

Chapter 2: Public Participation, Issues, and Alternatives

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the public involvement process, identifies issues, and describes and compares three alternatives considered for management of motorized and non-motorized travel. A summary of effects by alternative is also displayed at the end of this chapter.

2.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Sioux Ranger District Travel Management EIS public participation is summarized in this section. The summary describes public involvement, identifies persons and organizations contacted during preparation of the EIS, and specifies time frames for accomplishing goals in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.6

Public involvement includes the steps necessary to identify and address public concerns and needs. The public involvement process assists agencies in: (1) broadening the information base for decision making; (2) informing the public about the Proposed Action and the potential impacts that could result from the project; and (3) ensuring that public needs are understood by the agencies.

Public participation is required by NEPA at three specific points: the scoping period, review of the Draft EIS, and receipt of the Record of Decision. The 2005 Motorized Travel Rule also specifies that there must be public involvement in the process of designating motorized routes and trails.

Table 2-1 lists the public meetings conducted in conjunction with the process to date.

2.2.1 PUBLIC SCOPING

Scoping is a process used to help identify specific areas of concern related to the proposal during the early portion of the detailed environmental analysis. The initial scoping document (see Project Record) for this project was distributed on October 22, 2007 to approximately 287 individuals, government agencies, tribal governments, news media, businesses, and organizations that have shown interest in projects on the Custer National Forest, and in particular on the Sioux Ranger District. The scoping document provided information on the purpose and need for the project, described the proposed action, and asked for comments. A news release advertisement inviting comments was placed in the Billings Gazette (Billings, MT) on October 29, 2007. News releases were sent to local newspapers including the Billings Gazette, Ekalaka Eagle, Fallon County Times all in Montana, Bowman County Pioneer in North Dakota, Nation's Center News and Rapid City Journal in South Dakota and radio stations in Rapid City, Bowan, Buffalo, Baker, and Sturgis. These media efforts helped to publicize the proposal and comment period. Interested parties were asked to comment within 30 days, which ended November 26, 2007.

Public meetings were held in Camp Crook and Buffalo, South Dakota, and Ekalaka, Montana in November 2007 to discuss the scoping document (see Table 2-1).

Table 2-1. Summary of Public Meetings

Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
Proposed Action Scoping Meetings		
Camp Crook, SD	November 5, 2007, 6:00-8:00 pm	9
Ekalaka, MT	November 7, 2007, 6:00-8:00 pm	8
Buffalo, SD	November 8, 2007, 6:00-8:00 pm	13

In response to these efforts, 22 letters, personal comments, emails, or phone calls were received. The analysis of electronic, written, and verbal comments preliminarily identified several potential issues. Three of these issues were identified as significant issues and were used to formulate elements of the alternatives (see Issues section below).

2.2.2 NOTICE OF INTENT

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on September 5, 2008. The NOI stated that when the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was distributed, the public would have a 45-day comment period from the date when the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register. Also, a news release will be provided to local news media at the beginning of the 45-day comment period on the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS will be made available to interested parties identified in the updated District Travel Management Planning EIS mailing list.

2.3 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.

2.3.1 RECREATION

Concern about motorized recreation opportunities. Reductions in the amount of routes available for motorized use could reduce the opportunities available for motorized recreation, diminish the ability to retrieve big game using motorized routes, and reduce dispersed camping opportunities. Alternative A was developed to respond to this issue.

Indicators:

- Acres in rural, roaded natural, and semi-primitive motorized ROS settings within the District.
- Miles of motorized system roads and trails to be designated on the District.

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, reduce

opportunities for non-motorized big game hunting opportunities, and reduce opportunities for solitude, away from noise generated by motorized vehicles. Elements of Alternative B were developed in response to this issue.

Indicators:

- Acres in semi-primitive non-motorized and primitive ROS settings within the District.

Concern about opportunities for off-highway vehicle operation. The use of unlicensed off-highway vehicles on roads is not consistent with State of Montana and South Dakota 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 and B.

Indicators:

- Miles of mixed use system roads in the project area.
- Miles of motorized system trails in the project area.

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. Alternative B was developed in part to address concerns such as these.

2.3.2 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 could have an adverse effect to certain areas of traditional importance to local tribes.

Indicators:

- Number of sites potentially affected (directly and indirectly) on the District.
- Number of traditional cultural properties – culturally sensitive sites potentially affected on the District.
- Number of potentially affected NRHP Eligible Sites.

2.3.3 WILDLIFE

Concern about disturbance of wildlife and impacts to wildlife habitat. 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.

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Indicators:

- Effects determinations for federally listed threatened or endangered species, Forest Service sensitive species, Custer National Forest management indicator species, and other species of concern.
- Deer and Elk – Motorized Route Density and Percent secure habitat within deer and elk habitat on the District.
- General wildlife – Percent of land unit that is core wildlife habitat based on motorized and non-motorized routes on the District.

2.4 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.

2.4.1 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.

Indicators:

- Miles of actions that reduce risks on routes within the project area.
- Miles of actions that increase risks on routes within the project area.
- Effects determinations for listed Forest Service sensitive species and other species of concern.

