- Analysis information is provided for the Pryor and Beartooth Units, and the District as a whole. Discussion of effects related to the season of use related to noise disturbance has been added in response to public comments.

ES 12.3.4 Archeological Resources

- Inventory conducted on non-system roads proposed for designation as system roads. This new information was included and analyzed for all alternatives.
- Addition of a Site Identification and Monitoring Strategy (SIS) for travel management to the MTPA. The SIS will be followed in compliance with the NHPA and ARPA.

ES 12.3.5 Traditional Cultural Properties

- Continued consultation with affected tribes
- In Alternative B Modified, the addition of protective measures for the Big Pryor cultural landscape.

ES 12.3.6 Water Quality

- Changes to the water quality assessment were a result of public comments that requested clarification or change in the analysis. Narratives under Route Risk Analysis, TMDLs, and Effects Common to All Action Alternatives were expanded to meet these requests.
- The Route Risk Analysis was revised by eliminating route segments that extended significantly off forest and adjusting the risk category for six routes. Although the number of routes did not change substantially, the total miles did.

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- The effects discussion also changed to more closely follow the purpose and need to identify opportunities to take action to minimize or eliminate water quality impacts on some routes or sites through future decisions, rather than incorporate those opportunities into the Record of Decision for this FEIS.

ES 12.3.7 Fisheries and Aquatics

- With respect to fisheries and aquatics, few changes occurred between the Draft and Final EIS. However, among these few changes were some that provide significant additional protections for aquatic habitats and biota. The scope of the Beartooth Travel Management EIS is limited to the designation of system roads and trails. Additional protection measures that potentially improve aquatic habitat and species are included in Alternative B Modified. Additionally, Appendix E includes opportunities to reduce impacts to water quality, aquatic habitat and biota, where there are: 1) site specific impacts from existing routes not associated with the proposed action, and 2) proposed actions with potential to improve conditions but do not eliminate impacts. However, maintenance and decommissioning proposals will require future and separate NEPA decisions
- Specific changes to the fisheries and aquatics assessment were a result of public comments that requested clarification or change in the analysis. Narratives and tables under the Environmental Consequences section were expanded to meet these requests. Changes to the Route Risk Analysis are discussed in the Water Quality Section.

ES 12.3.8 Wildlife

- Open motorized route density figures for Gray Wolf and Bighorn Sheep analyses were revised to exclude the wilderness area acreage, thus becoming consistent with the Elk and General Wildlife analyses. Since motorized routes are concentrated along the Beartooth Face and in the Pryor Mountains, including the wilderness acres portrayed artificially low route densities.
- The percent of elk secure habitat in the Pryor Unit, the acres of bighorn sheep escape terrain in the Beartooth and Pryor Units, and the acres of bighorn sheep winter range on the Beartooth Unit were corrected to account for GIS process errors that occurred during analysis for the Draft EIS.
- Effects determinations for Canada Lynx, Gray Wolf and Grizzly Bear (and likewise Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Northern Goshawk) were revised because, although the Preferred Alternative meets the standards and guidelines for these species, human activity on designated routes may cause temporary disturbance of individual animals.
- Most general life history information was removed for the Final EIS and is available in the wildlife report in the project file.

ES 12.3.9 Soils

- In response to public comment, the erosion hazard rating for the existing condition is broken out for the Beartooth and Pryor Mountains areas.
- The Soil Survey of Carbon County (USDA SCS, 1975) was used to describe the landforms and determine erosion hazard in the Pryor Mountains. The draft Terrestrial Ecological Unit Inventory (TEUI) currently under way (data on file in the Supervisor's Office, Billings, MT) was used to supplement the LTAs and help describe the landforms and ratings in the Beartooth Mountains, allowing all roads and trails to be included in the erosion hazard rating analysis.

- The county soil survey and draft TEUI were used to analyze the effects of the Alternatives.
- The discussion on landforms was removed from the FEIS, though erosion hazard rating information remains.
- A section was added on Soil Crusts (see specialist report in the project file) in response to public comment.

ES 12.3.10 Vegetation

- *Vegetation Section.* In response to public comment, effects to vegetation below 8000' were incorporated and analysis results were addressed by land unit (Pryor and Beartooth Units) and as a total District unit.
- *Weed Section.* Some statements were clarified relative to type of use versus amount of use.
- *Sensitive Plant Section.* Analysis results were addressed by land unit (Pryor and Beartooth Units) and as a total District unit in response to public comment.

ES 12.3.11 Inventoried Roadless Areas

- This section on Inventoried Roadless Areas was added in response to public comment related to the need to analyze effects to this resource.

ES 12.3.12 Economics

- There were no changes in this section between Draft and Final EIS.

ES 13 COMPARISON OF EFFECTS

The following table provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives. Detail effects analysis for each Alternative is found in Chapter 3 of the FEIS.

ES 14 CONCLUSIONS

ES 14.1 RECREATION

ES 14.1.1 Recreation

Alternative A best responds to concerns related to opportunities for motorized recreation, including providing the most miles of system road and trails, most acres in motorized ROS settings, and most loop opportunities on the District and in the Pryor Unit. There would be 126,607 acres in motorized ROS settings and 341 miles of motorized routes on the District, with 55,384 acres in motorized ROS settings and 177 miles of motorized routes in the Pryor Unit.

The remaining alternatives respond to this issue to lesser and varying degrees than Alternative A. Considering the various factors discussed in the above analysis, the remaining alternatives *generally* respond to this indicator in the following order from most to least responsive (District; Pryor Unit):

Table ES-8. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Recreation						
Motorized Recreation Opportunity						
Acres of Rural ROS	Pryor Unit	0	0	0	0	0
	Beartooth Unit	12,676	12,676	12,676	12,676	12,205
	District	12,676	12,676	12,676	12,676	12,205
Acres of Roaded Natural ROS	Pryor Unit	19,399	25,739	41,621	44,055	25,875
	Beartooth Unit	51,832	51,830	51,314	51,830	52,307
	District	71,231	77,569	92,935	95,885	78,182
Acres of Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS	Pryor Unit	35,985	23,380	0	0	22,439
	Beartooth Unit	6,715	1,848	1,848	6,715	6,072
	District	42,700	25,228	1,848	6,715	28,511
Miles of motorized roads and trails	Pryor Unit	177	122	78	149	124
	Beartooth Unit	165	139	120	138	143
	District	341	261	198	287	267
Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity						
Acres of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS	Pryor Unit	22,584	28,849	36,347	33,913	29,654
	Beartooth Unit	127,281	132,150	132,666	127,283	127,920
	District	149,865	160,999	169,013	161,196	157,574
Acres of Primitive ROS	Pryor Unit	0	0	0	0	0
	Beartooth Unit	327,121	327,121	327,121	327,121	327,121
	District	327,121	327,121	327,121	327,121	327,121
Miles of non-motorized trails	Pryor Unit	2	2	2	1	2
	Beartooth Unit	274	285	284	271	271
	District	276	287	286	272	273
Opportunity for Off-Highway Vehicle Operation						
Miles of Mixed Use System Roads		28	27	0	0	52
Miles of Motorized System Trails		118	52	0	8	57
Total Miles available for Off-Highway Vehicle Operation		146	79	0	8	109
Noise						
Acres in motorized ROS settings (Percent of land unit in motorized ROS settings)	Pryor Unit	55,384 (71%)	49,119 (63%)	41,421 (53%)	44,055 (56%)	48,314 (62%)
	Beartooth Unit	71,233 (14%)	66,354 (13%)	66,038 (13%)	71,222 (14%)	70,584 (13%)
	District	126,607 (21%)	115,473 (19%)	107,459 (18%)	115,277 (19%)	118,898 (20%)
Acres in non-motorized ROS settings	Pryor Unit	22,584 (29%)	28,849 (37%)	36,347 (47%)	33,913 (43%)	29,654 (38%)

