

Broadaxe Recreation Input

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I. Existing Condition:

Forest Highway 50 (FH 50) provides a major access route to the upper St. Joe Ranger District. It is a popular access route for people visiting the District from Montana, from Coeur d' Alene, Idaho and from Spokane, Washington via Interstate 90. FH 50 provides access to St. Regis, Montana and Little Joe Road 282 over Gold Summit. FH 50 is a two-lane, paved secondary highway that was designated as a state scenic byway in the winter of 2005. The Montana side of this route is currently a two-lane, gravel surface road. It is scheduled for paving in 2006. Use of the road is expected to increase due to the scenic byway designation and the eventual paving to Interstate 90. FH 50 provides one of the major access points to the Stateline Road at Gold Summit on the Idaho-Montana border.

Stateline Road 391 is a high-clearance, primitive road that follows the ridgeline along the Idaho-Montana border. It is popular for recreationists seeking a high country, more primitive type driving experience. There are several small dispersed (undeveloped) camping sites along the road as well as several areas where visitors can get a good view of the surrounding mountains and valleys.

Road 3719 is a 4-wheel drive road that starts at the junction of FH 50 and Stateline Road 391. It accesses several small dispersed sites and one large campsite at the junction with Road 1405 and Broadaxe Creek. This road is used mainly during big game hunting seasons but is also used during the summer months to access Road 1405 which is currently open to vehicles less than 50 inches wide (ATVs).

Road 3694 is currently brushed in essentially blocking any motorized access.

Road 1405 is currently open to vehicles less than 50 inches wide.

II. Design Features Relating to Recreation:

Campsites: Dispersed camping spots would be protected and maintained along all open roads in the project area.

New Pull-outs, Log Landing Sites and Turn-arounds: Where feasible on open roads, newly established pull-outs, log landing sites and turn-arounds would be maintained and converted to dispersed campsites at the end of timber sales activities.

Stateline Road: Stateline Road 391 would be open to the public on weekends throughout sale activities. It would be open during the week from 5:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. daily. For weekend use it would remain open from 5:00 p.m. on Fridays until 5:00 a.m. on Mondays.

Road 3719: Road 3719 would be kept reasonably free of equipment and products to allow public access.

Road 3694: A temporary gate would be placed on Road 3694 as soon as it is brushed and bladed to avoid establishing public use of the road system. The gate would block all public motorized access. It would be replaced with a permanent restriction device at the end of sale activities.

Road 1405: A temporary gate would be placed on Road 1405 as soon as it is brushed and bladed, and access for vehicles less than 50 inches would be provided. The gate would be replaced with a permanent restriction device with access provided for vehicles less than 50" (ATV access) at the end of sale activities.

III. Effects of the Proposed Action

Approximately 2 ¼ miles of Stateline Road would be converted from high clearance vehicle access to passenger vehicle access temporarily. The maintenance level after sale activities would return to provide for high clearance vehicles. Over time the road would revert to high clearance access.

Approximately two miles of Road 3719 would be converted from 4-wheel drive access to passenger car access.

Stateline Road 391 may be blocked for logging operations during the week days. The sale could be in operation for two to three years.

All of the roads except FH 50 within the project area are narrow, single-lane roads with pull-outs. When timber hauling would be taking place, the road systems would not be very conducive for public traffic.