2.4.2 SOILS

Adding routes to the transportation 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.

Indicator:

- Miles of motorized and non-motorized routes by high/very high and medium erosion hazard rating on the District.

2.4.3 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.

Indicators:

- Acres and Percent of potential vegetation impacts by high risk category for motorized routes on the District.

- Weed susceptible Acres within designated road corridors within the project area.
- Total weed infested Acres within motorized route potentially affected corridor.
- Effects determinations for listed Forest Service sensitive species and other species of concern.

2.4.4 ECONOMICS

The functional economic area that surrounds the District consists of Carter County in Montana and Harding County in South Dakota and the immediate surrounding counties. For the two-county functional economic area evaluated, 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 the economic report are difficult to estimate (see Project Record), the dominance of hunting as a recreation choice and the expectation that the number of hunters using the District is not expected to change as a result of the alternatives (see Chapter 3 Recreation) means that the proposed travel management changes would have little effect on the overall economy of the two-county area.

Given this information, no further discussion of this issue is included in the EIS.

2.4.5 AIR QUALITY

There is concern that the addition of routes to the transportation system may lead to an adverse impact on air quality. Encountering motorized use emissions and fugitive dust on Forest roads and trails could have an undesirable effect on the quality of a recreational experience. These effects are typically transitory in nature and not long lasting. There are typically good air dispersion characteristics and low inversion potential across the District. In addition, traffic is generally at lower speeds that result in less dust generation.

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 (MTDEQ, 2008 and SD DENR, 2008). There are no non-attainment areas in South Dakota. The nearest Montana non-attainment area for particulate matter is Lame Deer, MT (approx. 150 miles west) and Laurel, MT (approx. 300 miles west) with sulfur dioxide concerns.

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. Given this information, no further discussion of this issue is included in the EIS.

2.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL

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

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Table 2-4 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.

Tables 2-2, 2-3, and 2-6 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.

2.5.1 ALTERNATIVE A (EXISTING CONDITION)

The Custer National Forest (Forest) developed Alternative A in response to multiple public comments expressing a desire to designate most or all of the motorized routes identified in the 1999-2000 inventory of the District for public motorized use. This alternative consists of routes identified during the 1999-2000 inventory, excluding:

1. Routes that have been decommissioned, obliterated, or are otherwise unavailable for public motorized use based on documented decisions since 2000.
2. Routes for which the Forest Service has no legal right-of-way for public use. This is necessary to be in compliance with the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule guidance and to make this alternative viable for implementation. These routes were either identified as candidates for decommissioning/obliteration or, if an administrative need was identified, they were proposed for administrative use only. This affects 31 miles of routes.
3. Two miles of existing administrative routes that would remain administrative use only.

Consequently, Alternative A includes designating the majority of both system and non-system routes on the District for public motorized use. Primary motorized travelways would either be designated as roads, or where appropriate, as mixed motorized use roads. For the most part, all other routes would be designated as motorized trails. To maximize motorized opportunities, no season of use would be designated on any routes, and motorized trails would be designated for use by all motor vehicles. This alternative approximates the existing condition (e.g. motorized use of existing system and non-system routes).

Designation of motorized trails under this alternative is intended to: 1) expand opportunities for motorized recreation opportunities, and 2) more accurately describe the characteristics and nature of these routes. In other words, routes proposed to be motorized trails do not display characteristics typically associated with roads, such as surfacing, engineering, and prescribed clearing widths. In many cases, the routes were not engineered, do not have any surfacing which has resulted in rutting and no defined drainage, and they may become impassable when wet.

This alternative includes the following types of actions (see Appendix C for route specific actions):

- Add non-system routes as system roads or motorized trails (101 miles – 91 miles for public motorized use and 10 miles for administrative use).
- Do not designate existing system roads for public motorized use or administrative use (0.4 miles).
- Identify system roads for administrative use due to no legal public right-of-way (21 miles) or health and safety concerns with previous mining activities (3 miles).
- Convert system roads to motorized trail (210 miles).

- Designate system roads for mixed motorized use (116 miles).
- Remove existing season of use designations (148 miles).
- Do not designate dispersed vehicle camping due to health and safety concerns with previous mining activities (10 miles).

The 2001 Tri-State OHV Decision authorized dispersed vehicle camping within 300 feet of motorized routes on the District. During the past seven years, the District has not observed unacceptable adverse impacts from this activity that warrants proposing a change to this activity under this alternative. However, due to safety and health concerns related to past mining activities, 10 miles of motorized routes would not be designated for dispersed vehicle camping in the North Cave Hills.

The tables at the end of this section provide a summary of the elements associated with this alternative (Table 2-4) and a summary of alternative mileages (Tables 2-3 and 2-4). Appendix C provides a list of the route specific actions proposed under this alternative.

2.5.2 ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

Alternative B consists of designating a system of motorized routes that provides the public with motorized recreation opportunities, while addressing resource concerns and recreation opportunity concerns. Primary travelways included in this alternative would be designated as roads, or where appropriate, as mixed motorized use roads, and, for the most part, all other routes would be designated as motorized trails. Designation of motorized trails under this alternative is intended to: 1) expand opportunities for motorized recreation opportunities, and 2) more accurately describe the characteristics and nature of these routes. In other words, routes proposed to be motorized trails do not display characteristics typically associated with roads. They are in many cases very primitive.

