

Development Process Alternative E

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe the process used to develop Alternative E and display the supporting rationale for the standards set by that Alternative. The paper was prepared based on information from the Access Amendment 2004 project records (V1 D41, D51, D94, D95; V2 D59; V16 D4; and V35 D26).

Alternative E from the 2002 FEIS was developed to provide increased grizzly bear habitat security while allowing limited management flexibility in response to issues related to public and administrative access of National Forest system lands, economics, and access to private in holdings.

The intent of Alternative E was to do as much for the grizzly bear as possible while considering activities the Forest Service has no jurisdiction, while providing limited flexibility for administrative access.

Alternative E Description Summary

In Alternative E, standards were set individually for each Bear Management Unit (BMU) based on achievable goals of open and total motorized route densities and core area. The standards reflect the presence of uncontrollable factors (e.g. highways, county roads, access to private lands), administrative access needs and public access. This Alternative would allow some minimal management flexibility.

Development Process

The standards for Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD), Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD), and Core Area (CORE) were developed through a series of meetings and conference calls involving Forest Service (Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Helena and Spokane offices), and Idaho Fish and Game (Bonners Ferry Office) wildlife biologists, Forest Supervisors and Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones (SCYRZ) interdisciplinary team members. The group included the two grizzly bear research biologists (Kasworm and Wakkinen) working in the SCYRZ. A list of participants is attached.

Information considered during development of proposed standards for individual BMUs included: existing conditions (end of bear year 2000) for OMRD, TMRD and CORE; potential conditions for those parameters in each BMU and adjacent BMUs; range of parameter values used by bears as determined by research done in the SCYRZ; land ownership pattern; proportion of National Forest system lands to non-system lands; known high interest areas for public access; social assessment findings related to grizzly bears (see 2004 project record) and motorized vehicle access; and administrative access needs.

The biologist task group (see list attached) went through the following process in their review of every bear management unit (BMU).

- 1) Establish the existing conditions (Bear year 2000 status) for OMRD, TMRD, and CORE.
- 2) Determine the feasibility of achieving at least the average habitat parameter values (33% OMRD, 26% TMRD, and 55% CORE) established by research done in the SCYRZ by answering a series of questions (see attached blank worksheet and project record V1 D95 P102), on the site specific situation.
- 3) Identify uncontrollable factors (such as county or state road presence) by answering additional questions (see attached blank worksheet and project record V1 D95 P102).

- 4) Identify grizzly bear mortality risk factors (such as proximity to communities) by answering additional questions (see attached blank worksheet and 2004 project record V1 D95 P102).
- 5) Consider establishing management flexibility. The percent of Core Area standard was selected as the tool to establish flexibility. The group agreed that where conditions warranted (e.g. existing condition was equal to or greater than 55% core) a 2-3 percent drop in core from the estimated maximum would be the range for creating a core standard that provided limited flexibility. Once a Core Area standard was set, estimates of achievable OMRD and TMRD standards were established by an interdisciplinary group. These estimates were based on the assumption that a 1% change in OMRD or TMRD would require changing the status of 2-6 miles of road. A validation test was conducted on a sample set of BMUs that confirmed the assumption. The miles available to change status by BMU was determined and used to estimate the achievable OMRD and TMRD standards.

Between the final EIS and the Record of Decision, the standards were adjusted for some BMUs (e.g. see 2004 project record V2 D59 P8) through consultation with USFWS and grizzly bear research scientists. The final standards reflect the unique features of biological and social factors (e.g., highways, high quality habitat, residential developments, linkage zones, public access, public opinion, etc.) found within specific BMUs. See Table 1 below for standards and rationale.