Table ES-8. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
(Percent of land unit in non-motorized ROS settings)	Beartooth Unit	458,416 (87%)	459,272 (87%)	495,515 (87%)	454,404 (87%)	455,041 (94%)
	District	481,000 (79%)	488,121 (81%)	495,862 (82%)	488,317 (81%)	484,695 (80%)
Cultural Resources						
Number of Sites potentially affected (directly and indirectly)	Pryor Unit	16	7	0	19	7
	Beartooth Unit	6	2	1	7	3
	District	22	9	1	26	10
Number of Cultural Landscapes potentially affected	Pryor Unit	2	1	2	2	0
	Beartooth Unit	0	0	0	0	0
	District	2	1	2	2	0
Number of Traditional Cultural Properties potentially affected within the project area.	Pryor Unit	17	12	12	14	5
	Beartooth Unit	30	23	6	25	23
	District	47	35	18	39	28
Water Quality, Fisheries, and Aquatics						
Miles of actions that reduce risks on moderate and high risk routes within the project area		8.5	54.6	51.9	0	43.3
Miles of actions that increase risks on moderate and high risk routes within the project area		5.8	4.2	4.0	0	4.1
Sensitive Aquatic Species						
Number of Species with No Impact		2	2	2	2	3
Number of Species with potential to effect individuals or Habitat but will not Likely Contribute to a trend towards Federal Listing or Loss of Viability to the Population or Species		1	1	1	1	0
Number of Species likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability		0	0	0	0	0
Aquatic Species of Concern						
Number of Species with No Impact		0	0	0	0	1
Number of Species with potential to effect individuals or Habitat but will not Likely Contribute to a trend towards Federal Listing or Loss of Viability to the Population or Species		1	1	1	1	0
Wildlife						
Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Species						
Number of species with No Jeopardy		1	1	1	1	1
Number of species with potential to effect, but not likely to adversely affect.		1	1	1	1	1

Table ES-8. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)	
Number of species with potential to effect, and likely to adversely affect	0	0	0	0	0	
Sensitive Wildlife Species						
Number of Species with Beneficial Impact	0	5	0	0	5	
Number of Species with No Impact	14	15	15	14	15	
Number of Species with potential to effect individuals or Habitat but will not Likely Contribute to a trend towards Federal Listing or Loss of Viability to the Population or Species	9	3	8 ³	9	3	
Number of Species likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability	0	0	0	0	0	
Management Indicator Species						
Number of Species with Positive Effects	0	0	2	0	0	
Number of Species with Neutral Effects	16	16	14	16	16	
Number of Species with Negative Effects	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Species of Concern						
Number of Species with No effect	3	3	3	3	3	
Canada Lynx						
Motorized Route Density within Lynx Analysis Unit (miles per square mile)	Pryor Unit	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.5
	Beartooth Unit	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
	District	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
Gray Wolf						
Motorized Route Density change from No Action (miles per square mile)	Pryor Unit	+ 0.3	- 0.1	- 0.35	0	- 0.1
	Beartooth Unit	+ 0.09	+ 0.07	- 0.05	0	+ 0.06
	District	+ 0.15	- 0.01	- 0.13	0	+ 0.02
Grizzly Bear						
Percent secure habitat available outside the primary conservation area	Suitable	91%	92%	92%	92%	92%
	Unsuitable	52%	59%	64%	57%	58%
	Suitable + Unsuitable	79%	82%	84%	81%	82%
Wolverine						
Motorized Route Density - no habitat in the Pryor Unit	Beartooth Unit	Low (<0.7 miles per square mile)				

³ Although Alternative C has fewer motorized routes than the other alternatives, it does not provide the same level of protection to some sensitive species due to lower amount of area receiving seasonal restrictions. Therefore, there is potential to effect individuals or Habitat but will not Likely Contribute to a trend towards Federal Listing or Loss of Viability to the Population or Species on more sensitive species in Alternative C than in Alternatives B or B Modified.

Table ES-8. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Acres of Refugia - no habitat in the Pryor Unit (Acres)	Beartooth Unit	346,300	389,600	389,600	346,300	371,155
Elk						
Motorized Route Density (miles per square mile)	Pryor Unit	1.49	1.16	0.69	1.44	1.27
	Beartooth Unit	0.47	0.41	0.37	0.44	0.39
Percent secure habitat within elk habitat	Pryor Unit	22%	25%	37%	23%	26%
	Beartooth Unit	65%	68%	69%	64%	66%
Big Horn Sheep						
Acres of Escape Terrain	Pryor Unit	3,920	4,926	6,138	4,388	5,129
	Beartooth Unit	5,543	5,904	5,970	5,612	5,809
Acres of winter range within and outside motorized route buffer within bighorn sheep habitat on the District.	Within buffer	8,373	8,191	8,161	7,966	8,316
	Outside buffer	10,076	10,258	10,288	10,483	10,129
General Wildlife						
Percent of Land Unit that is core wildlife habitat (base on motorized routes)	Pryor Unit	16%	25%	35%	22%	27%
	Beartooth Unit	82%	83%	83%	82%	82%
Percent of Land Unit that is core wildlife habitat (based on motorized & non-motorized routes)	Pryor Unit	16%	25%	35%	22%	27%
	Beartooth Unit	56%	57%	57%	57%	57%
Soils						
High/Very High Erosion Hazard Rating						
Miles of Motorized Routes designated for public use	Pryor Unit	81	57	31	67	58
	Beartooth Unit	29	23	19	27	25
	District	111	80	50	94	84
Miles of Non-motorized Routes designated for public use.	Pryor Unit	1	2	2	1	2
	Beartooth Unit	72	76	76	72	72
	District	73	78	77	73	74
Medium Erosion Hazard Rating						
Miles of Motorized Routes designated for public use.	Pryor Unit	19	9	8	13	10
	Beartooth Unit	35	23	19	26	26
	District	54	32	27	40	36
Miles of Non-motorized Routes designated for public use.	Pryor Unit	0	0	0	0	0
	Beartooth Unit	78	82	82	75	78
	District	78	82	82	75	78