The Forest Service followed this general screening process to develop this alternative:

1. System and non-system routes for which the Forest Service did not have a legal right-of-way for public motorized use were evaluated to determine if administrative use was needed. If needed, the routes were proposed for administrative use, if they were not needed they were identified as candidates for decommissioning or obliteration.
2. Recent decisions on actions within the District were reviewed to insure that any decisions about roads were incorporated.
3. The remaining system and non-system routes were evaluated to determine if there was an administrative, utilization (including recreation), resource, or protection need for the route. If a need existed, system routes were proposed for designation and non-system routes were proposed to be added to the system and designated. If no need was identified, system routes were identified as candidates for decommissioning and non-system routes were identified as candidates for obliteration.
4. At the same time, the Forest Service also assessed whether routes were parallel with each other, i.e. routes that were within ½ mile of each other. Where parallel routes existed, only one route was selected for public motorized designation.
5. Finally, based on public input, a season of use that limited motorized travel on some of the land units was developed. The purpose of this measure was to provide additional wildlife security and increase opportunities for non-motorized hunting. Forest Service personnel identified adjacent routes that would create consolidated areas accessible by primary

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travelways and proposed restricting motorized travel within those areas during rifle big-game hunting seasons – October 16 to November 30.

This alternative includes the following types of actions (see Appendix C for route specific actions):

- Add non-system routes as system roads or motorized trails (66 miles – 24 miles for public motorized use and 42 miles for administrative use).
- Do not designate existing system roads for public motorized use or administrative use (23 miles).
- Identify system roads for administrative use due to no legal public right-of-way (21 miles) or other resource, health and safety, or administrative concerns (76 miles).
- Convert system roads to motorized trail (73 miles).
- Designate system roads for mixed motorized use (57 miles).
- Designate system roads or trails with a season of use (45 miles).
- Remove existing season of use designations (4 miles).
- Do not designate dispersed vehicle camping due to health and safety concerns with previous mining activities (10 miles).

The 2001 Tri-State OHV Decision authorized dispersed vehicle camping within 300 feet of motorized routes on the District. During the past seven years, the District has not observed unacceptable adverse impacts from this activity that warrants proposing a change to this activity under this alternative. However, due to safety and health concerns related to past mining activities, 10 miles of motorized routes would not be designated for dispersed vehicle camping in the North Cave Hills.

Alternative B includes the designation of a combination of roads, mixed motorized use roads, and motorized trails. Because the biophysical effects of mixed motorized use roads and trails are identical, the mix of those types of routes in Alternative B could be changed in the Final EIS in response to public or internal comments related to social or management considerations without altering the biophysical effects, and as long as the overall miles are the same.

The tables at the end of this section provide a summary of the elements associated with this alternative (Table 2-4) and a summary of alternative mileages (Tables 2-3 and 2-4). Appendix C provides a list of the route specific actions proposed under this alternative.

2.5.3 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. The No Action Alternative also includes the existing vehicle types and seasons of use currently in force on the District (see Table 2-4 for details).

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.”

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.

System roads that the Forest Service does not have legal right-of-way for public 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 with the premise of the No Action Alternative.

Table 2-2. Summary of miles² of roads and trails by alternative.

Route Designation		Alternative A	Alternative B	No Action	
National Forest System Roads and Trails	Designated for public motorized use	Road: All types allowed (motorized mixed use)	116	57	0
		Road: Highway legal vehicles	70	162	399
		Trail: All types allowed	280	84	0
	<i>Subtotal</i>		466	303	399
	Administrative use only		36	141	2
	<i>Total Miles of System Routes</i>		502	444	401
Not designated		0	23	0	
Non-System Routes	Not converted to system roads or trails	3	38	104	
<i>Total Miles of Routes not designated</i>		3	61	104	
Total		505	505	505	

Table 2-3. 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	No Action
Yearlong	466	182	251
December 1 – October 15 (Provide Non-Motorized Hunting)	0	121	148
<i>Total</i>	466	303	399

