

Chapter III Affected Environment

Chapter III describes the biological, physical, social and economic conditions that may be affected by implementation of the alternatives

Forest Plan Direction

The analysis area is located within the Northwest Little Belts Geographic Unit LB-1, Management Area F, which emphasizes semi-primitive recreation opportunities while maintaining and protecting other Forest resources.

Management direction for HES 185 (parcel Z1) proposed for acquisition will take on the management area direction and prescription as established in the Forest Plan for adjacent NFS lands. This land exchange and reciprocal ROW analysis will not establish new management direction.

Forest-wide Management Standards J-1 Landownership Adjustment (Forest Plan page 2-62) directs that such adjustments support long-term Forest goals and objectives, as identified in Appendix B. Appendix B directs that such adjustments and exchanges be in the best interest of the public and be on a 'willing grantor basis'.

The Taylor Hills HES 185 (Parcel Z1) was specifically listed as a desirable parcel for acquisition, due to its semi-primitive recreational values and to enhance management (Appendix B, Table B-2). Forest Parcels F1 and F2 were not specifically listed as available for disposal; however Appendix B directs that other areas would be considered for disposal if the offered private land would enhance management, administration or production of Forest resources (Appendix B, page 2).

Forest-wide Management Standards J-2 ROW Acquisition (Forest Plan page 2-62) directs that road and trail ROW acquisitions support long-term Forest goals and objectives, as identified in Appendix C. Appendix C directs that permanent ROW easements be acquired by the Forest as a means of providing long term road or trail access to the National Forest, and that access is needed by the general public for recreation, and by the Forest Service for management and administration.

Appendix C direction continues, stating ROWs are needed for trails and that most existing Forest Service trails are partially on private land without the benefit of recorded easements, and the Forest's long term goal is to resolve all trail jurisdictional conflicts, through acquisition of easements, relocation of trails to federal land, or other suitable means (Appendix C, page 2).

Forest travel plan direction was made in the Little Belt, Castle, and North Half Crazy Mountains Travel Plan EIS and Record of Decision (October 2007) which determined the types and season of use on Forest system roads and trails. This travel plan direction applies to all ROWs proposed for acquisition.

Resource Issues

Inventoried Roadless Area

Taylor Hills HES 185 lies within the boundaries of the 88,400 acre Tenderfoot-Deep Creek Roadless Area I-726, stretching east – west from Smith River east to Logging Creek and north – south from Tenderfoot Creek to north Forest boundary. The area was inventoried and designated in 1978 under the RARE II process (second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation). The Forest Plan did not recommend this area for wilderness designation. I-726 is a geographically large and continuous area having little evidence of disturbance from past or present management activities.

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR) at 36 CFR 294, issued January 12, 2001, was reinstated in a District Court order in September 2006. The Rule prohibits road construction or reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas unless certain exception criteria are met. The project meets exceptions to prohibitions to road construction or reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas under 36 CFR 294.12(b)(4) and (5) as follows:

(b) Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, a road may be constructed or reconstructed in an inventoried roadless area if the Responsible Official determines that one of the following circumstances exists:

(4) Road realignment is needed to prevent irreparable resource damage that arises from the design, location, use, or deterioration of a classified road and that cannot be mitigated by road maintenance. Road realignment may occur under this paragraph only if the road is deemed essential for public or private access, natural resource management, or public health and safety:

(5) Road reconstruction is needed to implement a road safety improvement project on a classified road determined to be hazardous on the basis of accident experience or accident potential on that road.

Section 294.11 of RACR outlines the responsible official status with respect to decisions of this nature in inventoried roadless areas. It defines the Responsible Official as "The Forest Service line officer with the authority and responsibility to make decisions regarding protection and management of inventoried roadless areas pursuant to this subpart".

Existing Conditions:

The 1964 Wilderness Act considered several attributes in determining whether certain lands possessed wilderness characteristics. These included:

- natural integrity
- apparent naturalness
- opportunities for solitude, and
- opportunities for primitive recreational experiences.

Subsequent evaluations of roadless area qualities included attributes of special features and boundary management (Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 Chapter 70). This analysis will include an evaluation of the proposed actions on these roadless characteristics and compare any changes to the current conditions

The following descriptions of existing conditions are based on Forest Plan evaluations. Conditions in the Tenderfoot – Deep Creek IRA (I-726) are described in Appendix C of the Forest Plan, pages C-83-93). Conditions in the Tenderfoot-Deep Creek IRA were documented in the EIS conducted as part of the Montana Wilderness Study Act review. Subsequent changes, if any, to portions of the Tenderfoot-Deep Creek IRA within the project area since development of the Forest Plan are noted.

Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: The EIS notes that much of the Tenderfoot-Deep Creek area has had little development over time. Recreation use is not developed and leaves little impact. The most intensive livestock use is along Tenderfoot Creek and in Deep Creek Park.

Opportunity for Solitude: The area's size and isolation from development provides opportunities for solitude. Most outside land uses are not noticeable from most parts of the area.

Primitive Recreation Opportunity: The area provides a feeling of isolation, but the terrain does not give a high degree of challenge to the recreationist. Excellent fishing, good trail system, scenery, and floating are the major recreation attractions. The area is large enough that recreationists can stay within the area for several days.

Manageability and Boundaries: The southwest corner is checkerboard ownership. The Williams Mountain Timber Sale (1982) in the south side reduced original RARE II acres by 6,200. The Divide Road relocation reduced the roadless acres by an additional 60 acres (currently at 88,340 per Forest Plan figures; GIS acreages may vary).

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

Plants

Forest Service sensitive species are defined as “[t]hose plant and animal species identified by a Regional Forester for which population viability is a concern, as evidenced by: a) significant current or predicted downward trends in population numbers or density or b) significant current or predicted downward trends in habitat capability that would reduce a species’ existing distribution” (USDA Forest Service 2005). Regional Foresters are delegated the authority to designate sensitive plant species based on the definition above (USDA Forest Service 2005). The current USFS Northern Region (R-1) sensitive plant species list was developed October 28, 2004 (Kimbell 2004a). On November 24, 2004, long-styled thistle (*Cirsium longistylum*) was removed from the Regional Forester’s list after completion of a status assessment (Kimbell 2004b).

