

RECREATION

Eight issues pertaining to outdoor recreation were brought up during scoping.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR A FULL SPECTRUM OF SUMMER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SETTINGS.

There is a need to manage roads and trails to provide for a wide spectrum of both motorized and non-motorized recreational activities and settings. Motorized users feel that their numbers are increasing and they are concerned that reduction of motorized opportunities will force them onto fewer, more crowded roads and trails, eliminating opportunities they now have. They believe that, ideally, all users should share the same trails. They are concerned that more resource impacts and social conflicts will occur if they are forced to travel on fewer miles of trail. They are looking for high quality loop opportunities and large areas of the forest on which to ride. Some motorcyclists are concerned that some single track trails they prefer will be converted to ATV two-track trails. Many hunters want adequate motorized access opportunities during hunting season, and state that disabled hunters would be excluded if motorized access is not maintained. They believe a rapidly growing older population needs motorized opportunities to hunt.

People with disabilities need access to the Forest. Some believe that comes by allowing ATV use, while others see the need to maintain a system of high-clearance roads for 4x4/Jeep/SUV vehicles. Others recognize that some disabled individuals can also be accommodated by stock use.

Many non-motorized recreationists resent that the large majority of trails in the analysis area are currently open to motorized use, and feel they have little opportunity for solitude away from the associated sights, noises and smells of motorcycles and ATVs. They want some large blocks of land that are non-motorized and which would provide them primitive or semi-primitive overnight backpacking and stock use opportunities lasting several days. Some hunters that hike in or ride into hunting areas on horses feel that OHV users are ruining their hunting opportunities when they motor into hunting areas they've worked hard to walk to or ride stock to. Questions of fair chase and unfair advantage of using OHVs for hunting access have been raised by some non-motorized hunting proponents.

1. EXISTING CONDITION

a. Existing Recreation Setting and Travel System Characteristics

Table III-1 reflects Recreation Opportunity Settings (ROS) by alternative and mountain range. The existing situation (Alternative 1) is largely dominated by roaded or motorized trail settings. In 1988 when the travel plan was last done, the intent was that most trails allow both motorized and non-motorized use. Motorized trails are open to both motorized and non-motorized use. Motorized ROS settings dominate all three mountain ranges:

- Castle Mountains 97% motorized ROS settings
- Crazy Mountains 84% motorized ROS settings
- Little Belt Mountains 88% motorized ROS settings

Table III-1. Summer ROS Acreage by Alternative and Mountain Range

SUMMER ROS CLASSIFICATION	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Castles				
Rural	0	0	0	0
Roaded Natural	49,063 (70%)	49,068 (70%)	49,069 (70%)	48,277 (69%)
Semi-Primitive Motorized	18,568 (27%)	18,564 (27%)	0	8,394 (12%)
Semi-Primitive Non-motorized	1,991 (3%)	1,990 (3%)	20,553 (30%)	12,951 (19%)
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Crazies				
Rural	0	0	0	0
Roaded Natural	30,788 (54%)	30,429 (53%)	30,075 (52%)	27,270 (47%)
Semi-Primitive Motorized	17,489 (30%)	17,489 (30%)	0	1,892 (3%)
Semi-Primitive Non-motorized	9,316 (16%)	9,675 (17%)	27,518 (48%)	28,431 (50%)
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Little Belts				
Rural	2,228 (<1%)	2,228 (<1%)	2,228 (<1%)	2,228 (<1%)
Roaded Natural	522,995 (66%)	501,501 (63%)	507,240 (64%)	480,782 (60%)
Semi-Primitive Motorized	176,182 (22%)	182,876 (23%)	49,169 (6%)	153,448 (19%)
Semi-Primitive Non-motorized	94,944 (12%)	109,744 (14%)	210,916 (27%)	152,137 (19%)
Primitive	0	0	26,796 (3%)	7,754 (1%)
Total Acres by ROS setting				
Rural	2,228 (<1%)	2,228 (<1%)	2,228 (<1%)	2,228 (<1%)
Roaded Natural	602,846 (65%)	580,998 (63%)	586,384 (64%)	556,329 (60%)
Semi-Primitive Motorized	212,239 (23%)	218,929 (24%)	49,169 (5%)	163,735 (18%)
Semi-Primitive Non-motorized	106,251 (12%)	121,410 (13%)	258,987 (28%)	193,519 (21%)
Primitive	0	0	26,796 (3%)	7,753 (1%)
Total Motorized Acres by ROS setting and % of total analysis area	817,313 88%	802,154 87%	637,781 69%	722,292 78%
Total Non-motorized Acres by ROS setting and % of total analysis area	106,251 12%	121,410 13%	285,783 31%	200,913 22%

The ideal is to have available a wide range of ROS settings intended to meet the needs of all recreationists, both motorized and non-motorized. Ideally, these settings would be readily accessible without the need to travel long distances.

Settings vary from areas dominated by home and ranch development (Rural) to areas dominated by roads (Roaded Natural), to areas away from roads and through which motorized trails pass (Semi-primitive Motorized), to areas away from the sights and sounds of civilization (Semi-primitive Non-motorized and Primitive).

ROS classifications are intended to reflect the recreation setting during the spring, summer, and fall months. For this analysis, the Forest Service began by assigning ROS classifications

based on type of travel (motorized wheeled vehicle versus non-motorized horse/hike/bike travel) allowed on each road and trail. Other criteria such as distance from motorized trails and roads, size of area, intervening ridges, and vegetative screening were used to adjust boundaries and derive an ROS classification for summer recreation activities as shown for the alternatives on Maps 2, 3, 4, and 5. Definitions for ROS settings are as follows:

“Urban” settings are characterized by a large number of human structures dominating the landscape. Green-space would only be an intermittent feature. Facilities would accommodate parking for large numbers of automobiles and use by large numbers of people. Quiet trails and opportunities for solitude would be rare. There are no “urban” settings in the project area.

“Rural” settings are characterized by a highly modified natural environment where the sights and sounds of humans are readily evident. This ROS setting is available to both non-motorized and motorized recreation. Quiet trails and opportunities for solitude would be hard to find during much of the year. Developed areas such as Teton Ski Area, Gibson Dam, and Sun Canyon resorts and concentrations of recreation residences fit the definition of a rural setting. This setting, along with Primitive, was the least available in all alternatives.

“Roaded Natural” settings extend about one-half mile on each side of a road used by standard highway-type vehicles. All roads used by the public or permittees, and all roads used by private landowners outside the Forest boundary were considered as affecting the recreation setting. Non-motorized recreation is available on trails and other areas in this setting. Quiet trails and opportunities for solitude would be hard to find during the summer and fall. Primary access roads for passenger cars and trailer-towing vehicles include, for example, Highways 89 and 12, Divide Road, Charlie Russell Memorial Way, the road to Spring Creek Campground, etc. Forest development roads and well-used private roads typically are examples of roaded-natural corridors.