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

Table 2–4. Summary of Elements for Each Alternative

Element	Alternative A (Existing Condition)	Alternative B	No Action Alternative
Type of Vehicle Designations	<p>In general, primary travelways would be designated as system roads, which are only available for use by highway-legal vehicles.</p> <p>The majority of high clearance vehicle (Maintenance Level 2) roads would be converted to system trails open to all motor vehicles.</p> <p>A limited number of roads would be designated as mixed motorized use where connections between proposed motorized trails were important.</p> <p>(The map package provides a display of the type of vehicle designation for each route.)</p>	Same as Alternative A.	System roads would be designated for use by highway legal vehicles.
Season of Use Designations	Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong.	<p>Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong except for the following seasons of use.</p> <p>December 1-October 15 – A portion of the OHV trails on several of the land units would have this season of use designation to provide additional wildlife security and to increase opportunities for non-motorized hunting. See Appendix C and the map package for the specific routes involved.</p>	<p>Season of use for all designated routes is yearlong except for the following seasons of use.</p> <p>December 1-October 15 – A portion of the roads in the Long Pines land unit would have this season of use designation to provide additional wildlife security and to increase opportunities for non-motorized hunting. See Appendix C and the map package for the specific routes involved.</p>
Dispersed Vehicle Camping Designations	Access for dispersed vehicle camping would be allowed within 300 feet of all designated system roads and motorized trails on the District, except for 10 miles of motorized routes in the North Cave Hills.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Administrative Use	Roads identified for administrative use are not designated for public motorized use due to the lack of legal right-of-way for public access and to protect the public from hazardous situations. Some existing administrative use roads exist at administrative sites and based on past decisions. Appendix C includes all non-system roads that would be converted to system roads and identified for administrative use, as well as any additional system roads that would be identified for administrative use.	Same as Alternative A.	Roads identified for administrative use are not designated for public motorized use based on policy (administrative sites) and past land management decisions. This alternative includes only those roads currently identified for administrative use.

2.5.4 ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

2.5.4.1 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, permit activities, and other official business purposes. All such use requires authorization from the appropriate Line Officer, detailing when, where, who, and under what circumstances motorized travel would be allowed.

2.5.4.2 System Roads Converted to Motorized Trails

System roads proposed to be designated as system motorized trails would be coincident routes. These coincident routes would be operated and maintained as a motorized system trail that is coincident with a road in storage. A road in storage is a road that the Forest Service may need in the future for administration of timber sales.

This is intended to address timber sale contract considerations. Receipts from timber sales can only be used for maintenance on roads. If a route needs maintenance or improvement for a timber sale, funds from the timber sale can be used for this work if it is a system road, but are prohibited from being used on system trails. For this reason, the Forest Service wants to maintain the option to change these routes back to roads if there is a need to do so in the future. Bringing a road out of storage would require that a NEPA analysis be conducted at that time.

This would involve 210 miles of motorized trails in Alternative A and 72 miles in Alternative B. There are no environmental effects associated with coincident routes – this information is only provided for the reader’s benefit.

2.5.4.3 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.

2.5.4.4 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.

2.5.4.5 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.

2.5.4.6 No Legal Right-of-Way for Public Access

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

2.5.4.7 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 roads are desired for motorized use, an action is required to add them to National Forest transportation system.

2.5.4.8 Dispersed Vehicle Camping Authorized Only 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.

2.5.4.9 Implementation

In order to implement this project, the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule requires the Forest to make a Motor Vehicle Use Map available to the public, free of charge. 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 remain in effect. The ROD and its implementation will supercede the existing network of motorized system roads when the Motor Vehicle Use Map is published and any associated orders are in place.

Sign purchase and installation is a one time cost, but the remaining costs such as patrolling and Motor Vehicle Use Map production would be incurred annually. Annual funding levels may vary.

2.5.4.10 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.

Background

2005 Motorized Travel Management Rule. Until recently, travel restrictions could only be enacted through two means on National Forests: the 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 261 Subpart A (restrictions or general prohibitions), and the 36 CFR 261 Subpart B (prohibitions that are created through special order).

The Subpart A prohibitions that apply to the use of roads and trails have historically dealt primarily with violations of applicable state laws that regulate licensing, noise, safe operation of vehicles,

damaging roads or trails, interfering with road or trail use, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, careless or reckless operation or in a manner in which damages resources or wildlife (36 CFR 262.12[a.]-[d.] and 36 CFR 261.13 [a.]-[i.]). These general prohibitions of the CFRs are considered “strict liability” prohibitions. This means that it is the user’s responsibility to know and adhere to these regulations without any additional notification or posting on the part of the agency. Recent changes to CFR regulations have added off-route motor vehicle travel to the Subpart A restrictions. (See further discussion below on this subject.)

Most travel restrictions that historically prohibited some sort of travel on National Forest were implemented through the 36 CFR subpart B authority for special orders, specifically 36 CFR 261.53 (special closures), 36 CFR 261.54 (use of Forest development roads), 36 CFR 261.55 (use of Forest development trails), and 35 CFR 261.56 (use of vehicles off Forest development roads). These specific sections of the CFRs permit the agency to prohibit certain uses of roads and trails to limit use to specific vehicle types and to prohibit off road travel.

The situation that especially hampers enforcement of these special order restrictions is the 36 CFR 261.51 (a) and (b) requirement for posting of these prohibitions. 36 CFR 261.51 (a) states, “Placing a copy of the order imposing each prohibition in the Offices of the Forest Supervisor and District Ranger, or equivalent Officer who has jurisdiction over the lands affected by the order AND (emphasis added),” 36 CFR 261.51 (b) states, “Displaying each prohibition imposed by an order in such locations and manner as to reasonably bring the prohibition to the attention of the public.” The latter requirement becomes very problematic when attempting to post area closure or trail restrictions on the ground across large areas. The simple issue is that without adequate posting on the ground, special order restrictions are less enforceable. Lack of maintenance and vandalism of posted prohibition signing creates ongoing issues, and has the effect of negating or jeopardizing the effectiveness of special order closures.