The current Northern Region sensitive plant species list was reviewed as it pertains to the project area. There are currently eleven sensitive plant species that either occur or are suspected to occur on the Jefferson Division (Belt Creek, Judith, Musselshell, and White Sulphur Springs Ranger Districts) of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. Five species are known to occupy habitat and have documented occurrences in the Jefferson Division. These sensitive plant species are short-styled columbine (*Aquilegia brevistyla*), Northern wild-rye (*Elymus innovatus*), Northern rattlesnake-plantain (*Goodyera repens*), Missoula phlox (*Phlox kelseyi* var. *missoulensis*), and Austin's knotweed (*Polygonum douglasii* ssp. *Austinae*). Six species, English sundew (*Drosera anglica*), linear-leaved sundew (*Drosera linearis*), Hall's rush (*Juncus hallii*), Barratt's willow (*Salix barrattiana*), water bulrush (*Scirpus subterminalis*), and alpine meadowrue (*Thalictrum alpinum*), may also be present on the Lewis and Clark National Forest. Although these species have not been found on the Forest, it is suspected that their habitat may occur. Twelve species are not known to occur on the Jefferson Division of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. These plant species are round-leaved orchis (*Amerorchis rotundifolia*), Lackschewitz' milkvetch (*Astragalus lackschewitzii*), upward-lobed moonwort (*Botrychium ascendens*), peculiar moonwort (*Botrychium paradoxum*), small yellow lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*), sparrow's-egg lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium passerinum*), giant helleborine (*Epipactis gigantea*), Lackschewitz's fleabane (*Erigeron lackschewitzii*), Macoun's gentian (*Gentianopsis macounii*), stalked-pod crazyweed (*Oxytropis podocarpa*), blunt-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton obtusifolius*), and five-leaved cinquefoil (*Potentilla quinquefolia*). The presence or absence of plant populations or habitat is summarized Table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Sensitive plant species in the Jefferson Division of the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

SPECIES NAME	HABITAT PREFERENCE AND OCCURRENCE IN PROJECT AREA
short-styled columbine (<i>Aquilegia brevistyla</i>)	Open woods and stream banks at mid-elevations in the montane zone. <i>Habitat and plant populations may occur in the project area, but no field surveys have been completed.</i>
Northern wild-rye (<i>Elymus innovatus</i>)	Sandy meadows, streambank and rocky hillsides to open lodgepole pine or spruce forests. Elevations range from 4,600 to 5,200 feet on the Forest. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
Northern rattlesnake-plantain (<i>Goodyera repens</i>)	North-facing, mossy forested slopes in the montane zone. Usually in old-growth/late successional forests. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
Missoula phlox (<i>Phlox kelseyi</i> var. <i>missoulensis</i>)	Open, exposed, limestone-derived slopes in foothills and montane zones. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
Austin's knotweed (<i>Polygonum douglasii</i> ssp. <i>austinae</i>)	Barren to sparsely vegetated, dry, gravelly, often shale-derived soils of eroding slopes and banks in the montane zone. Elevations range from 4,900 to 7,000 feet on the Forest. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
English sundew (<i>Drosera anglica</i>) (S)	Sphagnum moss in wet, organic soils of fens in the montane zone. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
linear-leaved sundew (<i>Drosera linearis</i>) (S)	Sphagnum moss bogs, organic soils of nutrient-poor fens at mid-elevations in the montane zone. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>

SPECIES NAME	HABITAT PREFERENCE AND OCCURRENCE IN PROJECT AREA
Hall's rush (<i>Juncus hallii</i>) (S)	Montane to sub-alpine, wet sloughs to moist or dry meadows and open, grassy slopes. Often associated with fescue grasslands or more moist meadows, sometimes partially shaded. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
Barratt's willow (<i>Salix barrattiana</i>) (S)	Cold, moist soils near or above timberline. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
water bulrush (<i>Scirpus subterminalis</i>) (S)	Shallow fresh water and boggy margins of ponds, lakes, and sloughs in valley, foothill, and montane zones. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>
alpine meadowrue (<i>Thalictrum alpinum</i>) (S)	Hummocks, often beneath low shrubs in moist, alkaline meadow in the montane zone. <i>No habitat or populations occur in the project area.</i>

(S) = Suspected to occur on the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

No new field surveys have been completed for Forest Service Parcels F1 and F2. This analysis is based on known sensitive plant occurrences as provided by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP 2006), the Lewis and Clark National Forest plant atlas, the Lewis and Clark National Forest's sensitive plant species geographic information system (GIS) habitat probability model, and habitat potential as determined by habitat and site characteristics. No sensitive plant species have been documented in the project area (MNHP 2006). Based on pre-field diagnosis, there is a moderate probability that short-styled columbine habitat exists on north-east facing slopes in Parcel F1. However, no field surveys have been conducted to determine if short-styled columbine habitat and plants exist in the parcel. Parcels F2 and Z1 were determined to not contain suitable habitat for designated sensitive plant species. Only the potential effects to short-styled columbine will be discussed below.

Desired Condition

One of the long-range goals of the Lewis and Clark National Forest is to promote high quality, wildlife, and fish habitat to insure a desired mixture of well-distributed species and numbers for public benefit with special emphasis given to sensitive plant, animal, and fish species management (USDA 1986 (Sec. 2-2 (3)), as amended 1993). A Forest-wide management objective is to insure maintenance of sensitive species populations through inventory data collection and program area coordination (USDA 1986 (Sec. 2-5), as amended 1993). Special consideration may be given in land management to maintain genetic diversity (USDA 1986 (Sec. C-2(13)), as amended 1993). Based on the Forest Plan goals, objectives, and management standards, viable populations of sensitive plant species would be maintained across the Forest, and Forest populations would contribute to a viable Regional population (USDA 1993 - Amendment 12).