Table 1: Determination for BMU Specific Standards

BMU	Selected OMRD Standard	Selected TMRD Standard	Core Area Standard	Rationale for Selection of Standard(s) (Variation from 33-26-55)
1	15	15	80	Standards are better (higher) than average research levels because the BMU is 99% federal ownership with a fairly high percentage of designated wilderness and designated roadless habitat.
2	20	18	75	Standards are better (higher) than average research levels because the BMU is 94% federal ownership with a fairly high percentage of designated wilderness and designated roadless habitat.
3	33	26	59	Levels of core area increased between final EIS and ROD as a result of consultation with USFWS. Proposed core standards were best estimates at the time. Since then actual on ground conditions, through site specific analysis show that core can be maintained at a higher level. OMRD and TMRD do not vary from research values.
4	36	26	63	State highways on two sides of the BMU make it impossible to achieve the 33% OMRD; however, the standard is within the range of values shown in the research. Core is better than the average research level because much of the BMU is currently proposed wilderness, inventoried roadless, or wilderness.
5	30	23	60	High percentage of designated wilderness and designated roadless habitat. This BMU was thought to be reasonably capable of achieving levels above and beyond the research average core level, and below the average OMRD and TMRD levels. This strategy provides management flexibility while still providing a high level of habitat security. Core area standard increased between final EIS and ROD as a result of consultation with USFWS.
6	34	32	55	The ownership pattern and county roads greatly reduce the potential for achieving the recommended levels of OMRD and TMRD. The standards are within the range of values shown in the research
7	26	23	63	Standards are better (higher) than average research levels because BMU is 92% federal ownership and currently has a large designated roadless area adjacent to the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness.
8	32	20	55	The existing condition is better than the OMRD and TMRD recommendation- these levels provide flexibility.
9	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the 33-26-55 parameters.
10	44	34	52	Core Area, OMRD & TMRD are at the levels that can be maintained without closing county roads, access to private land and recreational facilities (e.g. Kilbrenan Lake Campground). Estimated highest level values used. The standards are within the range of values shown in the research
11	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the 33-26-55 parameters.
12	45	31	55	Achieving recommended OMRD & TMRD levels would require closing county roads and access to private land. Estimated highest level values used. The standards are within the range of values shown in the research
13	33	26	60	Levels of core habitat increased between final EIS and ROD as a result of consultation with USFWS. Proposed core standards were best estimates at the time. Since then actual on ground conditions, through site specific analysis show that core can be maintained at a higher level. OMRD and TMRD do not vary from research values.
14, 15, 16, & 17	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the 33-26-55 parameters.
22	33	35	55	A higher TMRD is required because the amount and pattern of private ownership make permanent barriers on many roads not possible. Estimated highest level values used.
Boulder	33	29	55	TMRD unachievable due to numerous roads accessing private lands in NW corner of this BMU. Estimated highest level values used.
Grouse	59	55	37	Because of numerous private in holdings and the associated ownership pattern the 33-36-55 standard is unattainable. BMU is NOT predominately NFS lands. Estimated highest level values used.
N. Lightning	35	26	61	OMRD is not as good as research average value due to configuration of arterial roads; however, the standard is within the range of values shown in the research. TMRD is better than research value. Higher core value results from Bee Top roadless area. TMRD does not deviate from research value.
Scotchman	35	26	62	OMRD is not as good as research average level due to high densities on private ownership; however the standard is within the range of values shown in the research. Higher core value results from roadless area. TMRD does not deviate from research value.
Blue-Grass	31	26	55	OMRD standard was made more restrictive because this is a high priority BMU.
Long-Smith	25	15	67	This BMU is better than research average values for core area and road densities due to high quality habitat, low road densities, and an elevated level of habitat