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.

The Forest Service’s Washington Office has established the format and the majority of the text that will appear on all MVUM maps prepared by the Forest Service. The text on these maps will include standardized information on the purpose and content of the map as well as a statement about motorized vehicle operator’s responsibilities and fines. The text states, “It is prohibited to possess or operate a motor vehicle on National Forest System lands on the Ashland Ranger District other than in accordance with these designations (36 CFR 261.13). Violations of 36 CFR 261.13 are subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months or both (18 U.S.C. 3571(e)).”

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Staffing. There is one full-time Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) stationed on the Custer National Forest. The District also has five permanent staff trained as Forest Protection Officers (FPO). FPOs have limited law enforcement authority and responsibilities compared to LEOs, but are capable of issuing citations for travel management violations associated with the prohibition created under the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule found at 36 CFR 261.13. Increasing the number of LEOs or FPOs is primarily a function of Forest and District budget and priorities. Changes in the budget to facilitate increases in law enforcement capability can be accomplished through changes in allocations within Forest and District budgets, securing additional budget funding from within the Northern Region, or supplementing budgets with grants and similar funds. Based on past practices, additional funding would most likely be used to hire additional seasonal FPOs, rather than full-time FPOs or LEOs.

Changes in Forest priorities to increase law enforcement capability would most likely occur through two options. First, the Forest can determine which programs, such as developed recreation, travel management enforcement, wildlife, etc., should be emphasized and allocate the funds to accomplish objectives related to those priorities. Another method is to prioritize the work of existing permanent and seasonal employees so that more than the current number of staff have the training and supervisory support to enforce violations of travel management decisions.

Post-MVUM Enforcement

This analysis will fulfill the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule requirements of review and public involvement for each of the action alternatives and no action. 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, LEOs and FPOs 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.

2.6 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 are already addressed by law, regulation or policy. Therefore, a number of alternatives were considered, but dismissed from detailed consideration for the reasons summarized below.

2.6.1 MOTORIZED DESIGNATED AREAS

The preamble to the 2005 Motorized Travel Rule indicates that designated areas “would have natural resource characteristics that are suitable for motorized vehicle use or would be so significantly altered by past actions that motor vehicle use might be appropriate.” (Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 216, p. 68274)

The Forest Service considered lands within the Sioux Ranger District, but did not identify any areas that “have natural resource characteristics that are suitable for motorized vehicle use”. No naturally-occurring tract of land on the District that does not possess natural resources that would be adversely impacted by long-term cross-country vehicle travel designation was identified.

The Forest Service also reviewed District lands for areas “significantly altered by past actions”, including mining, vegetation management, natural disasters, or other activities such that they are suitable for motorized cross-country vehicle travel. Several areas meet this definition in the Cave Hills land unit that were associated with past mining. However, these areas contain health and safety hazards in the form of radioactive soils exposed or deposited during mining activities. The Forest Service has taken measures to limit human exposure within these areas (i.e. area and road closures, silt catchments, water testing). Designating cross-country vehicle travel in these areas would be counter to these activities and pose a health and safety hazard.

2.6.2 DESIGNATE CLOSED ROUTES FOR GAME RETRIEVAL USE FROM 10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

This alternative is indirectly addressed by Alternative A, since all routes would be available for game retrieval under that alternative. Applying this approach to Alternative B was not considered practical or suitable. Affected routes would require additional signing, could create enforce issues, and could potentially confuse users. Furthermore, proposals in Alternative B to not designate a route for public motorized use or to have a season of use on a route were done to avoid resource impacts and enhance non-motorized recreation opportunities. Including this proposal to allow use of these routes would likely undermine several of these objectives.

2.6.3 A MOTORIZED RECREATION ALTERNATIVE WITH A RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM (ROS) COMPARABLE TO THE SURROUNDING ROS AVAILABLE FOR NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONISTS

Initial ROS mapping for Alternatives A and B indicates that there are more acres in motorized ROS settings than there are in non-motorized settings. This appears to alleviate the concern that there is more non-motorized ROS settings than motorized ROS settings in the project area.

In addition, prescribing that a specific amount be provided is often not practical or prudent management. Limitations such as legal rights-of-way for public access and guidance associated with the Forest Plan are just two examples of circumstances that can (and should) drive the type and location of recreation activities that are appropriate on National Forest System lands.

2.6.4 THE FOREST SERVICE SHOULD CONSIDER CLOSING THE LOWER SECTION OF ROUTE #381612

The lower section of route #381612 (i.e. the portion below the top of the butte) provides the only legal access to the state land in adjacent Section 36, and there are no identified resource concerns with this section of the route.

2.6.5 IMPLEMENT A 100 FOOT FIXED LIMIT FOR DISPERSED MOTORIZED CAMPING

The Custer National Forest has allowed dispersed vehicle camping within 300 feet of motorized routes since the July, 2001 Forest Order that implemented the 2001 Tri-State OHV Decision. Unacceptable resource damage or disturbance associated with this decision has not been observed on the District. Consequently, it is not evident that there is a need to change the existing dispersed vehicle camping policy based on biophysical resource impacts.