Table ES-8. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Vegetation						
High Risk Areas - Motorized Routes						
Acres Potential Frequent Use Areas (% of High Risk Area)	Pryor Unit	221 (2%)	202 (2%)	52 (<1%)	217 (2%)	173 (2%)
	Beartooth Unit	21 (<1%)	20 (<1%)	2 (<1%)	11 (<1%)	22 (<1%)
	District	195 (<1%)	218 (<1%)	102 (<1%)	228 (<1%)	195 (<1%)
Acres Potential Infrequent Use Areas (% of High Risk Area)	Pryor Unit	1851 (16%)	1481 (13%)	291 (3%)	1581 (14%)	1497 (13%)
	Beartooth Unit	1442 (1%)	1411 (1%)	237 (<1%)	1256 (1%)	1685 (1%)
	District	3293 (2%)	2892 (1%)	528 (<1%)	2837 (1%)	3570 (2%)
Miles in High Risk Area	Pryor Unit	29	23	21	25	20
	Beartooth Unit	23	21	17	17	22
	District	52	44	38	42	42
High Risk Areas - Non-Motorized Routes						
Acres Potential Frequent Use Areas (% of High Risk Area)	Pryor Unit	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Beartooth Unit	42 (<1%)	44 (<1%)	44 (<1%)	44 (<1%)	42 (<1%)
	District	42 (<1%)	44 (<1%)	44 (<1%)	44 (<1%)	42 (<1%)
Miles through High Risk Area	Pryor Unit	1	1	1	1	1
	Beartooth Unit	109	109	109	109	107
	District	110	110	110	110	108
Weeds Susceptibility						
Weed Susceptible Acres within designated road corridor		15,290	11,029	2,211	13,087	11,097
Weed Infestation						
Total Infested Acres within Motorized Route potentially affected corridor		254	236	218	277	236
Sensitive Plants						
Number of Species with No Impact		9	9	9	9	9
Number of Species with potential to effect individuals or Habitat but will not Likely Contribute to a trend towards Federal Listing or Loss of Viability to the Population or Species		3	3	3	3	3
Number of Species likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability		0	0	0	0	0
Inventoried Roadless Areas						
Miles of non-system routes within inventoried roadless area proposed to be converted to system routes.		1.8	0.6	0.5	0	0.6
Miles of system routes within inventoried roadless areas.		13.6	9.4	9.4	13.6	12.6

Table ES-8. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Economics					
Estimated economic contribution of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities on the District to local and regional economies.	There is no appreciable difference under all alternatives.				

The following table provides a summary of changes in effects for each action alternative *compared to the no action alternative*. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives. Detailed effects analyses for each Alternative are found in Chapter 3 of the FEIS.

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Recreation					
Motorized Recreation Opportunity					
Change in acreage of motorized opportunities within Rural settings	Pryor	No Change			
	Beartooth	No Change			Reduced by 471 Acres
	District	No Change			Reduced by 471 Acres
Change in acreage of motorized opportunities within Roaded Natural settings	Pryor	Reduced by 24,656 Acres	Reduced by 18,316 Acres	Reduced by 2,434 Acres	Reduced by 18,180 Acres
	Beartooth	Increased by 2 Acres	No Change	Reduced by 516 Acres	Increased by 477 Acres
	District	Reduced by 24,654 Acres	Reduced by 18,316 Acres	Reduced by 2,950 Acres	Reduced by 17,703 Acres
Change in acreage of motorized opportunities within Semi-Primitive Motorized settings	Pryor	Increased by 35,985 Acres	Increased by 23,380 Acres	No Change	Increased by 22,439 Ac
	Beartooth	No Change	Reduced by 4,867 Acres	Reduced by 4,867 Acres	Reduced by 643 Acres
	District	Increased by 35,985 Acres	Increased by 18,513 Acres	Reduced by 4,867 Acres	Increased by 21,796 Acres
Change in mileage of motorized road and trail opportunities (% change from No Action)	Pryor	Increased by 28 Miles	Reduced by 27 Miles	Reduced by 71 Miles	Reduced by 25 Miles
	Beartooth	Increased by 27 Miles	Increased by 1 Miles	Reduced by 18 Miles	Increased by 5 Miles
	District	Motorized Recreation Opportunities Increased by 54 Miles (Motorized Opportunities increased by 19%)	Motorized Recreation Opportunities Reduced by 26 Miles (Motorized Opportunities reduced by 9%)	Motorized Recreation Opportunities Reduced by 89 Miles (Motorized Opportunities reduced by 31%)	Motorized Recreation Opportunities Reduced by 20 Miles (Motorized Opportunities reduced by 7%)
Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity					
Non-motorized	Pryor	Reduced by 11329 Acres	Reduced by 5064 Acres	Increased by 2434 Acres	Reduced by 4259 Acres

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
opportunities increased or reduced in Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized settings in Acres	Beartooth	Reduced by 2 Acres	Increased by 4867 Acres	Increased by 5383 Acres	Increased by 637 Acres
	District	Reduced by 11331 Acres	Reduced by 197 Acres	Increased by 7817 Acres	Reduced by 3622 Acres
Non-motorized opportunities increased or reduced in Primitive settings in Acres	Pryor	No Change			
	Beartooth	No Change			
	District	No Change			
Change in mileage of non-motorized trail opportunities (% change from No Action)	Pryor	Increased by 1 Mile	Increased by 1 Mile	Increased by 1 Mile	Increased by 1 Mile
	Beartooth	Increased by 3 Miles	Increased by 14 Miles	Increased by 13 Miles	No Change
	District	Non-motorized Recreation Opportunities increased by 4 Miles (1%)	Non-motorized Recreation Opportunities increased by 15 Miles (6%)	Non-motorized Recreation Opportunities increased by 14 Miles (5%)	Non-motorized Recreation Opportunities increased by 1 Mile (0%)
Opportunity for Off-Highway Vehicle Operation					
Change in mileage of Mixed Use System Road opportunities		Increased 28 Miles	Increased 27 Miles	No Change	Increased 52 Miles
Change in mileage of Motorized System Trail opportunities		Increased 110 Miles	Increased 44 Miles	Reduced 8 Miles	Increased 49 Miles
Change in mileage available for Off-Highway Vehicle operation opportunities		Increased 138 Miles	Increased 71 Miles	Reduced 8 Miles	Increased 101 Miles
Noise					
Change in acreage of motorized settings where noise might be encountered	Pryor	Motorized settings and associated Noise increased by 138 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise increased by 71 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise reduced by 8 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise increased by 101 Acres
	Beartooth	Motorized settings and associated Noise increased by 11 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise reduced by 4,868 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise reduced by 5,184 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise reduced by 638 Acres
	District	Motorized settings and associated Noise increased by 11,330 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise increased by 196 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise reduced by 7,818 Acres	Motorized settings and associated Noise increased by 3621 Acres
Change in acreage of Quiet settings	Pryor	Quiet settings reduced by 11,329 Acres	Quiet settings reduced by 5,064 Acres	Quiet settings increased by 2434 Acres	Quiet settings reduced by 4,259 Acres
	Beartooth	Quiet settings increased by 4,012 Acres	Quiet settings increased by 4,868 Acres	Quiet settings increased by 41,111 Acres	Quiet settings increased by 637 Acres