“Semi-Primitive Motorized” settings extend about one-half mile on each side of a trail where motorized OHVs are legal to be used. The lack of vegetative screening, or the influence of intervening ridges may allow the zone to be wider or narrower than one-half mile. This ROS setting is available to both non-motorized and motorized recreation. By definition, quiet trails and the opportunity for solitude would not occur in this setting during the time of year the trail was open to motorized travel.

“Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized” settings denote areas where stock, hiking, and/or bicycling are the predominant modes of travel (OHVs would not be legal to operate in this setting and motorized travel corridors would be at least ½-mile distant). The lack of terrain screening or vegetative screening may occasionally allow the sights and sounds of humans within three miles to influence the setting. The area does not meet the size, distance, or lack of human disturbance criteria established for “primitive” settings. By definition, this would be a primary area for quiet trails and an appropriate setting to provide opportunities for solitude.

“Primitive” settings denote large areas (generally greater than 5,000 acres in size) that are more than three miles from trails or roads open to motorized use, and where there is little evidence of human disturbance. In this analysis it was impossible or difficult to find acreages more than about two miles from trails or roads open to motorized use in some settings, but topography was considered adequate to screen sights and sounds of motorized areas to create a primitive setting. Additionally, not all primitive settings were 5,000 acres or more in size; OHVs would not be legal to operate in this setting. By definition, this would be the best area for quiet trails and the best setting to provide opportunities for solitude. This setting, along with Rural, was the least available in all alternatives.

Existing road and trail mileages by type of restriction are shown in Tables III-2 through III-6 below. Table III-2 shows that there are **1527** miles of road open at least part or all of the year in the Little Belt, Crazy, and Castle Mountains.

Table III-3 shows that **90** percent of the existing **734** mile long trail system in the three mountain ranges allows both motorized and non-motorized use, and reflects Forest Plan direction to have various motorized and non-motorized users on the same trails where possible. **Ten** percent of the area allows for non-motorized use only.

These non-motorized trails are often called “quiet” trails. Motorized/Non-motorized trails split out by mountain range are:

- Little Belts Motorized **90%** Non-motorized **10%**
- Castles Motorized **83%** Non-motorized **17%**
- Crazies Motorized **98%** Non-motorized **2%**

These trail mileages reflect results of the 1988 travel plan, and forest plan direction for travel planning found on p. 2-64 of the Forest Plan:

- “The Lewis and Clark National Forest will generally be open to vehicles except for roads, trails, or areas which may be restricted...Manage road and trail use to provide public access, public safety, and resource protection, while minimizing environmental and user conflicts....Resource protection (includes) unacceptable damage to soils, watershed, fish, wildlife, or historical/archaeological sites ...”

Currently, open roads can be used by OHVs (motorcycles and ATVs) if they are street legal and the operator has a valid drivers license. It is not necessary on motorized trails to have street legal vehicles or licensed OHV operators.

b. Past Events and Conditions

The current travel plan was approved in 1988 for the entire Lewis and Clark National Forest. It allowed cross-country motorized travel in some areas, and restricted it in others. The 2001 Three-State OHV decision on all National Forest and BLM lands in Montana, North Dakota, and parts of South Dakota prohibited motorized use off of existing trails and roads. It also recognized a number of existing roads and trails of undetermined origin as valid travel corridors when they were not in conflict with area restrictions of the existing travel plan.

Resolution on the future use of these undetermined roads and trails is to be made in this travel planning analysis. Its purpose is to determine the kinds of use that are acceptable on each existing system road and trail, and on existing roads and trails of undetermined origin. Undetermined roads and trails not converted to system roads and trails will become unavailable for public motorized use, through signing, physical closure, or other means not specifically determined in this analysis.

c. Human Influence

A number of roads and trails exist in the analysis areas that are part of the Forest road and trail system. They are known as system roads and system trails, and were either constructed or adopted in the past because they accommodated the various transportation needs, both commercial and recreational, of forest users. Not all trails and roads became part of the Forest’s transportation system, including some historic roads and trails constructed or developed many years ago.

In the last couple of decades more and more trails have been created by users illegally seeking to increase their access into the forest by motorized and non-motorized means. These most recent user-created trails have largely been created by motorized users, whose vehicles allow easy off-trail access. All terrain vehicle use has risen sharply since the last travel plan. Their ability to travel on steep grades, together with a lack of suitable ATV trails, has increased the number of these user-built trails. Grades are often steep and alignments typically don't meet the needs of the public. A limited trails maintenance budget also constrains the Forest's willingness to adopt many of these user-created trails because of lack of funds to maintain the existing system trails. In some cases, however, some of these trails are recommended for inclusion as system trails when grades are reasonable and when their alignments are better than nearby system trails, or when they provide a desirable purpose not available on system trails. Recommendations for handling specific undetermined trails vary by alternative. Alternative maps show specific recommendations. Table III-8 shows the miles of undetermined trails and roads recommended for adoption into the forest's road and trail system, by alternative.

Currently, there are a number of resource impacts occurring on the forest as motorized use increases. This can occur on both system and non-system trails and roads. A combination of steep system trails, wet seasons and heavy use can create erosion. User-built trails continue to expand and a lack of law enforcement and suitable ATV trails exacerbates the situation. Social conflicts are described in the above issue statement.

d. Desired Condition

The following Desired Condition is based upon a combination of Forest Plan direction, policy (handbook and manual direction, for example), and public comments received for this analysis. Ideally, every reasonable and legal recreation activity would be able to be accommodated, within any resource or social constraints on it. Measures of each statement are shown in parentheses.

1. Forest Plan: Trails will generally all be open to vehicles, where possible. Non-motorized trails will be established when needed to avoid conflicts and meet the needs of non-motorized users. Non-motorized trails will be established when needed to avoid social conflicts between users, and to meet the needs of non-motorized users (miles of motorized and non-motorized trails, by recreation activity type).

2. Policy/Forest Plan/Public Comment: In regard to recreational activities on NFS lands, it is the policy of the Forest Service to maintain opportunities for a variety of motorized and non-motorized activities, and to manage OHV recreational activities within the capability and suitability of the resources (FSM-2355.03). The Forest Service attempts to find a balance between competing interests to maintain a mix of opportunities to enjoy the National Forest. This variety is accomplished in the Forest Plan by providing a wide variety of Recreation Opportunity Settings (ROS) to accommodate a wide variety of recreation activities (FSH 2309.18, Ch. 1- Trail Planning). Trails should reflect the ROS settings of the various management areas. The public requested opportunities to accommodate motorized loop trails of 50 miles or longer that can be ridden in a day, as well as non-motorized backpacking or stock trips lasting several days (acres of different ROS settings; miles of trail by activity type; large blocks of non-motorized ROS settings).

3. Policy/Forest Plan: Only those undetermined roads and trails that meet the needs of the forest will become system trails and roads. The Forest Plan, 2-64 says: "Manage road and trail use to provide public access, public safety, and resource protection, while minimizing

environmental and user conflicts.” Forest Plan direction for trails is: “Trails may be abandoned or rerouted when analysis indicates they are no longer needed for public or administrative use, or are not cost-effective.” Some determining factors include whether the facility is well-aligned, has reasonable grades, does not duplicate existing trail access, and has no unacceptable resource conflicts or impacts. Cost of maintaining such trails is also a factor (miles of undetermined road and trail becoming adopted into the transportation system).