2.6.6 IDENTIFY WHERE PARKING ALONG ROUTES WOULD BE UNSAFE OR CAUSE RESOURCE DAMAGE, AND DO NOT DESIGNATE

Parking is not an activity that is required to be authorized separately from designation of routes. Parking within a vehicle length of a route is considered inherent with designation of motorized routes. Cross-country travel for dispersed vehicle camping does require designation. Initial scoping indicated areas in the North Cave Hills where dispersed vehicle camping could have human health and safety hazards. These areas would not be designated for dispersed vehicle camping in either action alternative. If any additional areas with either safety or resource impacts issues are identified during the process, additional measures will be considered to address the issue.

2.6.7 SEASON OF USE DESIGNATIONS RATHER THAN NO DESIGNATION, ESPECIALLY TO ADDRESS WILDLIFE NEEDS

This alternative proposal was dropped because there were no routes that were not designated in either Alternative A or Alternative B due to wildlife needs. In Alternative B, route designation was based on specific objectives. Where those objectives could be achieved with a season of use designation, a season of use designation was proposed. Alternative B includes all existing routes except those that the Forest Service does not have a legal right-of-way for public access. This alternative proposal appears to be addressed by Alternative A, and does not appear to be appropriate for Alternative B.

2.6.8 SEASON OF USE DESIGNATION FOR ROUTES WITHIN 200 FEET OF RAPTOR NESTS

The District will continue to manage and evaluate species of concern in compliance with the Custer National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan identifies. Initial effects scoping does not indicate that there is a need for this type of mitigation. However, effects of the alternatives on raptors will be analyzed and if significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures will be considered.

2.7 COMPARISON OF EFFECTS

Table 2-6 (found at the end of the chapter) provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in Table 2-6 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.

2.8 MONITORING

Information collected through monitoring and through public user groups and individuals will be used in evaluating and revising travel management decisions. The designations identified on the motor vehicle use map are subject to revision based on this information.

The goal of travel management monitoring is to determine how well travel management is working and what is not working, and to help identify what changes are needed in travel management or monitoring methods. Monitoring and evaluation tell how travel management decisions have been implemented and how effective the implementation has proven to be in accomplishing the desired outcomes.

The travel management monitoring plan will be tiered to Forest Plan monitoring activities. Each year's monitoring plan will be adapted as needed based on changing needs, findings, and budget levels. The results of the monitoring plan will be evaluated annually, and based on the findings, potential solutions will be developed and adjustments to the motorized use map may be made.

Implementation monitoring will be based on compliance with the Travel Management decision. Effectiveness monitoring may be conducted by sampling a range of projects from the entire Sioux Ranger District as outlined in the Forest Plan monitoring section. The Forest will utilize an adaptive monitoring plan to allow flexibility for changing budgets and staff levels and for monitoring results. The following table outlines Forest Plan criteria for evaluating the effects of effects of off-road vehicle use and damage.

Table 2-5. 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.

If, based on monitoring pursuant to 36 CFR 212.57, the Forest Supervisor or other responsible official determines that motor vehicle use on a National Forest System road or National Forest System trail or in an area on National Forest System lands is causing or will cause considerable adverse effects on public safety or soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, or cultural or historic resources associated with that road, trail, or area, the Forest Supervisor or other responsible official shall immediately close that road, trail, or area to motor vehicle use until the official determines that such adverse effects have been mitigated or eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence.

2.9 FOREST SERVICE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Forest Service preferred alternative is Alternative B. Alternative B 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 providing a range of recreation opportunities, by providing more non-motorized hunting opportunities than Alternative A or the No Action Alternative while still maintaining ample opportunities for motorized recreation. Environmental impacts would also generally be reduced under Alternative B when compared to Alternative A and the No Action Alternative.

The Responsible Official (the Custer Forest Supervisor) may select any combination of travel management actions as presented and analyzed within this document.