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
	District	Quiet settings reduced by 7,317 Acres	Quiet settings reduced by 196 Acres	Quiet settings increased by 7545 Acres	Quiet settings reduced by 3,622 Acres
Cultural Resources					
Change in number of Sites potentially affected (% change from No Action)	Pryor	3 fewer sites potentially affected (16%)	12 fewer sites potentially affected (63%)	19 fewer sites potentially affected (100%)	12 fewer sites potentially affected (63%)
	Beartooth	1 fewer sites potentially affected (14%)	5 fewer sites potentially affected (71%)	6 fewer sites potentially affected (86%)	4 fewer sites potentially affected (57%)
	District	4 fewer sites potentially affected (15%)	17 fewer sites potentially affected (65%)	25 fewer sites potentially affected (96%)	16 fewer sites potentially affected (62%)
Change in number of Cultural Landscapes potentially affected (% change from No Action)	Pryor	No Change	1 less cultural landscape potentially affected (50%)	No Change	2 fewer cultural landscapes potentially affected (100%)
	Beartooth	No Change			
	District	No Change	1 less site potentially affected (50%)	No Change	2 fewer sites potentially affected (100%)
Change in number of Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) potentially affected (% change from No Action)	Pryor	3 additional TCPs potentially affected (21%)	2 fewer TCPs potentially affected (14%)	2 fewer TCPs potentially affected (14%)	9 fewer TCPs potentially affected (64%)
	Beartooth	5 additional TCPs potentially affected (20%)	2 fewer TCPs potentially affected (8%)	19 fewer TCPs potentially affected (76%)	2 fewer TCPs potentially affected (8%)
	District	8 additional TCPs potentially affected (21%)	4 fewer TCPs potentially affected (10%)	21 fewer TCPs potentially affected (54%)	11 fewer TCPs potentially affected (28%)
Water Quality, Fisheries, and Aquatics					
Water Quality					
Miles of actions that reduce risks on moderate and high risk routes (by changing routes to administrative use, not designating existing system routes, and seasonal restrictions during spring thaw)		8.5 Miles of Actions reducing risks	54.6 Miles of Actions reducing risks	51.9 Miles of Actions reducing risks	43.3 Miles of Actions reducing risks
Miles of actions that increase risks on moderate and high risk routes (by adding non-system routes)		5.8 Miles of Actions increasing risks	4.2 Miles of Actions increasing risks	4 Miles of Actions increasing risks	4.1 Miles of Actions increasing risks
Sensitive Aquatic Species					
Changes from No Action		No Change; May Impact 1 species and No Impacts on 2 species			Moves Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout from May Impact to No Impact
		Actions will not likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability for any of the 3 species analyzed			

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Aquatic Species of Interest					
Changes from No Action	No Change; Potential to Effect Species of Interest				Moves Wild Trout from Potential to Effect to No Effect
	Actions are not likely to adversely affect the one species analyzed				
Wildlife					
Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Species					
Number of species with potential to effect, and likely to adversely affect	No Change; Actions are not likely to adversely affect any of the 2 species analyzed				
Sensitive Wildlife Species					
Changes from No Action	No Change	Five species move from May Impact to Beneficial Impact category primarily due to protections offered during seasonal restrictions; one species moves from May Impact to No Impact category	One species moves from May Impact to No Impact category	Five species move from May Impact to Beneficial impact category primarily due to protections offered during seasonal restrictions; one species moves from May Impact to No Impact category	
	Actions will not likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability for any of the 23 species analyzed				
Management Indicator Species					
Changes from No Action	No Change		2 Species moves from May Effect to No Effect	No Change	
	Actions are not likely to have negative effects to any of the 16 species analyzed.				
Other Species of Interest					
Number of Species with No effect	Actions are not likely to adversely affect any of the 3 species analyzed				
Canada Lynx					
Reduction or increase in risks associated with route density (i.e. displacement in denning habitat during the summer) in miles / square miles compared to	Pryor	Risk associated with density slightly increases by 0.1 mi/sq mi (17% higher density but within guidelines)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.1 mi /sq mi (17% improvement)	Risk associated with density decreases by 0.3 mi /sq mi (50% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.1 mi /sq mi (17% improvement)
	Beartooth	No Change			

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
No Action (% change from No Action)	District	No Change	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.1 mi /sq mi (33% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.1 mi /sq mi (33% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.1 mi /sq mi (33% improvement)
All alternatives are within the conservation strategy’s motorized route density guidelines (maximum of 2 miles per square mile).					
Gray Wolf					
Reduction or increase in risks associated with route density (i.e. potential for illegal killing or displacement) in miles / square miles compared to No Action (% change from No Action)	Pryor	Risk associated with density increases by 0.3 mi/sq mi (25% higher density)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.1 mi/sq mi (8% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.35 mi/sq mi (29% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.1 mi/sq mi (10% higher density)
	Beartooth	Risk associated with density slightly increases by 0.09 mi/sq mi (16% higher density)	Risk associated with density slightly increases by 0.07 mi/sq mi (13% higher density)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.05 mi/sq mi (9% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly increases by 0.06 (11% higher density)
	District	Risk associated with density slightly increases by 0.15 mi/sq mi (15% higher density)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.01 mi/sq mi (1% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly decreases by 0.13 mi/sq mi (13% improvement)	Risk associated with density slightly increases 0.02 mi/sq mi (2% higher density)
Grizzly Bear					
Percent change from No Action in the availability of secure habitat outside the Primary Conservation Area	Suitable	Availability of secure habitat is 1% lower	No Change		
	Unsuitable	Availability of secure habitat is 9% lower	Availability of secure habitat is 4% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 12% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 2% higher
	Suitable and Unsuitable	Availability of secure habitat is 2% lower	Availability of secure habitat is 1% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 4% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 1% higher
Wolverine					
Risks associated with motorized route density (i.e. displacement of wolverine or den sites) compared to No Action - no habitat in the Pryor Unit	Beartooth	All alternatives have low risk associated with low motorized route density (<0.7 miles per square mile)			

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Percent change in availability of Refugia compared to No Action (Acres) - no habitat in the Pryor Unit	Beartooth	No Change	Availability of Refugia is 13% higher (43,300 Acres)	Availability of Refugia is 13% higher (43,300 Acres)	Availability of Refugia is 7% higher (24,755 Acres)
Elk					
Risks associated with motorized route density (i.e. displacement, excessive mortality during hunting season, etc.) compared to No Action	Pryor	Risk associated with density increases by 3%	Risk associated with density decreases by 19%	Risk associated with density decreases by 52%	Risk associated with density decreases by 12%
	Beartooth	Risk associated with density increases by 7%	Risk associated with density decreases by 7%	Risk associated with density decreases by 16%	Risk associated with density decreases by 11%
Percent change from No Action in the availability of Secure Habitat	Pryor	Availability of secure habitat is 4% lower	Availability of secure habitat is 9% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 61% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 13% higher
	Beartooth	Availability of secure habitat is 2% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 6% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 8% higher	Availability of secure habitat is 3% higher
Big Horn Sheep					
Percent change in availability of Escape Terrain compared to No Action (Acres)	Pryor	Availability of Escape Terrain is 11% lower (468 Acres)	Availability of Escape Terrain is 12% higher (538 Acres)	Availability of Escape Terrain is 40% higher (1750 Acres)	Availability of Escape Terrain is 17% higher (741 Acres)
	Beartooth	Availability of Escape Terrain is 1% lower (69 Acres)	Availability of Escape Terrain is 5% higher (292 Acres)	Availability of Escape Terrain is 6% higher (358 Acres)	Availability of Escape Terrain is 4% higher (197 Acres)
Percent change in availability of Winter Range within and outside motorized route buffer compared to No Action (Acres)	Beartooth (Within buffer)	Availability of Winter Range is 5% higher (407 Acres)	Availability of Winter Range is 3% higher (225 Acres)	Availability of Winter Range is 2% higher (195 Acres)	Availability of Winter Range is 4% higher (350 Acres)
	Beartooth (Outside buffer)	Availability of Winter Range is 4% lower (407 Acres)	Availability of Winter Range is 2% lower (225 Acres)	Availability of Winter Range is 2% lower (40957 Acres)	Availability of Winter Range is 3% lower (354 Acres)
General Wildlife					
Percent change in availability of core wildlife habitat (base on motorized routes)	Pryor	Availability of Core Habitat is 14% lower	Availability of Core Habitat is 14% higher	Availability of Core Habitat is 59% higher	Availability of Core Habitat is 23% higher
	Beartooth	Availability of Core Habitat is 2% lower	No Change	No Change	Availability of Core Habitat is 1% lower