Terrestrial Wildlife

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 219.19) require that National Forest System lands provide for a diversity of plant and animal communities to meet overall multiple-use objectives. Specifically, forest planning shall provide for: recovery of threatened or endangered species; maintenance of

viable populations of existing native and desired non-native, wildlife, fish and plant species; management of plant and animal communities that warrant special measures; and management direction which includes objectives for management indicator species. As such, the Lewis & Clark Forest Plan (FP) developed forest-wide management standards to provide for diverse plant and animal communities while achieving multiple-use objectives across the Forest (pp. 2-23 to 2-73 of FP). Management Standards C-1 thru C-5 (pp. 2-30 to 2-37 of FP) provides guidance for management of general wildlife habitat coordination, threatened and endangered species, indicator species, and species that warrant special habitats (old growth, cavity habitat, and rare plant habitats). Management indicator species (MIS) are used to monitor effects of management activities on viable populations of groups of similar species with the same or similar habitat requirements. These MIS groups include: species that are threatened, endangered or sensitive (TES); species that are hunted, fished or trapped; species of special interest; or species having special habitat needs.

Table 3-2 summarizes those Threatened and/or Endangered (T&E), Sensitive (S) and Management Indicator (MIS) species known or suspected to occur within the Little Belt Mountains of the Lewis and Clark National Forest and the potential for these species to occur within the influence zone of the proposed actions. Only those species known or suspected to be impacted by the proposed land exchange (as indicated in the table) will be further addressed in this analysis and Chapter IV.

Species	Existing Habitat Status And Need For Further Analysis
Gray Wolf (E) (MIS)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> The Little Belt Mountain Range supports adequate habitat and a wild ungulate prey base to sustain wolves' part of the year. Although sporadic, unverified sightings have been reported to MDFWP and Forest Service personnel in the past few years, wolves are not known to frequent the Little Belt Mountain Range, and no den sites or rendezvous sites are known to exist within the analysis area or anywhere in the Little Belts. However, the Little Belts may provide linkage zones between known populations in the Northern Rockies and Yellowstone ecosystems. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provides a list of threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species known or suspected to occur within the Jefferson Division of the Lewis and Clark National Forest; the USFWS last updated the list of T&E species on the Jefferson Division on Aug 8, 2007, and the Endangered Gray Wolf was included on that list. An assessment of exchange effects on Gray Wolves is warranted to full-fill requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act to complete a Biological Assessment (BA) for listed species. <i>Further analysis is warranted, and is incorporated within the Wildlife Assessment.</i>
Grizzly Bear (T) (MIS)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> Project area is outside the recognized Recovery Zone for the Grizzly Bear, and this species is not known to occur within the Little Belt Mountain Range. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Canada Lynx (T) (MIS)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> Exchange parcel Z1 is located within mapped/designated lynx habitat and within Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU) LB6 (Exhibit -WL1). <i>Further analysis is warranted and is incorporated within the Wildlife Assessment.</i>

Table 3-2. Terrestrial Wildlife Species Of Concern And Status Within The Analysis Area Or Proposed Project Influence Zone

Species	Existing Habitat Status And Need For Further Analysis
Bald Eagle (S) (MIS)	<i>Possible.</i> The Bald Eagle was removed from the Threatened Species List by the USFWS effective Aug 9, 2007, and is considered a Sensitive Species in R1 of the Forest Service and on the Lewis and Clark NF. Nesting, roosting and foraging habitat does exist along the Smith River corridor west of proposed exchange parcels, and known nest sites and/or nesting territories are located several miles north of proposed exchange properties along the Smith River on private lands. Known eagle use within the project area is restricted to the Smith River and Tenderfoot Creek riparian corridors where eagles have been observed hunting/fishing. The Tenderfoot Creek riparian corridor is located within 1 mile of exchange parcels F1 and Z1, but neither parcel provides substantial foraging habitat for bald eagles. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to alter habitat suitability and adverse impacts on the species would not be anticipated. <i>Further analysis is un warranted.</i>
Peregrine Falcon (S)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> An eyrie (historic nest site) is known to exist on FS lands within the Smith River corridor approximately six miles west of the proposed action, but no eyries or habitat suitable for nesting peregrines are suspected within the influence zone of proposed exchange parcels. Peregrine falcons prey on small to medium-sized birds and often take them “on the wing”. They prefer to hunt in open areas near marshes, riparian areas, and lakes, but will also utilize meadows, parklands, orchards, or hayfields that support good populations of medium-sized terrestrial birds. Although such habitat types suitable for hunting does exist within the Tenderfoot Creek corridor, historical use by peregrines have not been recorded. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to alter habitat suitability and adverse impacts on the species would not be anticipated. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Sage Grouse (C) (S)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> Sage grouse are sage brush habitat obligates, and are known to occur within the private land and Lewis & Clark NF interface dominated by sage brush community types. Lek sites (dancing grounds) are indicative of sage grouse population areas, and several have been recorded on private lands surrounding Lewis & Clark NF boundaries. However, no lek sites or suitable sage brush habitats are known to exist within the influence zone of proposed exchange parcels. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to alter habitat suitability and adverse impacts on the species would not be anticipated. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Black-Backed Woodpecker (S)	<i>Possible.</i> This species prefers conifer forests dominated by large numbers of dead trees where wood-boring beetles occur in large numbers. Areas of recent wildfires and areas of recent beetle infestations provide such habitats. As described in the <i>Affected Environment – General Upland Habitat Conditions</i> section of this report, a recent wildfire (2006 Taylor Hills Wildfire) has occurred within proposed exchange parcel Z1, but only 11 acres of trees were killed. Although Alt 2 may result in future private timber harvest actions within Z1, it is unlikely that many if any of the trees killed by the fire would be merchantable, and would likely not be harvested. Since implementation of either exchange alternative would not likely affect habitat for this species, <i>further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Flammulated Owl (S)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> Suitable habitat for this species in the form of dry Ponderosa Pine and Douglas Fir forest habitat types does occur in the project area; however, the presence of this species has not been recorded in any of the land bird surveys conducted in the Little Belt Mountain range or Jefferson Division of the L&C National Forest. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>

Table 3-2. Terrestrial Wildlife Species Of Concern And Status Within The Analysis Area Or Proposed Project Influence Zone