Table 2-6. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature	Alternative A	Alternative B	No Action Alternative	
Recreation				
Motorized Recreation Opportunity				
Acres of Rural ROS (During SOU ³ /Outside SOU)	2,986/NA	2,986/2,986	2,986/2,986	
Acres of Roaded Natural ROS (During SOU/Outside SOU)	54,512/NA	53,213/53,253	55,222/55,222	
Acres of Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS (During SOU/Outside SOU)	120,198/NA	121,497/70716	119,489/76,668	
Miles of motorized roads and trails (During SOU/Outside SOU)	341/NA	303/182	399/251	
Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity				
Acres of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS (During SOU/Outside SOU)	0/NA	0/50,742	0/42,820	
Opportunity for Off-Highway Vehicle Operation				
Miles of Mixed Use System Roads	116	57	0	
Miles of Motorized System Trails	280	84	0	
Total Miles available for Off-Highway Vehicle Operation	396	141	0	
Cultural Resources				
Total Number of Sites potentially affected (directly and indirectly)	212	138	0	
Of the total, the Number of Traditional Cultural Properties - Cultural Sensitive Sites potentially affected	72	50	0	
Of the total, the Number of NRHP eligible sites potentially affected within the project area.	33	20	0	
Wildlife				
Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Species				
Number of species with No Jeopardy	1	1	1	
Number of species with potential to effect, but not likely to adversely affect.	1	1	1	
Number of species with potential to effect, and likely to adversely affect	0	0	0	
Sensitive Wildlife Species				
Number of Species with Beneficial Impact	0	0	0	
Number of Species with No Impact	13	13	13	
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	9	9	
Number of Species likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability	0	0	0	
Management Indicator Species				
Number of Species with Positive Effects	0	0	0	
Number of Species with Neutral Effects	16	16	16	
Number of Species with Negative Effects	0	0	0	
Deer & Elk				
Motorized Route Density in miles per square mile (During SOU/Outside SOU)	Chalk Buttes	1.16/NA	0.78/0.78	0.99/0.99
	Ekalaka Hills	2.21/NA	1.27/0.90	1.83/1.83
	Long Pines	1.93/NA	1.12/0.44	1.74/0.40
	East Short Pines	1.19/NA	0.69/0.69	1.22/1.22
	West Short Pines	1.76/NA	1.76/1.76	1.76/1.76
	North Cave Hills	1.60/NA	1.25/0.85	1.42/1.42
	South Cave Hills	1.95/NA	1.25/1.07	1.55/1.55
	Slim Buttes	1.12/NA	0.94/0.66	0.82/0.82

³ SOU = Season of Use

Table 2-6. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature		Alternative A	Alternative B	No Action Alternative
Percent secure habitat within elk habitat (During SOU/Outside SOU)	Chalk Buttes	50/NA	57/57	36/36
	Ekalaka Hills	11/NA	25/37	8/8
	Long Pines	6/NA	27/64	8/64
	East Short Pines	34/NA	44/44	13/13
	West Short Pines	0/NA	0/0	0/0
	North Cave Hills	7/NA	15/31	11/11
	South Cave Hills	7/NA	17/17	7/7
	Slim Buttes	30/NA	34/48	32/32
General Wildlife				
Percent of Land Unit that is core wildlife habitat (based on motorized routes)	Chalk Buttes	45	52	31
	Ekalaka Hills	10	21	7
	Long Pines	5	21	6
	East Short Pines	28	37	8
	West Short Pines	2	2	2
	North Cave Hills	8	14	9
	South Cave Hills	6	14	7
	Slim Buttes	27	30	26
Water Quality, Fisheries, and Aquatics				
Water Quality				
Miles of actions that reduce risks on routes within the project area	42	186	0	
Miles of actions that increase risks on routes within the project area	92	24	0	
Sensitive Aquatic Species				
Number of Species with Beneficial Impact	0	2	0	
Number of Species with No Impact	3	3	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	2	0	2	
Number of Species likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability	0	0	0	
Recreational Fish Species				
Number of Species with Beneficial Impact	0	1	0	
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	0	1	
Soils				
High/Very High Erosion Hazard Rating				
Miles of Motorized Routes designated for public use	263	166	223	
Medium Erosion Hazard Rating				
Miles of Motorized Routes designated for public use.	176	114	150	
Vegetation				
Moderate Risk Areas - Motorized Routes				
Acres Potential Frequent Use Areas (% of Project Area)	128 (Trace)	90 (Trace)	98 (Trace)	
Acres Potential Infrequent Use Areas (% of Project Area)	2,191 (1%)	1,380 (1%)	1,634 (1%)	
Miles in High Risk Area	24	14	17	
Weeds Susceptibility				
Weed Susceptible Acres within designated route corridor	34,572	22,136	30,604	

Table 2-6. Comparison of Effects by Alternative

Feature	Alternative A	Alternative B	No Action Alternative
Weed Infestation			
Total Infested Acres within motorized route potentially affected corridor	209	149	201
Sensitive Plants			
Number of Species with No Impact	4	4	4
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	2	2	2
Number of Species likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability	0	0	0

NA = Not Applicable

Table 2-7. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Feature	Alternative A	Alternative B
Recreation		
Motorized Recreation Opportunity		
Acres of Rural ROS (During SOU ⁴ /Outside SOU)	No change	
Acres of Roaded Natural ROS (During SOU/Outside SOU)	Reduced by 710 acres/ Reduced by 710 acres	Reduced by 2009 acres/ Reduced by 1,969 acres
Acres of Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS (During SOU/Outside SOU)	Increased by 709 acres/ Increased by 45,530 acres	Increased by 2,008 acres/ Reduced by 5,592 acres
Miles of motorized roads and trails (During SOU/Outside SOU)	Reduced by 58 miles/ Increased by 90 miles	Reduced by 96 miles/ Reduced by 69 miles
Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunity		
Acres of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS (During SOU/Outside SOU)	No change/ Reduced by 42,820 acres	No change/ Reduced by 7,922 acres
Opportunity for Off-Highway Vehicle Operation		
Miles of Mixed Use System Roads	Increased by 116 miles	Increased by 57 miles
Miles of Motorized System Trails	Increased by 280 miles	Increased by 84 miles
Total Miles available for Off-Highway Vehicle Operation	Increased by 396 miles	Increased by 141 miles
Cultural Resources		
Total Number of Sites potentially affected (directly and indirectly)	212	138
Of the total, the Number of Traditional Cultural Properties - Cultural Sensitive Sites potentially affected	72	50
Of the total, the Number of NRHP eligible sites potentially affected within the project area.	33	20
Wildlife		
Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Species		
Number of species with No Jeopardy	No change; no species jeopardized	
Number of species with potential to effect, but not likely to adversely affect.	No change; Actions are not likely to adversely affect the single species analyzed	
Sensitive Wildlife Species		
Change from the No Action Alternative	No Change	
Management Indicator Species		
Change from the No Action Alternative	No Change	