4. Policy: New trail construction will reflect current construction and maintenance funds availability. Currently the forest has not been able to provide adequate maintenance to many of its trails. Trail capital investment funds average about ten miles of annual reconstruction, and have primarily been needed to reconstruct existing trails rather than accomplish new trail construction (miles of new road and trail construction).

5. Policy: FSH 2309.18 Ch.2.02 says: “The objective of trail development is to provide a facility that minimally affects resources, that provides opportunities for satisfying recreation experiences, that requires minimal maintenance and that serves the intended type and level of use.” Chapter.2.32B of the Hand Book says: “ATV use should occur on trails and routes designated for other motorized uses which fit the ATV trail guide specifications.” New ATV trails will be developed where there are suitable existing low standard roads, rather than through extensive new construction of trails (miles of ATV trail created from roads closed to road vehicles; high clearance **system** roads available to street legal ATVs with licensed operators; miles of new ATV trail construction; **miles of road and trail converted to 4x4 trails**).

6. Policy: The needs of the disabled for Forest access are recognized, analyzed, and accommodated within other resource constraints (miles of motorized **by motorized activity**) and non-motorized trails ; miles of road open to road vehicles and high clearance vehicles; acres by ROS settings).

7. Public comment: Single track trails will typically be maintained, rather than converted to two-track trails accommodating ATVs (miles of motorized trail not open to ATVs by alternative).

8. Policy/Public comments: Hunters will have opportunities to hunt in motorized settings and non-motorized settings during archery and rifle big game seasons (ROS settings by acre; miles of road and trail open during archery and rifle big game seasons).

9. Policy: The Forest is to provide quality recreation settings so that people can create their own high quality recreation experiences (a general summary by alternative of each alternative’s effects on recreation).

2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The above “Desired Future Conditions” describe measurements used to analyze how each condition is met. These “Desired Future Conditions” are based upon the Forest Plan, policy, and public comments describing what they wanted.

Acres and mileages **shown on the following tables** were determined using forest Geographic Information System (GIS) data, which generated spreadsheets for each alternative. Pivot tables were used for each spreadsheet to extract data. The following tables are self explanatory.

**Table III-2. Existing Road Vehicle Summer Opportunities in Miles
by Mountain Range***

Activity	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Non-mixed traffic roads open part of year or year round (includes undetermined roads in Alt. 1)	Castles 144 Crazies 53 LBelts 1326	Castles 69 Crazies 37 LBelts 513	Castles 114 Crazies 40 LBelts 770	Castles 55 Crazies 31 LBelts 402
Mixed traffic roads open part of year or year round (includes undetermined roads in Alt. 1)**	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 0	Castles 48 Crazies 9 LBelts 357	Castles 4 Crazies 0 LBelts 27	Castles 49 Crazies 16 LBelts 375
High clearance system roads open part of year or year round (4x4/SUV/Pickup opportunities)***	Castles 72 Crazies 28 LBelts 414	Castles 73 Crazies 27 LBelts 337	Castles 73 Crazies 21 LBelts 303	Castles 64 Crazies 28 LBelts 286
Road and trails converted to 4x4 Trails***	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 0	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 0	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 0	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 0
Total non-mixed/mixed roads open part of year or year round	Castles 144 Crazies 53 LBelts 1326 Total 1523	Castles 117 Crazies 46 LBelts 870 Total 1033	Castles 118 Crazies 40 LBelts 797 Total 955	Castles 104 Crazies 47 LBelts 777 Total 928

* Road vehicles include passenger vehicles, pickups, 4x4 SUVs.

** Mixed traffic roads allow non-street legal OHVs (motorcycles, ATVs) to be operated on them by licensed operators or unlicensed 12-16 year old OHV operators. An administrative analysis will be made in the future (outside this NEPA analysis process) to determine whether to have these mixed traffic roads. These miles are shown to help the reader know of additional riding and driving opportunities that potentially may be allowed in the future, outside of this NEPA analysis. The miles shown are estimates only.

*** Not counted in total to avoid double counting, or because it became a trail, and not a road. See also Table III-8 for undetermined roads (typically high clearance roads) made into system roads.



Table III-3. Existing Hiker, Backpacker, Mountain Bike, and Stock User Trail/Road Opportunities in Miles and % (both for “quiet” trails and motorized trails)

Trail Opportunities by Activity	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Non-motorized trail miles open all year (“quiet” trails)	Castles 13 Crazies 1 LBelts 62 Total 76	Castles 2 Crazies 3 LBelts 88 Total 93	Castles 49 Crazies 65 LBelts 366 Total 480	Castles 27 Crazies 58 LBelts 157 Total 242
Motorized trail miles open part of year or year round to motorcycles	Castles 65 Crazies 64 LBelts 529 Total 658	Castles 60 Crazies 62 LBelts 529 Total 651	Castles 12 Crazies 0 LBelts 230 Total 242	Castles 28 Crazies 7 LBelts 408 Total 443
Existing System Roads Closed to Motorized Use during non-winter season (good easy grades for hiking or horseback riding opportunities)	Castles 7 Crazies 10 LBelts 179 Total 196	Castles 11 Crazies 12 LBelts 182 Total 205	Castles 11 Crazies 21 LBelts 251 Total 283	Castles 19 Crazies 7 LBelts 230 Total 256
Total Miles of Trail (Roads above not counted)	734	732	722	685
% of trail miles that are motorized/non-motorized by mountain range	Castles 83/17 Crazies 98/2 LBelts 90/10	Castles 97/3 Crazies 97/3 LBelts 87/13	Castles 20/80 Crazies 0/100 LBelts 38/62	Castles 50/50 Crazies 11/89 LBelts 72/28
% of trail miles that are motorized/non-motorized by alternative(mountain ranges all combined)	90% mot. 10% non-mot	89% mot. 11% non-mot	33% mot. 67% non-mot	64% mot. 36% non-mot

