
Summary

This programmatic Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) supplements the 2002 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Forest Plan Amendments for Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones. It proposes to change the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) by amending the objectives, standards, and guidelines that address grizzly bear management within these two Recovery Zones.

Location

The Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zones (SRZ and CYRZ) are two of six grizzly bear recovery zones identified in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USFWS 1993). Located in northwestern Montana, northern Idaho, northeastern Washington, and British Columbia, the two ecosystems encompass 4,560 square miles of habitat. Portions of the Kootenai, Idaho Panhandle, Lolo, and Colville National Forests, and Kootenay Lakes Forest District (B.C.) are included in the recovery areas. This Draft SEIS addresses the amendment of the Forest Plans for the Kootenai, Lolo, and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. Therefore, only those portions of the SRZ and CYRZ within the boundaries of the three National Forests were analysed.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need for action for these Forest Plan amendments originates from several directives to update objectives and standards for access management within grizzly bear recovery areas. The overall purpose is to amend Forest Plans to include a set of motorized access and security guidelines to meet our responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act to conserve and contribute to recovery of grizzly bears. A number of other key directives that eventually led to this proposal to amend the Forest Plans are found in the 2002 FEIS, pages 1-4 through 1-5. In addition, the Purpose and Need to prepare this Draft SEIS originates from a U.S. District Court for the District of Montana, December 13, 2006 ruling, in which the Court directed the Forest Service to prepare a new analysis that complied with National Environmental Policy Act regulations [40 CFR 1502.22 (a) and (b)]. Alternative D (modified) responds to this direction.

Decision to be Made

The decision to be made by the three Forest Supervisors regarding access management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Areas is two-fold: 1) Whether to change the existing forest plan direction and 2) If so, what new standards should be established to guide management of access within the recovery zones.

Previous Analysis

This Draft SEIS is intended to provide additional information to the Decision Makers to consider rather than duplicate information presented in the 2002 FEIS. Detailed information on the Proposed Action, public participation and scoping comments, issues and alternative development, and environmental analysis of Alternatives A, B, C and E (original) are provided in the 2002 FEIS. Please refer to the 2002 FEIS for additional information.

Alternatives considered in this SEIS

Two alternatives were analyzed in detail in this Draft SEIS.

- **Alternative D (modified)** provides the highest level of grizzly bear habitat security of any alternative analyzed based on the Wakkinen and Kasworm (1997) study's recommendations for open motorized route density ($\leq 17\%$), total motorized route density ($\leq 14\%$) and core area ($\geq 72\%$). The maximum amount of secure grizzly bear habitat possible would be provided through restrictions on roads and motorized trails under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service.
- **Alternative E**, which was selected as the alternative best meeting the Purpose and Need for action in the FEIS, also provides a high level of habitat security, but not as much as Alternative D (modified). Different levels of open and total route densities and core area would be set for each individual BMU, and would be provided through restrictions on roads under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service.

Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

Chapter 3 of the Draft SEIS presents a detailed description of the human and natural resources within the affected environment composed of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak recovery zones and surrounding communities. The environmental effects of Alternative D (modified) and Alternative E are analyzed and disclosed for all elements of the affected environment. The following table displays a selected summary of the conclusions presented in Chapter 3 of the Draft SEIS and provides a comparative overview of Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated.

Comparison of Selected Effects of Alternative D Modified and Alternative E Updated

	Alternative D Modified	Alternative E Updated
Wildlife		
Relative ranking for grizzly bears (1 = best)	1	2
Relative ranking for other T&E species (1 = best)	1	2
Relative ranking for sensitive species.	Beneficial impact	Beneficial impact
Relative ranking for MIS	Improves habitat	Improves habitat
Transportation		
Estimated miles of road that might change from IGBC 4 (open) to IGBC 2 (gated)	204 - 490	8 - 24
Estimated miles of road that might change from IGBC 4 (open) to IGBC 3 (barriered)	382 - 623	20 - 60
Estimated miles of road that might change from IGBC 2 (gated) to IGBC 3 (barriered)	678 - 1,254	86 - 258
Estimated miles of road that might change from IGBC 2 (gated) to IGBC 4 (open)	0	128 - 384
Estimated miles of road that might change from IGBC 3 (barriered) to IGBC 4 (open)	10 - 30	12 - 36
Estimated miles of road that might change from IGBC 3 (barriered) to IGBC 2 (gated)	12 - 36	16 - 48
Miles of Motorized Trails changed to Non-Motorized	57	30
Recreation		
Effects to Motorized, Developed Recreation	Major effects. Could impact up to 22 developed sites.	No / little effects. Possible effect to one lookout rental.
Effects to Motorized, Dispersed, Summer Recreation	Greatest effects. Most open roads closed.	Slight effects. Least number of open roads closed.
Effects to Motorized, Dispersed, Winter Recreation	Groomed snow trails could be affected due to limited access during the active bear year (summer months) for maintenance.	Groomed snow trails could be affected due to limited access during the active bear year (summer months) for maintenance. Fewer routes would be affected than in Alt. D Modified.
Effect to Non-Motorized, Dispersed, Summer Recreation	Moderate effects. Could effect access to 148 trailheads; some trails will double in length; some trails could be dropped from the system.	No / little effect
Effect to Non-Motorized, Dispersed, Winter Recreation	Slight effects. Possible effect to one designed Nordic ski area and for alpine skiing.	No / little effect
Social and Economic		
Level of Effect on Social Environment	High	Moderate
Area Economy – Recreation Jobs and Income	Decrease	No Change
Area Economy – Timber Jobs and Income	Highest Decrease	Decrease