Species	Existing Habitat Status And Need For Further Analysis
Townsend's Big-Eared Bat (S)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> This species occurs in forest edge habitats near cave or mining-shaft nesting sites, and research indicates that the greatest risk known for this species is loss of suitable roost sites, and direct disturbances in caves (Torquemada and Cherry 1995). Such sites do not occur within the project area, and selection of either exchange proposal alternative would not be expected to impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Wolverine (S) (MIS)	<i>Possible.</i> This species prefers to den at higher elevation sites dominated by large boulder fields, or in areas with large amounts of blown-down timber. Such den site habitats do not occur within exchange parcels or within land areas immediately adjacent. However, this species is known to travel large distances in search of carrion and other food items, and winter track surveys have recorded the presence of individuals within the influence zone of proposed exchange parcels. Future vegetation changes on exchange parcels under either proposal would be unlikely to impact foraging habitat for this species. Since wolverines are sensitive to human activities (such as those associated with recreation, logging, hunting, or livestock management), disturbance impacts could occur under either proposed alternative. However, disturbance impacts would likely be short term and insignificant to population persistence. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Harlequin Duck (S)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> Primary habitat in the form of large, fast-moving streams does not occur in the project area, and no known populations or breeding pairs of this species have been recorded in the Little Belt Mountain range. During spring nesting seasons, Harlequin individuals have been observed along the Smith River west of the proposed exchange, but nesting observations have not been recorded. Harlequins have not been observed in Tenderfoot Creek, and the creek is likely not suitable habitat for nesting. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Fisher (S)	<i>Not Suspected.</i> The presence of this species has never been recorded in the Little Belt Mountains, and habitat is not suspected. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>

Table 3-2. Terrestrial Wildlife Species Of Concern And Status Within The Analysis Area Or Proposed Project Influence Zone

Species	Existing Habitat Status And Need For Further Analysis
Northern Goshawk (MIS)	<p><i>Possible.</i> Nesting and foraging habitat in the Little Belts is known to occur in mid and lower elevation Ponderosa Pine, Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine habitat types. Of the 12 goshawk nesting territories known to exist on the White Sulphur and Belt Creek Ranger Districts, none occur on (or within the influence zone of) proposed exchange parcels. Goshawk nesting habitat models developed by biologists for the Lewis and Clark NF did not predict nesting habitat within the F1 or F2 exchange parcels, and field reconnaissance in fall of 2006 validated negative modeling results. Nesting habitat within the private Z1 parcel was not modeled, but FS lands immediately adjacent were selected by the model as potential nesting (Exhibit - WL3); my field reconnaissance in 2006 indicated the presence of potential nesting habitat in Z1 as well. Foraging habitat for this species does occur on all three exchange parcels. Vegetation treatments within F1 and F2 under Alt 1 could impact foraging habitat for this species, and vegetation treatments within Z1 under Alt 2 could impact both foraging and nesting habitat. However, given the amount of suitable nesting and foraging conifer habitat that surrounds all exchange parcels, and the relatively small treatment areas that would be affected, it is likely that any future vegetation treatment actions (under either alternative) would have insignificant impacts on any individual goshawks that may occur within the influence zone of the project and would be unlikely to impact population persistence in the Tenderfoot drainage. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to adversely impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i></p>
N. Bog Lemming (S)	<p><i>Not Suspected.</i> Occurrence of this species has been documented on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District as well as west of the Continental Divide in Montana, but not in the Little Belt Mountain Range. Habitat in the form of sphagnum bogs, wet meadows, moist, mixed and coniferous forests, alpine sedge meadows, krummholz spruce-fir forest with dense herbaceous and mossy understory, and mossy streamside does not occur in the project influence zone. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to adversely impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i></p>
Elk (MIS)	<p><i>Known.</i> Summer and fall habitat for elk occurs in the project area, and this species is known to frequent the project area. <i>Further analysis is warranted and is incorporated within the Wildlife Assessment in CH IV.</i></p>
Mule Deer (MIS)	<p><i>Known.</i> Summer and fall habitat for mule deer occurs in the project area, and this species is known to frequent the project area. However, habitat management coordination requirements for elk meet analysis needs for mule deer. <i>Further detailed analysis is unwarranted.</i></p>
Whitetail Deer (MIS)	<p><i>Known.</i> Primary habitat for this species is located in lower elevations of the Little Belt Mountains. Habitat management coordination requirements for elk meet analysis needs for whitetail deer. <i>Further detailed analysis is unwarranted.</i></p>
Black Bear (MIS)	<p><i>Known.</i> Summer and fall habitat for black bear occurs in the project area, and this species is known to frequent proposed exchange parcels. However, habitat management coordination requirements for big game ungulates (elk) meet analysis needs for this species. <i>Further detailed analysis is unwarranted.</i></p>
Bighorn Sheep (MIS)	<p><i>Not suspected.</i> No habitat or population is known to exist in the project area. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to adversely impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i></p>

Table 3-2. Terrestrial Wildlife Species Of Concern And Status Within The Analysis Area Or Proposed Project Influence Zone