BMU	Selected OMRD Standard	Selected TMRD Standard	Core Area Standard	Rationale for Selection of Standard(s) (Variation from 33-26-55)
				effectiveness.
Kalispel-Granite	33	26	55	Selected security levels do not deviate from the 33-26-55 parameters.
Lakeshore	82	56	20	Achieving the research average values was not considered feasible due to the small size of the BMU and its close proximity to developed residential areas. BMU is management situation 2 and 3. Maintains existing conditions.
Salmo-Priest	33	26	64	Level of core habitat is better than the average research values because of the proportion of designated wilderness w/in the BMU. ORRD and TMRD do not deviate from research values.
Sullivan-Hughes	23	18	61	The levels of core habitat would exceed the 55 percent level based on the proportion of designated wilderness which is located within the BMU and also because of the low percentage of core habitat which would be managed for within the Lakeshore BMU.
Myrtle	33	22	56	Selected stds. reflect ownership patterns and lower total motorized road densities.
Ball-Trout	20	13	69	This BMU is better than the average research values for core and road densities due to high quality habitat, low road densities, and an elevated level of habitat effectiveness.

PARTICIPANT LIST**Biologist Task Group**

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Al Bratkovich	Kootenai NF	Libby District Wildlife Biologist
Steve Johnsen	Kootenai NF	Cabinet District Wildlife Biologist
Joni Manning Gilbert	Kootenai NF	Three Rivers District Wildlife Biologist
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Bryon Holt	USFWS	Consultation Biologist (Spokane Office)
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Line Officers

Name	Agency	Position
Mike Balboni	Kootenai NF	Three Rivers District Ranger
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Lisa Krueger	LNF	Plains-Thompson Falls Ranger District

Interdisciplinary Team Participants

Name	Agency	Position
Rob Carlin	Kootenai NF	IDT Team Leader
Kirsten Kaiser	Kootenai NF	IDT Assistant Team Leader

Selkirk-Cabinet/Yaak Motorized Access Amendment

Alternative E

Worksheet for Determination of BMU-Specific Standards

BMU Number/Name:	Acreage:	% Federal lands:	
BMU Standards	OMRD	TMRD	Core Area
Bear Year 2000 Status			
Proposed Alt. E Standards			

Consideration of unique biological features of this BMU:

Is there high quality seasonal foraging habitat (avalanche chutes, berry fields, etc.) or high quality denning habitat in this BMU? If so, please describe:

Describe the juxtaposition of habitats:

Is this BMU part of a linkage zone? If so, please describe:

Consideration of available grizzly bear occurrence data:

What is the present status of grizzly bears within this BMU?
 Occupied? Yes No With Females? Yes No

Describe known grizzly bear use: distribution, frequency, season, etc.

Have there been mortalities of grizzly bears in this BMU? Yes No
 If so, how many and what causes.....

Consideration of research results from Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear study:

Are the standards proposed for this BMU in Alternative E within the following range of habitat security levels utilized by all monitored bears in the SCYE study?

- OMRD - **% to **%
- TMRD - **% to **%
- Core - **% to **%

Yes No

Were any of the monitored bears located in this BMU before, during. or after the study?

Consideration of unique social values and motorized access features of this BMU:

Are there county or state roads or access to private residences within this BMU that would need to be closed during the non-denning period to meet the 33-26-55 standard?
Yes No If so, what type and approximately how many miles?

Are there major Forest Service arterial access roads that would need to be closed during the non-denning period to meet the 33-26-55 standard? Yes No

If so, would access to any special features (lakes, rec. sites, etc) be eliminated?
Yes No

If yes, state name and type of use:

Would any significant social / cultural traditions or uses be affected?

Are there multiple access points into this BMU? If so, how many?

Is this BMU in close proximity to communities? If so, please describe.

Consideration of existing and proposed security levels in adjacent BMUs:

Do any of the adjacent BMUs with potentially overlapping home ranges have existing or proposed habitat security levels higher or lower than 33-26-55?

<u>BMU</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
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Rationale for variance from 33-26-55 recommendations:

The recommended security levels proposed for Alternative E are based upon the considerations listed above. The rationale for the variance from 33-26-55 is as follows:

Documentation of USFWS consultation in this recommendation:

Documentation of coordination meetings and approval of recommended Alternative E security levels:

Signature(s): _____
District Wildlife Date
Biologist

District Ranger Date

USFWS Research Date
Biologist

USFWS Consultation Date
Biologist