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
Percent change in availability of core wildlife habitat (based on motorized & non-motorized routes)	Pryor	Availability of Core Habitat is 27% lower	Availability of Core Habitat is 14% higher	Availability of Core Habitat is 59% higher	Availability of Core Habitat is 23% higher
	Beartooth	Availability of Core Habitat is 2% lower	No Change	Availability of Core Habitat is 2% higher	No Change
Soils					
High/Very High Erosion Hazard Rating					
Percent change of designated motorized routes in High/Very High (H/VH) Erosion Hazard Rating from No Action (Miles)	Pryor	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 21% (14 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 15% (10 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 54% lower (36 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 13% (9 Miles)
	Beartooth	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 7% (2 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 15% (4 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating is 30% (8 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating is 7% (2 Miles)
	District	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 18% (17 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 15% (14 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 47% (44 Miles)	Motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 11% (10 Miles)
Percent change of designated non-motorized routes in High/Very High (H/VH) Erosion Hazard Rating from No Action (Miles)	Pryor	No Change	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 100% (1 Mile)	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 100% (1 Mile)	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 100% (1 Mile)
	Beartooth	No Change	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 6% (4 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 6% (4 Miles)	No Change
	District	No Change	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 7% (5 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 5% (4 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in H/VH Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 1% (1 Mile)
Medium Erosion Hazard Rating					
Percent change of designated motorized routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating from No Action (Miles)	Pryor	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 46% (6 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 31% (4 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 38% (5 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 23% (3 Miles)
	Beartooth	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 35% (9 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 12% (3 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 27% (7 Miles)	No Change

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
	District	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 35% (14 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 20% (8 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 33% (13 Miles)	Motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating reduced by 10% (4 Miles)
Percent change of designated non-motorized routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating from No Action (Miles)	Pryor	No Change			
	Beartooth	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 4% (3 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 9% (7 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 9% (7 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 4% (3 Miles)
	District	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 4% (3 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 9% (7 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 9% (7 Miles)	Non-motorized Routes in Medium Erosion Hazard Rating increases by 4% (3 Miles)
Vegetation					
High Risk Motorized Settings					
Change in acreage of potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk motorized settings (i.e. dispersed campsites) from No Action (% change from No Action)	Pryor	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 4 Acres (2%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 15 Acres (7%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 165 Acres (76%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 44 Acres (20%)
	Beartooth	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 10 Acres (91%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 9 Acres (82%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 9 Acres (82%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 11 Acres (100%)
	District	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 33 Acres (14%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 10 Acres (4%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 126 Acres (55%)	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 33 Acres (14%)
Change in acreage of Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk	Pryor	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 270 Acres (17%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 100 Acres (6%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 1290 Acres (82%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 84 Acres (5%)

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
motorized settings (i.e. vehicle access to campsites) from No Action (% change from No Action)	Beartooth	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 186 Acres (15%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 155 Acres (12%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 1019 Acres (81%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 429 Acres (34%)
	District	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 456 Acres (16%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 55 Acres (2%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings reduced by 2309 Acres (81%)	Potential Infrequent Use Areas in High Risk settings increases by 733 Acres (26%)
Change in mileage of motorized routes in High Risk settings from No Action (% change from No Action)	Pryor	Motorized routes in High Risk settings increases by 4 Miles (16%)	Motorized routes in High Risk settings reduced by 2 Miles (8%)	Motorized routes in High Risk settings reduced by 4 Miles (16%)	Motorized routes in High Risk settings reduced by 5 Miles (20%)
	Beartooth	Motorized routes in High Risk settings increases by 6 Miles (35%)	Motorized routes in High Risk settings increases by 4 Miles (24%)	No Change	Motorized routes in High Risk settings increases by 5 Miles (29%)
	District	Motorized routes in High Risk settings increases by 10 Miles (24%)	Motorized routes in High Risk settings increases by 2 Miles (5%)	Motorized routes in High Risk settings reduced by 4 Miles (10%)	No Change
High Risk Non-Motorized Settings					
Change in acreage of potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk non-motorized settings (i.e. dispersed campsites) from No Action (% change from No Action)	Pryor	No Change			
	Beartooth	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk non-motorized settings reduced by 2 Acres (5%)	No Change		Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk non-motorized settings reduced by 2 Acres (5%)
	District	Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk non-motorized settings reduced by 2 Acres (5%)	No Change		Potential Frequent Use Areas in High Risk non-motorized settings reduced by 2 Acres (5%)
Change in mileage of non-motorized routes in High Risk settings from No Action (% change from No Action)	Pryor	No Change			
	Beartooth	No Change			Non-motorized routes in High Risk non-motorized settings reduced by 2 Miles (2%)

Table ES-9. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Change from the No Action Alternative	Unit	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative B Modified (Preferred Alternative)
	District	No Change			Non-motorized routes in High Risk non-motorized settings reduced by 2 Miles (2%)
Weeds Susceptibility					
Change in acreage of Weed Susceptible areas, within motorized route corridor, from No Action (% change from No Action)		Weed Susceptible Area increased by 2203 Acres (17%)	Weed Susceptible Area reduced by 2058 Acres (16%)	Weed Susceptible Area reduced by 10,876 Acres (83%)	Weed Susceptible Area reduced by 1990 Acres (15%)
Weed Infestation					
Change in motorized route corridor exposure to weed infestation acreage from No Action (% change from No Action)		Motorized route corridor exposure to weed infestations reduced by 23 Acres (8%)	Motorized route corridor exposure to weed infestations reduced by 41 Acres (15%)	Motorized route corridor exposure to weed infestations reduced by 59 Acres (21%)	Motorized route corridor exposure to weed infestations reduced by 41 Acres (15%)
Sensitive Plant Species					
Change from No Action		No Change between Effects Determination categories. However, spring thaw seasonal restrictions will provide more protection to vulnerable species. Actions will not likely result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability for any of the 12 species analyzed			
Inventoried Roadless Areas					
Changes in mileage of non-system routes proposed to be converted to system routes within inventoried roadless areas from No Action		Non-system routes proposed to be converted to system routes increases by 1.8 miles	Non-system routes proposed to be converted to system routes increases by 0.6 miles	Non-system routes proposed to be converted to system routes increases by 0.5 miles	Non-system routes proposed to be converted to system routes increases by 0.6 miles
Changes in mileage of existing system routes within inventoried roadless areas from No Action		No Change	Existing system routes within inventoried roadless areas reduced by 4.2 miles	Existing system routes within inventoried roadless areas reduced by 4.2 miles	Existing system routes within inventoried roadless areas increased by 1 mile.
Economics					
Estimated economic contribution of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities on the District to local and regional economies.		There is no appreciable difference under all alternatives.			

Alternative B Modified (118,898 acres/267 miles; 55,384 acres/177 miles); No Action (115,276 acres/287 miles; 44,055 acres/149 miles); Alternative B (115,473 acres/261 miles; 49,119 acres/124 miles); Alternative C (107,459 acres/198 miles; 41,621 acres/79 miles).

Alternative C best responds to concerns related to opportunities for non-motorized recreation, including providing the most acres in non-motorized ROS settings and non-motorized trails on the District and in the Pryor Unit. There would be 496,134 acres in non-motorized settings and 286 miles of non-motorized trails on the District, and 36,374 miles in non-motorized settings and two miles of non-motorized trails in the Pryor Unit.