Species	Existing Habitat Status And Need For Further Analysis
Mountain Goat (MIS)	<i>Not suspected.</i> Occurrence of this species in the Smith River Corridor west of the proposed actions was documented in the spring of 2002 when three individuals were sighted within the rocky canyon walls of the Smith River Canyon; occurrences of additional individuals have not been reported since 2002, and it is unlikely that a persistent population exists within the Little Belt Mountains. Habitat for this species is not suspected within the Tenderfoot drainage, and selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to adversely impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Mountain Lion (MIS)	<i>Suspected.</i> Habitat and populations occur in the project area. However, habitat management coordination requirements for elk and deer (primary prey species of the lion) meet analysis needs for this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Blue Grouse (MIS)	<i>Suspected.</i> Blue grouse inhabit open coniferous forests at mid and high elevations where timber/grassland mosaics occur. Such habitat occurs within exchange parcel Z1, but individuals could also occur within exchange parcels F1 & F2. Nesting and foraging habitat for this species is suspected within all three exchange parcels, and could be impacted by future vegetation management activities if they occurred. But, given the amount of suitable nesting and foraging habitat that surrounds all exchange parcels, it is likely that any future vegetation treatment actions would have insignificant impacts on blue grouse population persistence in the Tenderfoot drainage. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to adversely impact this species. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Beaver Habitat (MIS)	<i>Possible.</i> Beavers build dams on lakes, ponds, or slow moving streams where tall shrubs (willows, ect...) and or soft wood trees (aspen and/or cottonwoods) are plentiful. All exchange parcels contain small stream segments, but soft woods within adjacent riparian corridors are not prevalent. Nor, was the presence of beavers or beaver activities noted during my reconnaissance trips to the project area. Tenderfoot Creek itself supports habitat for beavers, but selection of either alternative would not be expected to adversely impact individuals or habitat within the Tenderfoot drainage. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Bobcat (MIS)	<i>Suspected.</i> Preferred habitat for bobcats is rough, broken terrain in open or semi-open mid to lower elevation forests and riparian corridors that link habitat segments. Habitat management coordination requirements for elk, deer and lynx meet analysis needs for the bobcat. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Golden Eagle (MIS)	<i>Possible.</i> Golden eagles prefer to nest in steep vertical cliffs and hunt open meadows and prairie habitat types in search of prey. No nest sites are known within the influence zone of the proposed exchange, but eagles have been observed hunting open parks and searching for road kills along roadway corridors in the adjacent Sheep Creek drainage. Although not documented, golden eagles also likely hunt parks and private hayfields near exchange parcels F1 and F2 on occasion. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to adversely impact individuals or habitat within the Tenderfoot drainage. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>

Table 3-2. Terrestrial Wildlife Species Of Concern And Status Within The Analysis Area Or Proposed Project Influence Zone

Species	Existing Habitat Status And Need For Further Analysis
Prairie Falcon (MIS)	<i>Possible.</i> This species is known to occur within the rocky canyon walls of the Smith River Canyon west of the proposed project and shares habitat with the sensitive peregrine falcon, but Prairie Falcon nest sites are not known to occur within the Tenderfoot drainage. Foraging requirements for this species are very similar to those of the peregrine falcon, except prairie falcons are suspected to spend more time hunting small mammals and small birds in grassland and prairie habitat types. Although such habitat types suitable for hunting does exist within the Tenderfoot Creek corridor, historical use by Prairie Falcons have not been recorded. Selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to alter habitat suitability and adverse impacts on this species would not be anticipated. <i>Further analysis is unwarranted.</i>
Northern 3-Toed Woodpecker (MIS)	<i>Suspected.</i> This woodpecker species is fairly common in the Little Belt Mountains; coniferous forest types that contain snags at natural, historic levels are considered suitable habitats capable of maintaining endemic population levels of this species. All three parcels proposed for exchange (and surrounding forests immediately adjacent to these parcels as well) are dominated by mature forest age classes and contain adequate snag numbers to support this species. Because of the large amount of mature forest types within the surrounding landscape, selection of either exchange alternative would not be expected to appreciably alter habitat suitability even if vegetation projects within exchange parcels were implemented in future years that resulted in a net loss of snags. Significant adverse impacts on this species would not be anticipated in either alternative, <i>and further analysis is unwarranted.</i>

T= Threatened, E=Endangered, S=Sensitive, MIS=Management Indicator Species

Gray Wolf (E)

The Little Belt Mountains are part of the Yellowstone National Park (YNP) experimental population area for gray wolves released in 1994. Although wolves have not been released in or near the Little Belt Mountains, they are expected to expand from YNP release sites and may eventually inhabit the project area. These wolves are classified as "nonessential experimental wolves" under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended. Section 10(j) of ESA states that "nonessential experimental animals are not subject to formal consultation of the Act unless they occur on land designated as a national wildlife refuge or national park" (50 CFR Part 17, Fed. Reg. Vol 59, No 224). According to section 7 of ESA, nonessential experimental wolves found outside of national wildlife refuges and national park lands will be treated as if they were only proposed for listing (50 CFR Part 17, Fed. Reg. Vol. 59, No 224). Under section 7, Federal agencies are required to establish conservation programs for the particular species and to informally confer with USFWS on actions that will likely jeopardize the continued existence of the proposed species to be listed as threatened or endangered (50 CFR Part 17, Fed. Reg. Vol 59, No 224).

Although some sporadic sightings of wolves in the Little Belt Mountain Range have been reported to Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Forest Service personnel in the recent past, few sightings have been undeniably confirmed. The latest confirmed observation of a wolf in the Little Belts was reported by Wildlife Services (ADC) personnel in January of 2004. This observation was of a single individual in the

Blacktail Hills area of the Dry Wolf drainage on the Judith Ranger District (several miles east of the proposed project area). Wolves are not known to regularly frequent the Little Belt Mountain Range, and no pack activities (including den sites or rendezvous sites) have been reported in the Little Belts or within the Tenderfoot Creek drainage in recent times. When wolves do occur in the Little Belts, they are most likely single, dispersing individuals from established wolf packs in the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Rockies (northwestern Montana or Alberta, Canada) Ecosystems.

Canada Lynx (T)

As described in the Introduction of this section, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) latest list of threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species known or suspected to occur within the Jefferson Division of the Lewis and Clark National Forest does not include the Canada lynx; although lynx historically occurred within the Little Belts and habitat for the species is suspected, the Little Belts are currently considered *unoccupied* by lynx per definitions jointly developed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Forest Service and as described in a 2006 amendment to the *Canada Lynx Conservation Agreement* (USDA FS, USDI FWS 2006). Per the amended agreement, USFWS consultation on projects occurring within *unoccupied habitat* is not required. However, in March of 2007, a Record of Decision (ROD) for the *Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction EIS* was signed; this decision provides lynx management direction (and amends Forest Plans) for all Forests within R1 of the Forest Service, including the Lewis & Clark National Forest (USDA Forest Service 2007). **Per this decision, lynx management direction was incorporated into all forest plans but would only apply to occupied lynx habitat; management direction for forests with unoccupied lynx habitat should be "considered"** (especially the direction regarding linkage habitat), but would not have to be followed until such time lynx occupancy is undeniably established (Ibid). The assessment below describes how the proposed exchange may impact lynx habitat and whether or not implementing either alternative would meet management direction described in the *Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction EIS* ROD.