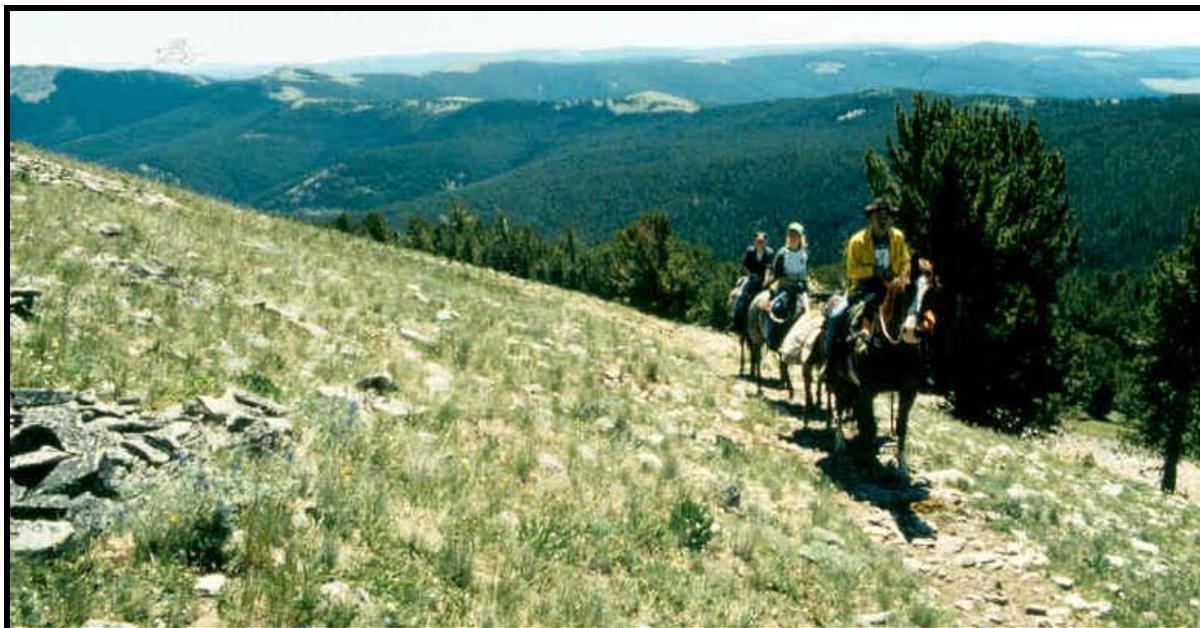


Table III-4. Existing Motorcycle Riding Opportunities in Miles by Alternative

Activity	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Motorcycle trails open part of year or year round until closed by snow	Castles 65	Castles 60	Castles 12	Castles 28
	Crazies 64	Crazies 62	Crazies 0	Crazies 7
	LBelts 529	LBelts 529	LBelts 230	LBelts 408
	Total 658	Total 651	Total 242	Total 443
Motorcycle trails open year round until closed by snow*	Castles 57	Castles 46	Castles 12	Castles 22
	Crazies 6	Crazies 28	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 385	LBelts 382	LBelts 164	LBelts 138
	Total 448	Total 456	Total 176	Total 160
Trails open to motorcycles and not to ATVs(i.e. single track trails)*	Castles 21	Castles 12	Castles 0	Castles 0
	Crazies 41	Crazies 29	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 376	LBelts 302	LBelts 71	LBelts 235
	Total 438	Total 343	Total 71	Total 235
Roads closed to road vehicles all year but open part of year or all year to motorcycles until closed by snow	Castles 4	Castles 3	Castles 3	Castles 1
	Crazies 8	Crazies 7	Crazies 4	Crazies 8
	LBelts 69	LBelts 85	LBelts 88	LBelts 70
	Total 81	Total 95	Total 95	Total 79
Roads open part of year or year round to road vehicles and street-legal ATVs and motorcycles operated by licensed drivers until closed by snow	Castles 144	Castles 117	Castles 118	Castles 104
	Crazies 53	Crazies 46	Crazies 40	Crazies 47
	LBelts 1326	LBelts 870	LBelts 797	LBelts 777
	Total 1523	Total 1033	Total 955	Total 928
Total road and trail miles available**	2262	1774	1287	1441

* To avoid double counting, these rows not included in total at bottom of table

**See Table III-2 for potential additional “mixed traffic” road opportunities in the future when administratively determined outside this NEPA analysis.



Table III-5. Existing ATV Riding Opportunities in Miles by Alternative

Activity	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Trails open to ATV's part of year or year round until closed by snow	Castles 44 Crazies 29 LBelts 153 Total 226	Castles 48 Crazies 33 LBelts 228 Total 309	Castles 12 Crazies 0 LBelts 158 Total 170	Castles 28 Crazies 7 LBelts 173 Total 208
Trails open to ATV's year round until closed by snow*	Castles 36 Crazies 6 LBelts 123 Total 165	Castles 46 Crazies 26 LBelts 186 Total 258	Castles 12 Crazies 0 LBelts 125 Total 137	Castles 22 Crazies 0 LBelts 87 Total 109
Roads closed to road vehicles all year but open part of year or all year to ATVs until closed by snow	Castles 4 Crazies 8 LBelts 22 Total 34	Castles 3 Crazies 7 LBelts 80 Total 90	Castles 3 Crazies 4 LBelts 85 Total 92	Castles 1 Crazies 8 LBelts 70 Total 79
Roads open part of year or year round to road vehicles and street-legal ATVs and motorcycles operated by licensed drivers until closed by snow	Castles 144 Crazies 53 LBelts 1326 Total 1523	Castles 117 Crazies 46 LBelts 870 Total 1033	Castles 118 Crazies 40 LBelts 797 Total 955	Castles 104 Crazies 47 LBelts 777 Total 928
High clearance (Maintenance Level 2) system roads converted into ATV/motorcycle trails***	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 0 Total 0	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 33 Total 33	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 33 Total 33	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelts 13 Total 13
Roads and non-system trails converted to 4x4 Trails (Which are also open to ATV use)*	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelt 0 Total 0	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelt 0 Total 0	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelt 0 Total 0	Castles 0 Crazies 0 LBelt 0 Total 0
Total Road and Trail Miles**	1783	1432	1217	1215

*To avoid double counting, this row not included in totals at bottom of table.

**See Table III-2 for potential additional “mixed traffic” road opportunities in the future when administratively determined outside this NEPA analysis.

***To avoid double counting, this row not included in totals at bottom of table. See also Table III-8 for undetermined (typically high clearance) roads made into system roads or trails.



**Table III-6. Existing Big Game Hunting Season Motorized Access
in Miles by Alternative**

Activity	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Roads Open 1 Sept to 30 Nov (Archery and Rifle Big Game Season)*	Castles 137	Castles 99	Castles 30	Castles 74
	Crazies 34	Crazies 26	Crazies 26	Crazies 26
	LBelts 1152	LBelts 734	LBelts 520	LBelts 630
	Total 1323	Total 859	Total 576	Total 730
Trails open to motorcycles 1 Sep-30 Sep (Archery Season)	Castles 65	Castles 58	Castles 12	Castles 27
	Crazies 70	Crazies 62	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 528	LBelts 530	LBelts 226	LBelts 369
	Total 663	Total 650	Total 238	Total 396
Trails open to ATVs 1 Sep-30 Sep (Archery Season)	Castles 44	Castles 46	Castles 12	Castles 27
	Crazies 29	Crazies 33	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 153	LBelts 228	LBelts 158	LBelts 170
	Total 225	Total 302	Total 170	Total 197
Trails open to Motorcycles 15 Oct-30 Nov (Rifle BigGame Season)	Castles 58	Castles 46	Castles 12	Castles 27
	Crazies 6	Crazies 28	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 390	LBelts 389	LBelts 177	LBelts 148
	Total 454	Total 463	Total 189	Total 175
Trails open to ATVs 15 Oct-30 Nov (Rifle BigGame Season)	Castles 38	Castles 46	Castles 12	Castles 27
	Crazies 6	Crazies 26	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 127	LBelts 192	LBelts 139	LBelts 97
	Total 171	Total 264	Total 151	Total 124
Trails open to 4x4/SUV/jeeps 15 Oct-30 Nov (Rifle BigGame Season)	Castles 0	Castles 0	Castles 0	Castles 0
	Crazies 0	Crazies 0	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 0	LBelts 0	LBelts 0	LBelts 0
	Total 0	Total 0	Total 0	Total 0
Trails open to 4x4 / SUV / Jeeps 1Sep-30 Sep (Archery Season)	Castles 0	Castles 0	Castles 0	Castles 0
	Crazies 0	Crazies 0	Crazies 0	Crazies 0
	LBelts 0	LBelts 0	LBelts 0	LBelts 0
	Total 0	Total 0	Total 0	Total 0