The remaining alternatives respond to this issue to a lesser degree than Alternative C. Considering the various factors discussed in the above analysis, the remaining alternatives *generally* respond to this indicator in the following order from most to least responsive [Alternative (District; Pryor Unit)]: (Alternatives B and B Modified are very similar in responsiveness.). No Action Alternative (488,317 acres/272 miles; 38,912 acres/1 miles); Alternative B (488,120 acres/287 miles; 28,849 acres/2 miles); Alternative B Modified (484,695 acres/273 miles; 29,654 acres/2 miles); Alternative A (464,986 acres/276 miles; 22,584 acres/2 miles).

Alternative A best responds to concerns related to opportunities for unlicensed off-highway vehicle operation, including providing the most miles of motorized mixed use roads and motorized trails. There would be 146 combined miles of motorized mixed use roads and motorized trails on the District. The remaining alternatives respond to this issue to a lesser degree than Alternative A. In relative descending order of responsiveness, they are: Alternative B Modified (109 miles); Alternative B (79 miles); No Action (8 miles); Alternative C (0 miles).

ES 14.1.2 Human Environment

Considerations of the human environment in each of the alternatives is consistent with the Custer Forest Plan, the Tri-State OHV EIS, travel planning direction and existing manual direction. Concerns raised by the non-motorized or motorized groups through the public comment process, including those received after the DEIS, were used to analyze the human environment aspect of each alternative. Comments received indicated a wide array of public needs and views, including a desire for more or no potential decrease in the number of routes by the motorized group or more quiet areas or less routes by the non-motorized group.

All alternatives address the needs of the recreation communities to differing degrees. None of the alternatives are anticipated to satisfy all publics. Alternative A is most responsive to the desires of individuals supporting motorized recreational opportunities and Alternative C is most responsive to the desires of individuals supporting non-motorized recreational opportunities. Alternatives B and B Modified both emphasize a compromise in addressing human environment concerns. Alternative B Modified responded to comments received from review of the Draft EIS which further emphasizes compromise.

ES 14.1.3 Noise

Recreationists seeking natural quiet near activities producing noise are likely to be annoyed by human-caused noise and may find noise from motorized recreational vehicles to be additive to

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ambient noise or they make likely recreate elsewhere. These effects are all short term but tend to impact the quality of some user's experience.

Under all alternatives, between 79% and 82% of the District provides non-motorized settings where human caused noise is less likely and between 18% and 21% provides motorized settings where noise impacts are more likely. There is more difference between alternatives when the Pryor Unit is considered individually. The season of use restrictions in Alternatives B, C and B Modified have the potential to shift (16% or more) the ROS settings from motorized to non-motorized during the spring to early-summer periods affected.

Regardless of sound detectability by distances in a variety of settings, there are still those who are affected by noise-caused actions due to annoyance and resentment at the type of noise sources, or to the direct results of the noise itself.

ES 14.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

For all alternatives compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act through the Montana Programmatic Agreement is required. A monitoring program will be implemented that will address sites identified as at risk from the decision, and measures to reduce, remove, or mitigate these effects will be taken in consultation with the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

ES 14.2.1 Archeological Resources

In overall comparison, Alternative A consists of the highest count of sites (22) that are either currently being effected or may be affected. Alternative C consists of the lowest site count (1) that is either currently being effected or may be affected. Alternative B and Alternative B Modified consist of nine and ten sites that are either currently being effected or may be affected.

ES 14.2.2 Traditional Cultural Properties

The CNF has been utilized through the centuries by prehistoric, historic and contemporary cultures and this use is reflected in the landscape we see today. Contemporary use includes traditional cultural properties, grazing, mineral extraction and recreation. The last use includes hiking, motorized touring, and off highway vehicle driving, and was the focus of this analysis.

Unmanaged motorized vehicle use has come in conflict with the other forest uses and has had adverse effects to archaeological and traditional cultural properties. Alternatives A and the No Action alternatives do little to curb these effects and may in fact introduce more detrimental effects. Alternative C, while considering the fewest roads and cumulatively may result in reducing adverse effects for some of the archaeological resources, it does not address two significant cultural landscapes – the Dryhead overlook and the Big Pryor overlook.

Alternative B identifies some measures to reduce effects to archaeological and traditional cultural properties, but still neglects the need to protect the Big Pryor cultural landscape. The Alternative B Modified includes some protection for all three cultural landscapes that promises to reduce the effects to these non-renewable and vital resources.

ES 14.3 WATER QUALITY, FISHERIES, AND AQUATICS

ES 14.3.1 Water Quality

Currently, some routes have documented water quality impacts and therefore, may not comply with Forest Plan direction or state and federal water quality regulations. Compliance relative to the Decision to be made for this FEIS, only pertains to those routes with a proposed action. These routes have actions proposed which are the first steps toward addressing water quality impacts. Additional activities, outside of this proposal, that would further reduce water quality impacts are identified in Appendix E - Opportunities. From a NEPA standpoint, routes with no proposed actions that have known water quality impacts are not a compliance issue relative to the Decision to be made, because this project is not the cause of those impacts (i.e. they are existing impacts). However, water quality impacts should still be addressed through measures outside this process and recommended actions for these routes are also identified in Appendix E - Opportunities. Full compliance with Forest Plan direction and state and federal water quality regulations under all alternatives would occur in the future as these actions or rehabilitation measures are implemented.

Alternatives B, C, and B Modified have between 43 and 55 miles of routes with actions that reduce risks on moderate and high risk routes with the project area. Alternative A has approximately 9 miles of routes with actions that reduce risks on moderate and high risk routes. Alternatives B, C, and B Modified have about 4 miles of routes with actions that increase risks on moderate and high risk routes with the project area. Alternative A has approximately 6 miles of routes with actions that increase risks on moderate and high risk routes.

ES 14.3.2 Fisheries and Aquatics

Proposed actions with site specific effects that potentially increase risk of adverse impacts to aquatic habitat and species are mitigated in Alternative B Modified. Compliance relative to the Record of Decision for this FEIS, only pertains to those routes with proposed actions. Under Alternative B Modified, actions related to moderate and high risk routes are expected to benefit or maintain aquatic habitats, and fish and amphibian species. Only minimal indirect effects to sensitive aquatic species are anticipated under all other action alternatives. Therefore, the Beartooth District is anticipated to move towards compliance with Forest Plan standards and state and federal water quality regulations under all action alternatives. However, Alternative B Modified initiates the most rapid rate of recovery and compliance should be achieved in the shortest timeframe under this alternative.

Appendix E includes opportunities to reduce impacts to water quality, aquatic habitat and biota where there are: 1) site specific impacts from existing routes not associated with the proposed action, and 2) proposed actions with potential to improve conditions but do not eliminate impacts. However, construction, reconstruction, maintenance and decommissioning proposals will require future and separate NEPA decisions.

Relative to sensitive fish and amphibian species, none of the alternatives are likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability. The following table summarizes the effects determinations for sensitive aquatic species and aquatic species of concern.

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ES 14.4 WILDLIFE

Wildlife effects analysis was conducted based on regulatory framework for threatened, endangered, sensitive, management indicator, and other species of concern. Conservation strategy standards and guidelines and literature-based recommended guidelines were also considered. Analysis for lynx was based on motorized route density. Analysis for grizzly bears and wolverine were based on secure habitat availability. Analysis for elk was based on both motorized route density and secure habitat. Relative comparisons of available habitat and/or motorized route density were also conducted between alternatives for species and groups lacking conservation strategies, standards, or guidelines. The following outlines effects determinations for wildlife species.