Lynx Population Status: Verified lynx occurrence records (trapping records, museum specimens, etc...) indicate lynx have historically occurred within the Little Belt Mountain Range (Ruggerio et al. 2000). Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks records indicate that the last legally trapped lynx in the Little Belts occurred in 1980 and 1981, when three individuals were taken; one of those was taken from the Harley Park Area approximately 7 miles east of the proposed Z1 exchange parcel.

Furbearer snow track surveys conducted by US Forest Service and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologists in various locations within the Little Belt Mountain range since 1994 have found three separate track sets believed to be that of lynx. One of those was recorded in 1997 near Harley Park, and another was recorded in 2002 near Wet Park; both sets of track records are located within 10 miles east of the proposed Z1 exchange parcel. Track observations are difficult to validate, however, and accurate identification is heavily dependent on snow conditions at the time of observation and the observer's skill and experience in identifying animal tracks.

Biologists on the Lewis and Clark National Forest completed a survey for lynx in the Little Belt Mountain Range during the summer/fall months of 1999 through 2001 using a survey method referred to as “hair snagging,” which utilizes hair snares to capture hair from carnivores enticed by scent lures to detection stations, and DNA testing to validate their visits. The Little Belt surveys were conducted per protocols developed for the National Lynx Survey (McKelvey et al. 1999), and were part of the larger national effort to find any remaining lynx and/or lynx populations in the lower 48 states. These surveys were managed and coordinated by USFS biologists in the Northern Region Office and Rocky Mountain Research Station in Missoula, MT. Several hair samples were collected during the Little Belts survey, and were submitted to the Carnivore Genetics Lab in Missoula for analysis. DNA results from the lab confirmed that hair samples were from bobcats, coyotes, bears, and other mammals, but none were confirmed as being lynx. The Little Belts’ hair snagging survey covered approximately 64,000 acres of contiguous lynx habitat, but did not include any of the Tenderfoot Creek drainage where this proposed exchange would occur.

A Forest Bio-Tech conducting hair snagging surveys in September of 2001 visually sighted what he thought was a lynx near Hoover Springs several miles east of the project area. However, this visual observation (as well as the snow track observations mentioned earlier) lacks positive validation, and it is therefore unknown if any lynx individuals occur anywhere within the Little Belt Mountain range at the present time. As is the case with many occurrence data in the lower 48 states, researchers are currently unsure if historical data in the Little Belts represent the presence of past, persistent populations, or if they represent the presence of linkage zones for immigrating individuals from known populations in NW Montana, Canada or Alaska (Ruggerio et al. 2000).

Lynx Habitat Status: Plan direction in the *Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction* ROD is based in large part upon recommendations in the *Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy* (CLCAS) (Ruediger et al. 2000). Using habitat-modeling guidelines provided in the CLCAS, lynx habitat on NF lands within the Little Belts was modeled and mapped, and further subdivided into Lynx Analysis Units (LAU’s) based on 6th code watershed boundaries. Modeling parameters are on file at the Lewis and Clark Forest Supervisor’s office. LAUs approximate the size of a female’s annual home range, and encompass all seasonal habitats; they are intended to provide analysis units of the appropriate scale with which to assess potential direct and indirect effects of projects or activities on individual lynx, and to monitor habitat changes. The private exchange parcel Z1 occurs within modeled lynx habitat LAU LB6 (**Exhibit - WL1**). Proposed FS exchange parcels F1 and F2 are not located within mapped lynx habitat. Thus, the assessment that follows in Chapter IV will compare the effects of exchanging for the private parcel Z1 under Alt 1 or not exchanging for parcel Z1 under Alt 2 to applicable lynx standards and guidelines defined in the *Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction* ROD.

Fire suppression actions over the past 80+ years have interrupted naturally occurring fire regimes that “stand replace” some conifer stands, and homogenous forest conditions now

exist that are less diverse than would have occurred historically. As a result, young stands (10-30 years old) that tend to support good snowshoe hare populations and good foraging habitat for lynx are poorly represented in the Tenderfoot Drainage and within LAU LB6; currently within LB6, only 15% of all habitat suitable for lynx (13,975 acres) is considered suitable for lynx foraging. Fire suppression actions are likely to continue in future years. Regeneration timber harvest can create suitable foraging habitat for snowshoes and lynx, but few to none have occurred in past years, and none are planned for the near future. Most of the Tenderfoot Drainage (and LB6) is within a Forest Plan management allocation (Roadless MA) that does not support significant timber harvest management actions; unless the Forest Plan is changed, significant timber harvest management actions that would improve foraging conditions are unlikely in future years.

Management Indicator Species (MIS)

The National Forest Management Act and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 219.19) require that National Forest System lands provide for a diversity of plant and animal communities to meet overall multiple-use objectives. The Forest Plan developed forest-wide management standards to provide for diverse plant and animal communities while achieving multiple-use objectives across the Forest (pp. 2-23 to 2-73 of Forest Plan). Management Standards (pp. 2-30 to 2-37 of Forest Plan) provide guidance for management of general wildlife habitat coordination, indicator species, and species that warrant special habitats (old growth, cavity habitat, and rare plants). Management indicator species (MIS) are used to monitor effects of management activities on viable populations of groups of similar species with the same or similar habitat requirements. These management indicator species groups include: species that are threatened, endangered or sensitive (TES); species that are hunted, fished or trapped; species of special interest; or species having special habitat needs. TES species identified for analysis in Table 1 (gray wolf and Canada lynx) were discussed in the sections above. There are a number of wildlife game species (hunted or trapped) native to the project area, and they were identified/discussed in Table 1. Elk are one of the most common hunted species in the project area, and since they also tend to be most sensitive to human disturbances, they were selected for further, more detailed analysis in the section below.

Special habitats identified in the Forest Plan include old growth. A brief discussion of the potential for old growth impacts are also discussed below.

Elk (MIS)

The project area provides a wide variety of habitats that supports healthy populations of big game wildlife species native to the Little Belts. Elk and other hunted big game wildlife species (including mule deer, whitetail deer, moose, mountain lions, and black bears) are common to the project area. Use of the exchange project area by these species (including elk) is generally limited to summer and fall months (summer range); the area is not considered elk calving, deer fawning, or big game winter range.