⁴ SOU = Season of Use

Table 2-7. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Feature		Alternative A	Alternative B
Deer & Elk			
Motorized Route Density in miles per square mile (During SOU/Outside SOU)	Chalk Buttes	Density increases by 17% / Density increases by 17%	Density decreases by 21% / Density decreases by 21%
	Ekalaka Hills	Density increases by 21% / Density increases by 21%	Density decreases by 31% / Density decreases by 51%
	Long Pines	Density increases by 11% / Density increases by 383%	Density decreases by 36% / Density increases by 10%
	East Short Pines	Density decreases by 2% / Density decreases by 2%	Density decreases by 43% / Density decreases by 43%
	West Short Pines	No changes/No change	No changes/No change
	North Cave Hills	Density increases by 13% / Density increases by 13%	Density decreases by 12% / Density decreases by 12%
	South Cave Hills	Density increases by 26% / Density increases by 26%	Density decreases by 19% / Density decreases by 31%
	Slim Buttes	Density increase by 37% / Density increase by 37%	Density increases by 15% / Density decreases by 20%
Percent secure habitat within elk habitat (During SOU/Outside SOU)	Chalk Buttes	Increase of 14% / Decrease of 36%	Increase of 21% / Increase of 21%
	Ekalaka Hills	Increase of 3% / Decrease of 8%	Increase of 17% / Increase of 29%
	Long Pines	Decrease of 2% / Decrease of 54%	Increase of 19% / No change
	East Short Pines	Increase of 21% / Increase of 21%	Increase of 31% / Increase of 31%
	West Short Pines	No change	No change
	North Cave Hills	Decrease of 4% / Decrease of 11%	Increase of 4% / Increase of 20%
	South Cave Hills	No change / Decrease of 7%	Increase of 10% / Increase of 10%
	Slim Buttes	Decrease of 2% / Decrease of 32%	Increase of 2% / Increase of 16%
General Wildlife			
Percent of Land Unit that is core wildlife habitat (based on motorized routes)	Chalk Buttes	Increase of 14%	Increase of 21%
	Ekalaka Hills	Increase of 3%	Increase of 14%
	Long Pines	Decrease of 1%	Increase of 15%
	East Short Pines	Increase of 20%	Increase of 29%
	West Short Pines	No change	
	North Cave Hills	Decrease of 1%	Increase of 5%
	South Cave Hills	Decrease of 1%	Increase by 7%
	Slim Buttes	Increase of 1%	Increase of 4%
Water Quality, Fisheries, and Aquatics			
Water Quality			
Miles of actions that reduce risks on routes within the project area	42 miles of actions reducing risks	186 miles of actions reducing risks	
Miles of actions that increase risks on routes within the project area	92 miles of actions increasing risks	24 miles of actions increasing risks	
Sensitive Aquatic Species			
Change from No Action Alternative	No change	Change 2 species from May Impact to No Impact	
Recreational Fish Species			
Change from No Action Alternative	No change	Change from May Impact to No Impact	

Table 2-7. Summary of Changes in Effects Compared to the No Action Alternative

Feature	Alternative A	Alternative B
Soils		
High/Very High Erosion Hazard Rating		
Miles of Motorized Routes designated for public use	Increase of 40 miles	Decrease of 57 miles
Medium Erosion Hazard Rating		
Miles of Motorized Routes designated for public use.	Increase of 25 miles	Decrease of 36 miles
Vegetation		
Moderate Risk Areas - Motorized Routes		
Acres Potential Frequent Use Areas	Increase of 30 acres	Decrease of 8 acres
Acres Potential Infrequent Use Areas	Increase of 557 acres	Decrease of 254 acres
Miles in High Risk Area	Increase of 7 miles	Decrease of 3 miles
Weeds Susceptibility		
Weed Susceptible Acres within designated road corridor	Increase of 3,968 acres	Decrease of 8,468 acres
Weed Infestation		
Total Infested Acres within Motorized Route potentially affected corridor	8 additional acres	52 fewer acres
Sensitive Plants		
Change from No Action Alternative	No change; ; Actions are not likely to result in a trend to Federal listing or loss of viability	

Chapter 2: Public Participation, Issues and Alternatives

- End of Chapter 2 -