Threatened, endangered, sensitive, Custer Forest management indicator species and other species of concern. Regarding threatened, endangered, sensitive, and Custer Forest management indicator species, all alternatives are consistent with the National Forest Management Act (36 CFR 219.19) which directs federal agencies to manage habitat to provide for viable populations of all native and desired non-native fish and wildlife species. All alternatives are also consistent with Forest Service Manual (FSM 2672.1) direction for management of sensitive species which states that these species must receive special management emphasis to ensure their viability and to preclude trends toward endangerment that would result in the need for Federal listing. The following table summarizes the effects determination.

ES 14.4.1 Canada Lynx

All alternatives are consistent with the laws, regulations, policy, and Federal, Regional, and State direction, the Custer National Forest Management Plan, the Canada Lynx Conservation and Assessment Strategy, and the Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction. Of these regulatory directions, the latter two documents specifically address Forest roads relative to lynx conservation and recovery.

The anticipated direct and indirect effects to lynx, and their habitats, from any of the alternatives are small. No alternative would exceed the Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy programmatic guideline for Forest backcountry roads and trails of a maximum 2.0 mi/sq mi road density. Average open motorized route density in lynx habitat across the Beartooth District would be 0.2 mi/sq mi under Alternative B, Alternative C and Alternative B Modified, and 0.3 mi/sq mi under Alternative A and No Action. No alternatives would exceed the Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy programmatic guideline for Forest backcountry roads and trails of a maximum 2.0 mi/sq mi road density.

ES 14.4.2 Gray Wolf

All alternatives are consistent with the laws, regulations, policy, and Federal, Regional, and State direction, the Custer National Forest Management Plan, and the Montana Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. None of these regulatory directions specifically address Forest roads relative to wolf conservation and management.

To indicate potential effects to gray wolf displacement, avoidance, and recolonization changes in

motorized route density from No Action are assessed. In the Beartooth and Pryor Units, Alternative A would increase open motorized route density over No Action by 0.09 and 0.30 mi/sq mi, respectively. This is the highest motorized route density of the alternatives. In the Beartooth Unit, Alternatives B and B Modified would increase open motorized route density over No Action by 0.07 and 0.06 mi/sq mi, respectively. In the Pryor Unit, Alternatives B and B Modified would each decrease open motorized route density over No Action by 0.10 mi/sq mi. In the Beartooth and Pryor Units, Alternative C would increase open motorized route density over No Action by 0.05 and 0.35 mi/sq mi, respectively. This is the lowest motorized route density of the alternatives.

ES 14.4.3 Grizzly Bear

All alternatives are consistent with the laws, regulations, policy, and Federal, Regional, and State direction, the Custer National Forest Management Plan, and the Conservation Strategy for Grizzly Bear in the Yellowstone Ecosystem (ICST 2003; updated 2007). The habitat and conservation standards, described in the Conservation Strategy, have formally been incorporated into the Custer National Forest Plan. It provides the direction for managing grizzly bear habitat on the National Forest.

Within the grizzly bear Primary Conservation Area (PCA), 96% of habitat would be secure under all alternatives. This is consistent with the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy standard to maintain secure habitat at or above 1998 levels. Availability of secure biologically suitable habitat for grizzly bears outside the PCA would effectively be the same between the alternatives, 91% in Alternative A and 92% in the other four alternatives. In addition, the availability of secure biologically unsuitable habitat outside the PCA would effectively be the same under Alternatives B (59%), No Action (57%), and Alternative B Modified (58%); lowest under Alternative A (52%); and greatest under Alternative C (64%). The availability of biologically unsuitable habitat is pertinent because grizzly bears have been documented in such habitat on the Beartooth District within the last five years.

ES 14.4.4 Wolverine

All alternatives are consistent with the National Forest Management Act (36 CFR 219.19) which directs federal agencies to manage habitat to provide for viable populations of all native and desired non-native fish and wildlife species. All alternatives are also consistent with Forest Service Manual (FSM 2672.1) direction for management of sensitive species which states that these species must receive special management emphasis to ensure their viability and to preclude trends toward endangerment that would result in the need for Federal listing.

Open motorized route density in wolverine habitat under all alternatives would be characterized as low (≤ 0.7 mi/sq mi). The percent of wolverine habitat available as refugia would be the lowest under Alternatives A and No Action (66%), and effectively the same under Alternatives B and C (74%), and Alternative B Modified (71%).

ES 14.4.5 Bighorn Sheep

All alternatives are consistent with the following direction on occupied bighorn sheep range. The Custer National Forest Management Plan contains relevant direction for management of big game populations. The protection measure for key wildlife species, including big game species, relative to

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travel management planning states, “Where necessary to protect wildlife values, access and/or traffic will be restricted in key wildlife habitats during critical periods.”

Alternative C would provide the greatest acreage of bighorn sheep escape terrain in both the Beartooth and Pryor Units, 5970 and 6138 acres respectively, and in turn, Alternative A would provide the least acreage, 5543 and 3920 acres. Alternatives B, No Action, and Alternative B Modified would fall in between, with 5904, 5612, and 5809 acres respectively in the Beartooth Unit, and 4926, 4388, and 5129 respectively in the Pryor Unit. Bighorn sheep winter range is currently utilized only on the Beartooth Unit, where the No Action Alternative would provide the greatest availability (10,483 acres) and Alternative A the least (10,076 acres). Alternatives B and C would be similar (10,258 and 10,288 acres respectively), and Alternative B Modified would provide 10,129 acres.

ES 14.4.6 Elk and Deer

Because of the large overlap in habitat between elk and deer, the elk analysis serves as a surrogate for mule deer and white-tailed deer and impacts of travel management on the District are expected to be very similar for these three species.

All alternatives are consistent with the Custer National Forest Management Plan which contains relevant direction for management of big game populations. The goal for key wildlife species, including big game species, relative to travel management planning states, “Where necessary to protect wildlife values, access and/or traffic will be restricted in key wildlife habitats during critical periods.” Key habitats are described in Appendix VII of the Forest Plan and largely occur in Management Area C relative to core elk winter range where seasonal motorized use restrictions apply.

Hunting season vulnerability was assessed using motorized route density and secure elk habitat. Under all alternatives, the Beartooth Unit open motorized route densities in elk habitat would range from 0.37 to 0.47 mi/sq mi. This is within the recommendation to manage roads at <1.0 mi/sq mi for elk habitat. Secure elk habitat would range from 64% to 69%, which is above the recommended 30% minimum.

On the Pryor Unit, Alternatives A and No Action would have the highest open motorized route density relative to wolves (1.5 mi/sq mi) and in elk habitat (1.49 and 1.44 mi/sq mi, respectively), plus would provide the lowest elk security cover (22% and 23%, respectively). Open motorized route density for Alternatives B and Alternative B Modified are 1.16, and 1.27 mi/sq mi, respectively and approach the density recommendation of 1 mi/sq mi. Secure elk habitat would range from 23% to 26%, which is below the recommended 30% minimum. Alternative C, with open motorized route density of 0.69 mi/sq mi in elk habitat, and security cover of 37%, and would fall within the recommendations for elk.

ES 14.4.7 General Wildlife

All alternatives are consistent with the Custer National Forest Management Plan and Forest Service Manual direction. The wildlife goal in the Custer National Forest Management Plan is to “manage and/or improve key wildlife and fisheries habitats, to enhance habitat quality and diversity, and to provide wildlife and fish-oriented recreation opportunities.” Forest Service Manual 2672.4 requires

review of “all Forest Service planned, funded, executed, or permitted programs and activities for possible effects on endangered, threatened, proposed, or sensitive species.”