***Provides access to hunters using road vehicles (Passenger cars, Pickups, SUVs, and street legal OHVs operated by licensed drivers).**

Table III-7 Number of Large Blocks of Non-Motorized ROS Settings By Size*

Mountain Range and number of blocks by size in acres		SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Castles	50,000 plus	0	0	0	0
	25,000 to 50,000	0	0	0	0
	15,000 to 25,000	0	0	1	0
	10,000 to 15,000 acres	0	0	0	0
	5,000 to 10,000 acres	0	0	0	2
Crazies	50,000 plus	0	0	0	0
	25,000 to 50,000	0	0	0	0
	15,000 to 25,000	0	0	1	1
	10,000 to 15,000 acres	0	0	0	0
	5,000 to 10,000 acres	1	1	0	0
LBelts	50,000 plus	0	0	2	0
	25,000 to 50,000	0	0	2	1
	15,000 to 25,000	0	0	0	1
	10,000 to 15,000 acres	1	1	0	1
	5,000 to 10,000 acres	6	8	4	7

*Semi-primitive Non-Motorized and Primitive Recreation Opportunity Settings (ROS) , by mountain range and size in acres). **Actual number and size of non-motorized blocks will increase if using measuring methods other than ROS. For example, ROS creates a half-mile buffer from motorized roads or trails. While acres within the buffer are influenced by the sights and sounds of adjacent motorized travel, they are not available to motorized use.**

Table III-8. Undetermined Roads and Trails becoming System Roads and Trails in Miles by Alternative*

Trail Opportunities In Miles by Alternative/Activity	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Undetermined Roads becoming system roads	0	46	45	54
Undetermined roads and trails becoming system trails	0	54	38	89
Total miles of roads and trails	0	100	83	143

***Alternative 1, while converting no undetermined roads or trails to system roads or trails, kept all 495 undetermined miles of road and 268 miles of undetermined trail for public use. In Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 above, only the undetermined roads and trails converted to system roads and trails were kept. All others were eliminated.**

**Table III-9. Road and Trail Construction / Reconstruction
in Miles by Alternative***

Activity	SUMMER ALT. 1	SUMMER ALT. 3	SUMMER ALT. 4	SUMMER ALT. 5
Road Construction or Reconstruction	0	5	5	5
Trail Construction or Reconstruction	0	127	127	127
Total miles	0	132	132	132

***Does not include existing annual construction/reconstruction program, which emphasizes work on the existing system.**

a. Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

1. Direct and Indirect Effects

The following reflect the desired condition and how well the alternative accomplished it.

1. Forest Plan: Trails will generally all be open to vehicles, where possible. Non-motorized trails will be established when needed to avoid conflicts and meet the needs of non-motorized users.

Motorized trails are defined here as those trails that accommodate motorized use while non-motorized trails accommodate all kinds of non-motorized use. Motorized trails are open both to motorized and non-motorized use. Many non-motorized recreationists have expressed concern with having to share trails with motorized users.

This alternative contains more miles of trail open to both motorized and non-motorized users than any other alternative—**90** percent. It provides excellent opportunities for motorized recreation—more than any other alternative in sheer miles available. Table III-2 shows opportunities for road-related recreation. See tables III-3 through III-5 above for trail-related recreation. **Table III-2 shows that this alternative has more miles of open road than any action alternative. That is because it keeps all existing inventoried undetermined roads, rather than eliminating them. While they are not made system roads in this alternative, Table III-8 shows that in action alternatives, typically less than 50 miles of undetermined road are made into system roads. Though not shown in the tables, Alternative 1 has 495 miles of undetermined roads and 268 miles of undetermined trails that are kept.** Most of these **undetermined** routes do not meet criteria for making them system roads or trails as discussed in the desired future conditions above. Their inclusion in this alternative greatly increases the miles of roads and trails available for motorized and non-motorized use, but does so at the expense of natural resources impacted by these typically user-built facilities.

While this alternative reflects the Forest Plan desire to maximize opportunities for motorized and non-motorized use on the same trails, it does not acknowledge the desire by many of the public to have more non-motorized trail opportunities. This alternative provides the fewest miles of non-motorized trail opportunities of any alternative. See Table III-3 above.

2. Policy/Forest Plan: A wide variety of ROS settings and motorized and non-motorized trails will be provided to accommodate a wide variety of recreation activities, including long motorized loops and several day hiking trips in non-motorized settings (Acres of different ROS settings; miles of trail by activity type.; large blocks of non-motorized ROS settings).

Table III-1 shows Recreation Opportunity Settings (ROS). Alternative 1 provides very limited opportunities for non-motorized settings, while providing a maximum of settings that are motorized. Alternative 1 is primarily Roded Natural and Semi-Primitive Motorized. Rural and Roded Natural settings are more difficult to change to non-motorized than other settings. Roads already constructed will continue to have influence on settings unless shut to road vehicles and allowed to grow in to narrower widths for trail-related recreation or through closure to motorized use.

Alternative 1 is more motorized than Alternatives 4 and 5, and about the same as Alternative 3. Sixty-six percent of the three mountain range acreages are within about .5 mile of a road, having an ROS setting of Rural or Roded Natural. Twenty-three percent are within about a .5 mile of a motorized trail, ie. they are semi-primitive motorized ROS settings. Opportunities for solitude and a non-motorized experience are lowest of all alternatives at just 12 percent of total acres.

By mountain range, the Castles are 97 percent in motorized ROS settings, with only 3 percent in non-motorized settings. In the Crazies, 84 percent of the acres are motorized settings, while non-motorized settings represent 16 percent of the mountain range. The Little Belts are 88 percent motorized and 12 percent non-motorized.

In terms of total roads and trails available to motorized use(See Tables III-2, III-4, and III-5) this alternative has the greatest opportunities for motorized trail recreation and the least for non-motorized recreationists seeking quiet and solitude.