Population Status: Elk populations in Montana are managed by Montana Department Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP) in accordance with the *Statewide Elk Management*

Plan, which was first developed in 1992 and recently amended in 2005. The exchange project area is within the Little Belts Mountains Elk Management Unit (EMU), which includes Hunting Districts (HD's) 413, 416, 418, 420, 432, 448, 454, and 540. Exchange parcel F1 is located within HD 416; parcels F2 and Z1 are located within HD 413. Currently, elk population levels within the Little Belts EMU meet or exceed MDFWP population management objectives.

Habitat Status: In general existing summer/fall forage quality and quantity for elk within the Little Belts EMU is considered adequate to maintain current elk populations; however, and as was described in the Affected Environment section for Wildlife, fire suppression actions during the past 80+ years have disrupted natural fire cycles, resulting in dense conifer stands with less than desirable forage conditions under the forest canopy for wildlife mammals, especially big game ungulates. Forage availability for big game is also less than desirable in site-specific areas within some livestock grazing allotments where livestock forage utilization is high.

Elk security has been defined by Lyon and Christensen (1992) as “the protection inherent in any situation that allows elk to remain in a defined area despite an increase in stress or disturbance associated with the hunting season or other human activities.” When security is inadequate, elk become increasingly more vulnerable to harvest. As open road densities increase, otherwise secure habitats become more accessible and elk more vulnerable to harvest. This is especially true for bulls because hunting regulations have traditionally allowed greater opportunity for bull harvest as compared to cows. In response to reduced security and additional hunting pressure, elk will seek “safe” areas if they are available. Managing motorized access is one of the few factors affecting elk vulnerability that the Forest Service has management authority for (Christensen et al. 1993). Most other methods of managing elk populations are under the control of MDFWP.

Hillis et al. (1991) provided guidelines for managing elk security and limiting elk vulnerability. The key concept was to provide security areas for elk during the hunting season where they are less vulnerable to harvest. They defined secure areas as >250 acres in size and >0.5 miles from an open road, and recommended that they comprise >30% of analysis units. The 30% secure habitat level should be viewed as the minimum necessary during the hunting season, realizing that more may be necessary in some districts due to variables such as topography, vegetation cover and hunting pressure. Although Hillis' model is based on open roads, recent studies indicate that ATVs and motorcycles cause similar elk flight responses to that caused by full-sized motor vehicles (Wisdom et al. 2005). And for this reason, motorized ATV and motorcycle trails are included in security calculations when evaluating motorized influences on elk security habitat. Currently, HD 413 and 416 contain 26% and 14% secure habitat respectively during the bow hunting season (Sept 1 to Oct 15), and 31% and 15% secure habitat respectively during the rifle hunting season (Oct 15 to Dec 1). Desirable amounts of security habitat (30% or greater by HD, as defined by Hillis et al.) currently only exists within HD 413 during the big game rifle hunting season. **Exhibit - WL2** spatially displays existing security areas within the influence zone of proposed exchange parcels.

Big Game Summer Range: The project area provides a wide variety of habitats that supports healthy populations of big game wildlife species native to the Little Belts. Elk and other hunted big game wildlife species (including mule deer, whitetail deer, moose, mountain lions, and black bears) are common to the project area. Use of the exchange project area by these species (including elk) is generally limited to summer and fall months (summer range); the area is not considered elk calving, deer fawning, or big game winter range.

Old Growth

The Lewis & Clark Forest Plan (**FP Management Standard E-4**) requires that a minimum of 5 % of the commercial forest land within a Timber Compartment (TC) should be maintained in an old growth condition – a minimum stand size of 20 acres is recommended for OG retention. Exchange parcels in this proposal occur within three different Timber Compartments: parcels FS 1 and FS 2 are located within TC793, and parcel Z1 is located within TCs 783 and 785. On the Lewis and Clark NF, the OG assessment, designation, and allocation process occurs during the planning stages of major vegetation development projects. However, Forest Plan management allocations (MAs) for the lower and middle reaches of the Tenderfoot do not emphasize timber harvest or other major vegetation actions. As such, the OG allocation process has not been completed for timber compartments where this proposal would occur.

FS parcels F1 and F2 and private parcel Z1 were visited in October of 2006 to assess general forest and habitat conditions. OG characteristics were noted for all three parcels at that time. FS parcels F1 and F2 are primarily mature stands of Douglas fir (DF) mixed with small inclusions of lodgepole pine (LPP). Overall, crown closures for both stands do not exceed 50% and stand ages do not exceed 150 years in age. Most stands within both parcels are single storied and decadency is lacking in both parcels (large numbers of snags and down logs). Stand compositions/structures are similar in the private Z1 parcel, except that LPP is more heavily represented. All three parcels lack sufficient characteristics to be considered OG; none meet minimum requirements for stand age (>200 years) and minimum tree size (4-5 trees per acre exceeding 17-19 inches in diameter) recommended by Green et al. (1992).

Fisheries

No fish are found in any of the waters contained in the exchange parcels. Westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) are present in South Fork Tenderfoot Creek downstream from the confluence of the unnamed tributary which crosses the National Forest System (NFS) exchange parcel in section 32. However, less than 10% of the habitat occupied by WCT in SF Tenderfoot Creek occurs below this confluence. No fish reside in Mongar Creek. Below the confluence of Mongar Creek, SF Tenderfoot Creek is heavily silted from road sediment and supports few fish. The South Fork joins main Tenderfoot Creek less than a quarter mile downstream, at which point its sediment load is absorbed into the greater discharge volume of the Tenderfoot. As noted in the Hydrology Report, stream reaches

in the NFS exchange parcels in the unnamed tributary and Mongar Creek were rated “At Risk” according to the Sheep Creek Range EIS, due to livestock grazing and other agricultural uses. The unnamed tributaries on the Taylor Hills parcel appear to be in proper functioning condition. Columbia spotted frogs and western toads have been found in similar riparian habitats in the Little Belts and may use any of the wetlands in the exchange parcels as well, although no breeding sites are known to occur there.

