

APPENDIX C.
BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST
SCREENING PROCESS FOR POTENTIAL MOTORIZED RECREATION ROUTES
FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The following is a three screen process used by the Bitterroot National Forest (BNF) to screen potential CHANGES (open vs closed) to the existing motorized use condition requested by the public, or internally.¹ This tool is not used to screen or consider seasonal use or vehicle type changes. If, after consideration of the screening questions the team recommends motorized use for the route **then the seasonality of use and the vehicle type** should be discussed, decided on and included in the recommendation.

1st Screen – Forest Plan Consistency

2nd Screen – Resource Considerations

3rd Screen – Recreation Consideration

1ST SCREEN – FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY

1. Does the Forest Plan (ROS class or classes) allow motor vehicle use?

Yes **No**

Notes:

(If yes, continue evaluation. Note any other pertinent information for later reference. If only a portion of the opportunity is within a motorized ROS class or classes, identify the segments that can be considered. If no, the road, trail or area should be considered for non-motorized uses.)

2. Is the opportunity entirely on NFS lands?

Yes **No**

(If no, are there public rights-of-way across private land or agreements with other agencies for use of other public land?)

Yes **No**

Notes:

¹ Note: All of the criteria listed in “36 CRF §212.55 Criteria for designation of roads, trails, and areas” will be considered through the analysis process, but not all of them were used at this coarse screening level.

(If yes, continue evaluation. If no, designation cannot occur until rights-of-ways or agreements are obtained. List each right-of-way and agreement. Be sure to note any restrictions on the right of public use.)

2ND SCREEN QUESTIONS – RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS
 (FOR OPENING MOTORIZED ROUTES, A ZERO IN ONE OR MORE CATEGORIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED UNDESIRABLE FROM A RESOURCE PERSPECTIVE WITHOUT ADDITIONAL MITIGATION. FOR EITHER OPENING OR CLOSING ROUTES - THE LARGER THE NUMBER THE MORE DESIRABLE THE CHANGE IS FROM A RESOURCE PROTECTION PERSPECTIVE.)

1. Could the route change (open to motorized) degrade water quality or affect designated beneficial uses; or could the change (close to motorized) improve water quality?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
0	Could create a substantial sediment contribution to a stream, or add cumulatively to a stream on the MTDEQ 303(d) list for sediment. Sediment not able to be mitigated.	Would have no effect on sediment to streams.
3	Could create only minor sediment contribution, with little potential to affect beneficial uses.	May reduce sediment in stream not listed under 303(d), or relatively high in a 303d watershed stream with very little chance of sediment reaching streams.
6	Sediment not an issue due to location, physical character of route, or other mitigating factor.	Could reduce a substantial sediment contribution to a stream, or could reduce sedimentation to a stream on the 303(d) list.

2. Could proposed, endangered, threatened, or sensitive aquatic species be negatively or positively affected by the route change? (Bull Trout, Westslope Cutthroat)

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
0	Proposed, threatened or endangered aquatic species are present and would likely be affected by the route change.	Proposed, threatened or endangered aquatic species not known to be present and therefore not affected by the route change or no effect due to physical character of route or other

		mitigating factor. (rocky ridgeline trails).
3	Sensitive and/or T & E aquatic species present but would not be likely to be affected by the route change	Sensitive and/or T & E aquatic species present and could possibly be positively affected by the route change, but not likely.
6	TE&S species not known to be present and therefore not affected by change or no effect due to physical character of route or other mitigating factor. (rocky ridgeline trails).	Aquatic threatened or endangered aquatic species are present and would likely be positively affected by change

3. Could the route change negatively affect known occurrences of sensitive plant species (open)? (weed spread concern) OR could the change reduce threats to sensitive plant species (close)?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
0	Sensitive plants are found on the route	No sensitive plants known in area
3	Sensitive plants are known within 300 feet of route	Sensitive plants are known within 300 feet of route
6	Sensitive are not known in the area	Sensitive plants are found on the route

4. Could the route change affect known threatened, endangered or sensitive wildlife species' nests and/or dens?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
0	Wildlife T, E or Sensitive Species' nest/den are on the route and could be affected by route change.	Wildlife T, E or Sensitive Species' nests and/or dens are not known.
3	Wildlife T, E or Sensitive Species' nest/den are known within 1320 feet (1/4 mi.) of route and might be affected by route change.	Wildlife T, E or Sensitive Species' nest/den are known within 1320 feet (1/4 mi.) of route and might be affected by route change.
6	Wildlife T, E or Sensitive Species' nests and/or dens are not known.	Wildlife T, E or Sensitive Species' nest/den are on the route and could be affected by route change.

5. Could the route change spread weeds where there is currently non – or little?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to
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	Motorized	Motorized
0	No weeds present on or adjacent to route, or where the route leads.	Route moderately to heavily infested with weeds.
6	Route moderately to heavily infested with weeds.	No weeds present on or adjacent to route, or where the route leads.