“Core” habitat available for wildlife in general in the Beartooth Unit would range from 82% to 83%, effectively the same for all alternatives. On the Pryors Unit, availability of “core” habitat would be the greatest under Alternative C (35%) and the least under Alternative A (16%). The No Action alternative would provide 22% “core”, and availability would be similar under Alternatives B and B Modified (25% and 27% respectively).

All alternatives have taken migratory bird conservation issues into account through effects analyses, and thus are consistent with the following direction. Management of migratory bird species and their habitats are governed by a wide variety of authorities. Most direction regarding conservation of these species falls under the umbrella of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703-712) and an associated Presidential Executive Order. Under this Act, which implements various treaties and conventions for the protection of migratory birds, it is unlawful to take, kill or possess any migratory birds, except as regulated by authorized hunting programs. Executive Order 13186 directs Federal agencies whose actions have a measurable negative impact on migratory bird populations to incorporate migratory bird conservation into planning processes and take reasonable steps that include restoring and enhancing habitat.

ES 14.5 SOILS

Although regional soil quality standards do not apply to this project, adding routes to the National Forest System and designating roads and trails for public or administrative use will have an impact on soil productivity. Roads and trails impact and disrupt the natural function of the soil resource, and are long-term commitments to that specific use. Non-system routes will revegetate or be reclaimed and eventually return to productivity. Alternative C would provide the greatest number of miles of routes to return to productive capability over time. Alternative A would provide the least number of miles. Alternative B and Alternative B Modified would provide an intermediate number of miles compared to Alternatives A and C. Alternatives B, C, and B Modified all would have fewer miles of routes available to the public for motorized use on landforms with high erosion hazard compared to Alternative A and the no-action alternative. Alternative B Modified, with the proposed seasons of use, deferred designation contingent upon mitigation, and dispersed camping constraints would allow motorized use while minimizing affects to the soil resource.

Vegetation

ES 14.6 VEGETATION

ES 14.6.1 Vegetation

Because it is seldom possible to control or even document the past use or predict future use, estimates of the impacts caused by different use frequencies are imprecise. The ability to predict the effects of different intensities of various uses is low. However, the amounts of potentially affected area, projected within the context of high risk categories based on various elements of frequency, duration, timing, and vegetation resistance and resilience were analyzed. It is recognized that not all estimated acreage will be affected and therefore results are on the conservative side.

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Frequency and duration of motorized and non-motorized activities are difficult to separate. However, potential for impacts from motorized use activities typically tends to be higher than non-motorized activities due to higher mobility for increased frequency and a bigger footprint for increased effects (weight, size, wheel slip, etc.) than most modes of travel. There is likelihood for more impacts from compaction due to higher pressure from more surface area that vehicles pose.

Although miles of motorized and non-motorized routes do not differ substantially by alternative, the potential areas for effects do differ. Alternative C has fewer areas exposed to potential impacts when compared to the other alternatives largely due to the distance from a motorized route where vehicle parking could occur (50 feet used for analysis purposes) when compared to the other Alternatives' distance of a 300 foot allowance for vehicle access to dispersed campsites.

Under all alternatives, when compared against similar vegetation types, potential impacts from *frequent* use within the 0 to 4% slopes of the route's corridor in high, moderate, and low risk areas is less than 1% of each risk setting, respectively. High risk category potential impact ranges from 146 to 272 acres across all alternatives. Moderate risk category potential impact ranges from 11 to 69 acres across all alternatives. Low risk category potential impact ranges from 91 to 585 acres across all alternatives.

In addition, when compared against similar vegetation types, potential impacts from *infrequent* use within the route's corridor in high, moderate, and low risk areas is about <1-2%, <1-5%, and 1-10% of each risk setting, respectively.

Timing of use through management strategies, such as restricting use during spring thaw, can also influence the degree of impact on vegetation. Most of the Beartooth Unit road subgrades are rocky and hard (granitic parent material) where damage from vehicles during spring thaw is less of an issue. Portions of the Red Lodge Creek road are proposed for closure during spring thaw due to the finer grained nature of the soils in that location. Many of the routes in the Pryor Unit do not support loads well when wet (sedimentary parent material). Spring thaw restrictions in the Pryor Unit range from 19 miles in Alternative C, to 58 miles in Alternative B – Modified, to 60 miles in Alternative B.

While impacts resulting from camping, vehicles, hiking, mountain biking, and stock use can be locally very significant, the total area of impact is small when compared to various ecosystems of the project area. The level of acceptable impact over a given area is within the discretion of the deciding official for this project as outlined in the regulatory framework for this section. Selection of any alternative would be consistent with the regulatory framework relative to vegetation sustainability at the level of this project's scale.

ES 14.6.2 Weeds

Since there is a high association with motorized routes and weed infestations, Alternatives A and No Action have a higher probability for weed spread, Alternative C has a lower probability, and Alternatives B and B Modified have an intermediate probability for weed spread.

Many agents will continue to transport weeds and weed seeds, regardless of the decision on travel, but the fewer the agents, the less weed spread. However, removing all use would defeat the purpose of the

public lands, and is not public policy, and still would not totally eliminate the spread of weeds. Therefore, noxious weed management requires a balance of use restriction, public education, implementation of best management practices (BMPs), and effective treatment measures. The more the public voluntarily accepts and implements weed prevention practices, less restrictions and expensive weed control will be required.

Per existing policy, a noxious weed risk analysis will be done for each project and appropriate BMP measures (FSM 2080, R1 Supplement 2000-2001-1) included in each environmental analysis, permit, and contract and will help reduce cumulative effects. Each project and public use area will be monitored for noxious weeds and the implementation and effectiveness of BMP mitigation measures, prioritized by the degree of risk. The Forest Service will continue prevention, public education and appropriate weed treatment measures.

All action alternatives are consistent with the Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Federal, Regional, State, and Custer Forest Plan. Of these regulatory directions, only the FSM 2080 addresses travel management with respect to weed management. A weed risk assessment is part of this analysis and meets this manual requirement.

ES 14.6.3 Sensitive Plants

Under all alternatives, nine of the 12 species assessed are anticipated to have no impact. Any alternative may impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species relative to two known species (Beartooth goldenweed, Jove's buttercup) and one suspected species (Platte cinquefoil). All alternatives are consistent with the Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Federal, Regional, State, and Custer Forest Plan. Selection of any alternative would be consistent with the regulatory framework relative to sensitive plants.

ES 14.7 INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS

Alternative A is the only alternative that would increase the overall miles of motorized routes in Inventoried Roadless Areas compared to the No Action Alternative. Alternatives B, C, and B Modified would reduce the overall miles in Inventoried Roadless Areas by 3.6, 3.7, and 0.4 miles, respectively, when compared to the No Action Alternative.

None of the alternatives would cause irreversible or irretrievable effects to roadless characteristics that would negate future consideration for inclusion in the Wilderness Preservation System. Conversion of non-system routes to system routes is a reversible decision. If areas were established by Congress as wilderness, motorized uses would be prohibited. Those routes could be considered for conversion to foot and/or pack and saddle standards

None of the effects described above would appreciably reduce roadless quality or appreciably compromise the potential to designate roadless lands as wilderness in the future.

All of the alternatives would comply with existing law, regulation, and policy.

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ES 14.8 ECONOMICS

For the eight-county functional economic area used in this analysis, the total economic effects of recreation overall, and specifically recreation tied to motorized and non-motorized activities, are very small compared to the total economic activity in the area. Though changes in use attributable to the alternatives outlined in this report are difficult to estimate, even large changes in use would have little effect on the overall economy of the eight-county area.

- End of Executive Summary -