Water Rights, Wetlands, Floodplains

Water Rights: One water right pertinent to the land exchange was found, 41J207111-00, owned by Zehntner brothers. It is a statement of claim for surface waters from Taylor Hills Creek in the NE ¼, NE ¼ Section 24. The purpose is stock use at the rate of 10 gallons/minute and total annual volume of 2 acre-feet.

Wetlands: Executive Order 11990 (May 24, 1977, 42 F.R. 26961) directs Federal agencies to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in acquiring, managing and disposing of Federal lands and facilities. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, sloughs, potholes, wet meadows and natural ponds.

The Taylor Hills tract contains wetlands. An unnamed tributary of Tenderfoot Creek begins in the large meadow of the tract and flows north to south in a wet meadow with riparian sedge, for and shrub cover. Within the property, willow and birch cover is fair. The property is grazed by livestock which has an impact on streambanks. A second unnamed tributary to Tenderfoot Creek begins from springs on the east edge of the Taylor Hills tract. This tributary also has fair riparian sedge, forb and shrub cover. Both tributaries appear to have functioning condition within the tract.

The Taylor Hills tract includes approximately 5.2 acres of wetlands (See Appendix A). The condition of the wetlands on the Taylor Hills tract based on riparian function is fair.

No wetlands were found on the Forest Service tracts except the narrow band immediately associated with the streams themselves.

Floodplains: Floodplains are defined as the lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters, including at a minimum, that area subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. Under Executive Order 11988, Federal agencies are directed to take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.

The Forest Hydrologist has determined that the Zehntner tract includes approximately 0.4 acres of floodplains. The condition of the floodplains on the Taylor Hills tract based on riparian function is fair.

The two Forest Service parcels have floodplains along Mongar Creek in the S ½ Section 30 and along an unnamed tributary to South Fork Tenderfoot Creek in NW ¼ Section 32 both in T14N, R5E. Based on lengths of streams, 100 year peak flows and floodplain widths the Forest Hydrologist has determined that there are approximately 2.1 acres of floodplains in these two parcels (See Appendix A).

Streams on both FS parcels were evaluated according to the Proper Functioning Condition Assessment process (USDI Bureau of Land Management 1998) for the Sheep Creek Range Analysis FEIS (2004). Both streams showed approximately 30 percent cumulative bank instability due to livestock grazing and the reaches were determined to be functioning at risk.

Cultural Resources

The cultural resource inventory took place only on the NFS parcels identified to be exchanged out of Federal ownership. The inventory identified two sites, both linear irrigation ditches, the Mongar Ditch and the Rye Field Ditch. Both ditches were evaluated, both pass through multiple jurisdictions (private, State, Federal) along their lengths, both have had changes, updates and introduction of modern elements. Both sites were determined to be ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to their lack of integrity.

Cultural resource inventory was not required on Taylor Hills Parcel Z1, identified for acquisition into Federal ownership. Homestead Entry Survey 185 includes several homestead structures, including a remnant cabin, barn, shop and implements. These structures are recognized as potentially having historic value, although no inventory or research has been required or conducted to date. Forest Service management intent would be to record the site and determine eligibility through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If deemed eligible, the site would then be managed as an historic site.

Noxious Weeds

No significant noxious weed infestations are known to occur within Parcels F1 and F2, nor were any observed within HES 185, although an indigenous level is always present due to introduction and infestation sources from motorized use on roads and trails (a primary introduction and infestation source), livestock presence, and normal agricultural activities.

Range and Allotment Management

A sliver of the Tenderfoot Allotment, formerly permitted to Keith and Becky Ledger, extends into Parcel F1 on the south/southwest edge. It borders the Zehntner Special Use

Pasture permit fence. If Parcel F1 is conveyed to Zehnter, this sliver of Tenderfoot Allotment would then be on Zehnter private property. Federal regulations require the Forest Service to notify holders of term grazing permits two years in advance of any proposal including land exchanges, which could result in NFS lands being devoted to another public use which excludes livestock grazing. Allotment permit holders may waive this requirement in writing. The LCNF sent this letter of notification to Legers' on 4/21/04, asking for a waiver. They refused to sign the waiver; however the two year notification requirement expired in May 2006.

Parcel F2 is located within the Bald Hills Allotment which is issued to Zehnter and thus is not an issue.

HES 185 (Parcel Z1) is located within the Bald Hills Allotment held by Zehntner, with the HES 185 stock carrying capacity deleted from grazing fees charged for the Bald Hills Allotment. The management of this inholding has been released by Zehntner to the Forest Service for overall management under the Bald Hills Allotment Management Plan.

Special Use Permit Authorizations

Special use permit KIN 0011 is authorized to Zehntner for a 0.5 miles of water transmission ditch, located on NFS system lands in Parcel F1, planned for disposal. Special use permit WSS 0022 is authorized to Zehntner for a fence line and pasture that includes segments of NFS lands included within Parcels F1 and F2, planned for disposal.

Timber Resources

The initial cruise of sawtimber and sawtimber appraisal reports for the Federal Parcels and for HES 185 were conducted in July 2004 by the L&C NF timber staff. The appraisals determined the value of the timber based on standard Forest Service transaction evidence. These values will vary quarter by quarter. The appraisal did not include an estimate of costs to Zehntner to build 4.1 miles of log haul road into HES 185, but again simply the comparison appraisal values between public and private properties proposed for exchange.

Because appraisal values for comparison to 25% difference in value must be less than 1 year old, a revised sawtimber appraisal was conducted in December 2006 by the L&C NF Timber staff. This December 2006 appraisal accounted for a July 2006 wildfire into HES 185 that accounted for loss of approximately 3 acres of timber volume. The sawtimber values remained at less than 25% difference between public and private values. Federal parcels F1 and F2 were determined to contain 125 net timbered acres with a net sawlog volume of 2,529 ccf (cubic feet). HES (Parcel Z1) 185 was determined to contain 123 net timbered acres with a net sawlong volume of 3,038 ccf (cubic feet). This net acreage and volume took into account the July 2006 wild- fire that partial burned nearly 5 acres of timber land on HES 185, with a net loss of about 3 acres of timber land.