. Table III-7 specifically addresses the issue of large blocks of non-motorized ROS settings by mountain range and block size. This alternative has the least amount of blocks of any size containing quiet areas (Semi-primitive non-motorized and primitive settings). There are no quiet areas larger than 5,000 acres in the Castles and only one such area in the Crazy Mountains. None of the blocks exceed 15,000 acres, and most are less than 10,000 acres, making 4-5 day long hikes in non-motorized settings problematic. Only one block, located in the Middle Fork Judith area, is greater than 10,000 acres in size. There are no primitive ROS settings in Alternative 1.

See the alternative maps for **motorized** trail and road combination loops. Alternative 1 has more loop opportunities, **based on total miles of available motorized trails and roads**, than any other alternative for street legal OHVs. **These off-highway vehicles (ATV's and motorcycles)** can use a combination of forest roads and trails to make loops otherwise unavailable to non-street legal OHVs. **1,523 miles of road are open all or part of the year to street legal OHVs and road vehicles. As earlier indicated nearly 500 miles of these roads are "undetermined", meaning they were not designed, and are often overly steep.**

Those recreationists who make their motorcycles and ATVs street legal greatly increase their opportunities to use the national forest. The alternative has no anticipated mixed road traffic, eliminating the opportunities for non-street legal OHVs and unlicensed drivers to legally make long loops that require a combination of travel on both roads and trails. Mixed road traffic decisions will be made administratively outside this analysis, but anticipated mileages by alternative are shown in Table III-2.

3. Policy: Only those undetermined roads and trails that meet the needs of the forest will become system trails and roads. Some determining factors include whether the facility is well-aligned, has reasonable grades, does not duplicate existing trail access, and has no unacceptable resource conflicts or impacts. Cost of maintaining such trails is also a factor. (Miles of undetermined road and trail becoming adopted into the transportation system)

Table III-8 shows that this alternative has the least miles of undetermined roads and trails becoming adopted into the forest road and trail system. None are adopted into the system. This alternative addresses undetermined roads and trails only by keeping them open to the public. The Three State OHV EIS Decision required that identified “undetermined” roads and trails be left available to public use until travel planning determined which to keep and which to eliminate.

This alternative keeps all undetermined roads (495 miles) and undetermined trails (268 miles), and does not determine which should be eliminated and which should be adopted. As a result it has more total miles of system and non-system (“undetermined”) roads and trails than any other alternative. This alternative is the only one keeping roads and trails in an “undetermined” status. Table III-8 shows that all action alternatives eliminate most undetermined roads and trails. They either would become part of the transportation system or would be eliminated from public use through some mechanism such as signing or physical closure.

This alternative has more resource impacts than any other alternative because it does nothing to address problems of poor road and trail alignments, steepness, locations, and duplication of the existing transportation system.

The Forest Service would not maintain these undetermined roads and trails because only system roads and trails are maintained. Maintenance funds for the existing system are presently inadequate and are not expected to increase in the next several years.

4. Policy: New trail construction will reflect current construction and maintenance funds availability. ATV trails will largely be limited to existing ATV trails or will use existing low standard roads (miles of new road and trail construction and miles of ATV trails created from roads and trails).

Table III-9 shows that Alternative 1 proposes no additional road or trail construction or reconstruction beyond our existing annual program. This is the least of any alternative. Those mileages vary from year to year and are not included in this table, which shows trail construction intended to create new loop or other opportunities, rather than maintain the status quo system in Alternative 1.

Table III-5 utilizes fewer miles of roads closed to road vehicles for ATV use than any action alternative. Such roads can be inexpensive means of providing ATV opportunities at low cost. Alternative does provide the most miles of road travel opportunities to street-legal ATV’s with operators 17 and over. It provides more miles of ATV trails than Alternatives 4 and 5, but these miles are not designed to provide loop opportunities like Alternatives 3 and 5.

Mixed road traffic opportunities will be addressed in a separate analysis, but Table III-2 shows no miles of mixed roads anticipated in the future for this alternative. This is lower than any action alternatives estimates. No system roads would be available to mixed use, meaning that non-street legal ATV’s or youth 12-16 would not be able to use these roads. See Table III-5 for more ATV information.

No miles of high clearance **system** roads were closed to road vehicles and converted into **system trails suitable** for ATV trails in this alternative.

Table III-2 shows that this alternative has more “4 wheeling” opportunities on low maintenance level, high clearance roads, than any other alternative. This alternative provides 514 miles of high-clearance roads open all or part of the year to high-clearance road vehicles, such as pickups, and SUVs. These roads are also open to OHVs, including ATVs, **if they** are street legal and have licensed operators. That is because this alternative is required to keep existing “undetermined” roads and trails.

5. Policy: New ATV trails will be developed where there are suitable existing low standard roads, rather than through extensive new construction of trails (miles of ATV trail created from roads closed to road vehicles; high clearance **system** roads available to street legal ATVs with licensed operators; miles of new ATV trail construction; miles of road and trail converted to 4x4 trails).

In Alternative 1 no roads are converted to 4x4 trails (Table III-2) and there are no 4x4 trails in the analysis area. While not considered ATV trails, this alternative has more miles of high clearance roads available to street legal ATV traffic than any other alternative. (Table III-2). No high clearance roads are converted into system trails suitable for ATV use (Table III-5). 34 miles of roads closed yearlong to road vehicles are open to ATV’s in this alternative, less than in any action alternative (Table III-5). No new road or trail construction is proposed in Alternative 1, other than the traditional existing program, which emphasizes reconstruction of the existing system. (Table III-9).

6. Policy: The needs of the disabled for forest access are recognized, analyzed, and accommodated within other resource constraints.(Miles of motorized (**by motorized activity**) and non-motorized trails ; miles of road open to road vehicles and high clearance vehicles; acres by ROS settings).

Individuals with disabilities vary widely in the impacts of disabilities to their mobility on the national forest. **Some are able to walk but only on flatter trails.** Some unable to walk can ride horses with the assistance of others. Others are able to ride ATVs while others can not. Most are able to use road vehicles, including passenger cars, and high clearance vehicles such as pickups and jeeps and other SUV’s.

None of the alternatives, including Alternative 1, propose new wheelchair accessible trails, **unlike the Rocky Mountain Travel Plan. Unlike the Rocky Mountain Front, there are several wheelchair-accessible trails in the analysis area, including Crystal Lake, and trails adjacent Jumping Creek and Dry Wolf Campgrounds. Development of additional wheelchair-accessible trails** can be accomplished outside this travel planning process with normal environmental analysis for specific trails, and is typically non-controversial.

Those with disabilities can refer to Tables III-2 through III-6 to find the availability of their preferred mode of transportation. Alternative 1 does provide more motorized opportunities than any other alternative, recognizing that all undetermined roads and trails are kept in this alternative. Alternative 1 does provide more motorized road access opportunities than any other alternative. It is about equal to Alternative 3 in miles of motorized trails available, and has about 300 more miles of trails and roads available to ATV use than any other alternative.