6. Could trail segments along the route cause soil disturbance and erosion because of trail grade?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
0	Trail grade could be >35% for at least 100 feet has high risk of soil disturbance from off-road vehicle impacts. These steep trail segments are also at high risk for erosion during precipitation events.	Trail grade likely <15% on any trail segment length has minimal risk of soil disturbance from off-road vehicle impacts. Gentle sloping trail segments have minimal risk of erosion during precipitation events.
3	Trail grade could be 15 - 35% for at least 100 feet has moderate risk of soil disturbance from off-road vehicle impacts. These moderately steep trail segments also have moderate erosion risk during precipitation events.	Trail grade could be 15 - 35% for at least 100 feet has moderate risk of soil disturbance from off-road vehicle impacts. These moderately steep trail segments also have moderate erosion risk during precipitation events.
6	Trail grade likely <15% on any trail segment length has minimal risk of soil disturbance from off-road vehicle impacts. Gentle sloping trail segments have minimal risk of erosion during precipitation events.	Trail grade could be >35% for at least 100 feet has high risk of soil disturbance from off-road vehicle impacts. These steep trail segments are also at high risk for erosion during precipitation events.

7. Could route encourage encroachment in Wilderness?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
0	Yes, route accesses the wilderness boundary.	No, route does not access the wilderness.
6	No, route does not access the wilderness.	Yes, route accesses the wilderness boundary.

8. Could route have social impacts (noise, dust, disturbance) to private residences?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
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0	Yes, route is within 3/4 mile of a private residence, or clearly audible.	Route greater than 2 mile of a private residence, or not likely audible.
3	Route is between 3/4 to 2 mile of private residence, or possible audible.	Route is between 3/4 to 2 mile of a private residence, or possible audible.
6	Route is greater than 2 mile from private residence and not likely audible.	Route is within 3/4 mile of a private residence, or clearly audible.

Note: Any proposals to open routes that are recommended by the IDT/Districts after the initial screening will be reviewed by the heritage specialist and scored as follows.

Could heritage or cultural sites be affected by the route change?

Points	Proposed Change is to OPEN to Motorized	Proposed Change is to CLOSE to Motorized
0	Yes, route goes through a known area of potential effect.	Route does not go through a known area of potential effect or high probability area.
3	Route goes through area of high probability for heritage or cultural sites.	Route goes through area of high probability for heritage or cultural sites.
6	No, route does not go through a known area of potential effect or high probability area.	Yes, route goes through known area of potential effect.

3RD SCREEN QUESTIONS – MOTORIZED RECREATION OPPORTUNITY
 (THE LARGER THE NUMBER THE MORE DESIRABLE THE ROUTE IS FROM A MOTORIZED OPPORTUNITY PERSPECTIVE)

1. Would the route provide a loop opportunity and/or adequate mileage for a motorized trail?

- 0 points – No opportunity for loop route, less than 15 miles in length or would require extensive new construction
- 3 points – Some new construction required for loop opportunity but only short connection between existing routes and/or would need to open a portion of a currently closed route; and loop length of 15 miles or more
- 6 points – Existing loop(s) all forest service jurisdiction and length of 15 miles or more

2. Would the route provide an alternative to having motorized mixed use on roads at maintenance level 3 or higher?

- 0 points – the route doesn't provide an alternative to having motorized mixed use on roads at maintenance level 3 or higher?
- 6 points – the route does provide an alternative to having motorized mixed use on roads at maintenance level 3 or higher?

3. Are adequate parking/trailhead facilities available?

- 0 points – No existing trailheads or suitable undeveloped areas with potential for parking.
- 3 points - No existing trailheads but adequate spaces for easily developed parking.
- 6 points – Some existing trailheads/parking areas, and other spaces for easily developed parking.

4. What is the likelihood of creating a problem or continuing an existing problem (such as overuse or illegal use) if the route IS open?

- 0 points – High likelihood of creating a problem or there is an existing problem.
- 6 points – Little or no likelihood of creating a problem or there is no large existing problem.

5. Would the route provide opportunities in an area of high demand?

- 0 points – Potentially serves a small number of motorized users.
- 6 points – Potentially serves area of moderate to high motorized use demand.

6. Would the route provide a unique opportunity not available in the area?

- 0 points – Similar opportunities provided in the immediate area.
- 6 points - A unique opportunity not provided in the surrounding area.

7. Does the route/area location minimize conflicts between motor vehicle use and other existing or proposed uses?

- 0 points – the route/area location does not minimize conflicts between motor vehicle use and other existing or proposed uses?
 - 6 points – the route/area location does minimize conflicts between motor vehicle use and other existing or proposed uses?
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IDT / DISTRICT RECOMMENDATION

Considering the answers to the resource considerations and the recreation opportunity questions the team should decide whether they recommend the route be open or closed to motorized recreation use for the proposed action.

If they recommend it be open **then the seasonality of use and the vehicle type** should be discussed, decided on and included in the recommendation.

District Rangers make the ultimate determinations on what will be included in the proposed action for their respective Districts, with a review by the Forest Supervisor.