None of the alternatives were specifically designed to create closed system roads for hiking by those seeking flatter hiking opportunities because of age or physical condition. Nevertheless, closed system roads that are non-motorized can provide good opportunities for hiking if they are identified to the public on maps or other literature. Any closed road is typically available for use by hikers or stock users. It is the original system roads that are closed to motorized use that offer the flattest, most favorable grades for easy walking because they were typically designed to not exceed certain grade maximums. These roads often are intended to be reopened for anticipated future timber harvest, but may often be closed for many year between timber harvest entries and their surfaces may have grassed in. Table III-3 shows the miles of existing system roads that are closed to motorized use during the non-winter time of year. There are 196 miles in Alternative 1, very similar to the 205 miles in Alternative 3, and less than any of the action alternatives. The large majority of these roads are in the Little Belt Mountains.

7. Public comment: Single track trails will typically be maintained, rather than converted to two-track trails accommodating ATVs. Table III-4 shows that Alternative 1 has 438 miles of single track trail maintained for motorcycle use, which excludes ATV use. This is **substantially** more than any other alternative. These single track trails are also available for non-motorized use.

8. Policy/Public comments: Hunters will have opportunities to hunt in motorized settings and non-motorized settings during archery and rifle big game seasons (ROS settings by acre; miles of road and trail open during archery and rifle big game seasons) Table III-1 shows ROS settings for this alternative. Alternative 1 has more Roaded Natural acres than any alternative and the least amount of non-motorized acres of any alternative. It also has the second highest number of acres of Semi-primitive Motorized settings. This alternative provides the greatest amount of motorized hunting opportunities of any alternative, and the least opportunity for non-motorized hunting.

Table III-7 recognizes that not all acres of the same ROS settings are of equal value. The presence or absence of larger blocks of non-motorized **ROS** settings are shown in this table. Generally, larger non-motorized blocks are less likely to be illegally used by OHVs and road vehicles **because such activities can more easily be monitored, especially at trailheads serving these areas.** Their mass discourages illegal use, and greatly reduces the possibility of social conflict. They may also increase hunting success by non-motorized users because they are more remote and difficult to access.

Table III-7 shows that Alternative 1 has the **least** number of larger blocks of non-motorized ROS settings of any alternative, meaning it has the least amount of non-motorized hunting **areas of size** of any alternative, including hunting in larger blocks of non-motorized areas. This is additionally described in item two above.

Table III-6 shows miles by alternative of roads and motorized trails for hunting access during the September archery season and the rifle big game season in October and November. This alternative has substantially more **road** access during hunting season than the other alternatives. **It is comparable to Alternative 3 in having more miles of motorcycle trail open during hunting season than other alternatives. It has less ATV trail hunting opportunities during archery season than Alternative 3, but more than other alternatives. Like other alternatives, 4x4 traffic is limited to roads and there are no 4x4 trails.**

Table III-1 shows acres of various ROS settings. Those wishing to hunt in non-motorized settings should seek Semi-primitive non-motorized settings available in this alternative. As

already discussed above, this alternative and Alternative 3 provide smaller blocks of this setting than the other two alternatives.

9. Policy: The Forest is to provide quality recreation settings so that people can create their own high quality recreation experiences. (A general summary by alternative of each alternative's effects on recreation)

Undetermined roads and trails. This alternative is required to keep all of these. These include many overly steep, poorly aligned trails that create erosion problems and don't meet agency design standards, or are duplications of existing trails. Funds **would not** be spent to try and maintain these trails and roads **because they are not system trails**. This **would end up over time** reducing tread quality and increasing erosion problems, reducing the quality of the trail riding experience for all users. Undetermined trails are a large reason why many feel that OHV use, especially ATV use, is out of control on many national forests. This alternative does nothing to control or manage that use.

Youth OHV loops. This alternative does not provide any loops, although they can be added in the future with appropriate analysis.

Use of Mixed Traffic Roads to expand recreation trail opportunities for motorized use. No mixed traffic trails are anticipated for this alternative. That determination will be done by a separate analysis.

Large blocks of non-motorized ROS areas for non-motorized use. Table III-7 shows this alternative provides none. Providing large areas of semi-primitive **or primitive** non-motorized lands **was** not a priority for this alternative in the late 1980s. Expanding OHV use since then, especially for ATV's, has **caused** many members of the public **to** feel that quality non-motorized experiences are not possible in much of the analysis area.

Smith River floating experiences. This alternative allows motorized use on all but one of the roads and trails approaching the river from the east. This use has the potential for affecting the solitude sought by floaters during the floating season. There is also the potential for motorized and non-motorized users of these trails to use boat camps needed by floaters.

Loop opportunities for OHVs, especially ATV's. This alternative, because it has the largest amount of motorized roads and trails, provides more motorcycle loop opportunities than other alternatives, although Alternative 3 is very similar. It provides substantially more miles of road opportunities for ATVs than other alternatives, and the second highest number of miles of ATV trails of all alternatives. Adult operators of street legal OHV's have significantly more riding opportunities with this alternative than any other alternative.

Protects motorized trail connectors between areas of each mountain range. This alternative protects more of these connectors than other alternatives, allowing OHV riders to drive long distances from one part of a mountain range to another. Again, street legal machines **with licensed operators**, expand these opportunities using existing roads.

Motorized and non-motorized quality trail opportunities. This alternative provides the most motorized trails, and fewest non-motorized trails. It does this while impacting other resource values analyzed elsewhere. The quality of motorized trails **of undetermined origin** is questionable. From a strictly quantitative standpoint, no alternative offers as many miles of motorized opportunity, and as few miles of non-motorized opportunity as this alternative. It accommodates the motorized recreationist very well, while poorly handling the needs of those looking to the Forest for solitude and opportunities to get away from the noise of nearby cities, towns, and motorized vehicles.

2. Cumulative Effects

It is anticipated that motorized use, especially ATV use, will continue to increase, creating more pressure on limited miles of roads and trails. Desires of the non-motorized community for a larger share of the trail system for non-motorized use will grow as quiet opportunities become less available on private lands, and as the nation becomes more urbanized. This will create more conflict. Federal (and state trail grants) budgets for construction and maintenance will likely remain static **to slightly declining** over the next several years, limiting the Forest's ability to construct new trails or convert old ones to different kinds of use, including ATV. **Over time fewer miles of trail will be** available to motorized use in the future. This necessitates the need for a transportation system that is more efficient and able to handle the needs for long loop motorized opportunities while providing substantial miles of non-motorized trail for hikers, backpackers, and stock users unwilling to use motorized trails. This issue is explored in more detail in the recreation issue "Cumulative Effects of Past Closures" later in the **recreation** section of this analysis. Use will increase over time, creating more impacts from both motorized and non-motorized users on other resources. **The illegal construction of user-built trails, if it continues, will impact resources and create social conflict, potentially necessitating the need to close more motorized trails to keep environmental impacts of motorized use to the levels described in this analysis for all resources.**

b. All Action Alternatives (Alts. 2-5)

The same analysis methodology described above under the No Action Alternative was used to analyze action alternatives. Effects described are based on the desired future condition already described, which is based upon the Forest Plan, policy, and public comments describing what they wanted.

1. Direct and Indirect Effects

Tables III-1 through III-9 show by alternative the effects of the action alternatives to road and trail-related and dispersed recreation in the analysis area. The desired conditions below provide a format for accomplishing that.

1. **Forest Plan:** Trails will generally all be open to vehicles, where possible. Non-motorized trails will be established when needed to avoid conflicts and meet the needs of non-motorized users.

Motorized trails are defined here as those trails that accommodate motorized use while non-motorized trails accommodate all kinds of non-motorized use. Motorized trails are open both to motorized and non-motorized use. Many non-motorized recreationists have expressed concern with having to share trails with motorized users.

Table III-3 shows miles of motorized and non-motorized trails by alternative. Eleven percent of the trails in Alternative 3 are non-motorized, while **89** percent are motorized (multiple use). This alternative has fewer miles of non-motorized trails than any alternative other than Alternative 1. It provides the most multiple use trails, **ie. accommodating both motorized and non-motorized use.** Alternative 4 has the fewest miles of motorized trails with **67** percent of the trail system being non-motorized. Only **33** percent of the trails are multiple use, which reflects the non-motorized emphasis of this alternative. **36** percent of the trails in

Alternative 5 are non-motorized, with **64** percent accommodating both motorized and non-motorized users.

2. Policy/Forest Plan: A wide variety of ROS settings and motorized and non-motorized trails will be provided to accommodate a wide variety of recreation activities, including long motorized loops and hiking trips lasting several days in non-motorized settings (acres of different ROS settings; miles of trail by activity type; **large blocks of non-motorized ROS settings**).

Table III-1 shows Recreation Opportunity Settings (ROS). Alternative 3 is very similar to effects already described above for Alternative 1, although Alternative 3 slightly reduces acres of Roaded Natural and increases both motorized and non-motorized semi-primitive settings by 3 percent and 14 percent, respectively. Its' ROS settings in the Castles and Crazies are essentially the same as Alternative 1. Like Alternative 1, it contains no primitive acres. Except for Alternative 1, this alternative provides less non-motorized settings than any other alternative. It provides more ROS setting diversity than Alternative 1, but less than Alternatives 4 and 5.

In terms of providing a diversity of ROS settings, Alternative 4 provides the most, although it is still dominated by motorized settings, especially Roaded Natural. Alternative 4 remains primarily Roaded Natural, but eliminates Semi-primitive Motorized settings in both the Crazies and the Castles **and increases semi-primitive non-motorized settings**. Trails within these semi-primitive non-motorized settings are all non-motorized. In the Little Belts Semi-primitive Motorized settings are dropped to about 28 percent of what they are in Alternatives 1 and 3, while Semi-primitive non-motorized ROS settings double in that mountain range. This alternative provides more primitive acres than any other alternative. Alternative 4 is less motorized than any other alternative, with 31 percent of the total area non-motorized.

Alternative 5 offers more non-motorized settings than Alternatives 1 and 3, but less than Alternative 4; it provides more variety of settings than Alternatives 1 and 3, but less than Alternative 4. It has the smallest amount of Roaded Natural settings, with 60 percent of the area being within about .5 mile of an existing or proposed road. It has more than three times the Semi-primitive motorized acres as Alternative 4, but only about 75 percent of that setting contained in Alternatives 1 and 3. In the Castles, Semi-primitive motorized acres are reduced to 44 percent of their existing acreage in Alternative 1, while increasing Semi-primitive non-motorized to 19 percent of the entire range. In the Crazies, it greatly reduces Semi-primitive motorized settings to less than 2,000 acres while increasing Semi-primitive non-motorized settings to more than 28,000 acres, more than any other alternative. In the Little Belts, Semi-primitive motorized acres **by one percent** of their existing acreage, while Semi-primitive non-motorized acres are increased by about 60 percent from the existing condition. Primitive ROS settings in this alternative are more than in Alternatives 1 and 3, which have none, and less than one third of those offered in Alternative 4.

Alternative 5 has fewer opportunities for motorized recreation activities than Alternatives 1 and 3, but much more than Alternative 4.

Effects on non-motorized recreationists, motorcyclists, road vehicles, and ATV operators are shown in Tables III-2 through III-5. Alternative 3 emphasizes motorized opportunities and has **well over twice** the **miles of** motorcycle trails as Alternative 4, which emphasizes non-motorized recreation. Alternative 5 includes resource **considerations** and the desire to accommodate the needs of a variety of users while avoiding social conflict where possible. It

provides just **68** percent of the motorcycle opportunities in Alternative 3, but **nearly** twice the opportunities for motorcycles contained in Alternative 4.

ATV trail **mileage** opportunities are greatest in Alternative **3** and lowest in Alternative 4, **with Alternative 5 being in between**. Miles of roads closed to road vehicles but open to ATVs and motorcycles are highest in Alternative **4, followed closely by Alternative 3, and are** lowest in Alternative 1. **Again, Alternative 5 is in between.**

See the alternative maps for trail and road combination loops. Alternative 3 has **the most loop opportunities of all the action alternatives**, especially for street legal OHVs that can use forest roads to make loops otherwise unavailable to non-street legal OHVs. Alternative 4 has the least opportunities because it has the fewest motorized trail opportunities **and little or no emphasis on providing loop opportunities.**

Table III-7 specifically addresses the issue of large blocks of non-motorized settings by mountain range and block size. Alternatives 1 and 3 offer the fewest large blocks of non-motorized settings, **with all of them less than 15,000 acres in size**. Alternative 4 offers the largest blocks, **including four that are greater than 25,000 acres in size**. Alternative 5 is in between. **Alternatives 4 and 5 provide opportunities for hikes of several days and two plus days, respectively, in a non-motorized setting,** while Alternatives 1 and 3 do not.

Simplistically, a backpacker travelling ten miles in a day in a non-motorized ROS setting would require approximately ten square miles (.5 mile of non-motorized ROS setting on either side of the trail) or about 6,660 acres daily. A four day hike on a loop trail where no trail is traveled over more than once would require **approximately** 40 square miles or about 25,000 acres of non-motorized setting. Just half that acreage would be needed if the hike was 20 miles in and 20 miles out using the same trail. **Of equal importance is having trails within those non-motorized ROS settings areas to make such hikes.**

Opportunities for extended hikes of two or more days using different system trails entirely within non-motorized settings are not possible in Alternatives 1 and 3. Blocks are small and often untrailed areas located between roads or motorized trails.

Alternative 4 provides the only opportunity for approximately 4 to 5 day hiking trips in non-motorized settings where routes are not retraced. Opportunities in this alternative are greatest for long hikes in the Pilgrim Creek, Tenderfoot, Deep Creek, and Middle Fork Judith drainages of the Little Belts. It provides good loop opportunities for hiking in the western side of the Castle Mountains and provides slightly more hiking opportunities than Alternative 5 in the Crazy Mountains.

Alternative 5 has opportunities for approximately two day long hikes (or longer if the party moves less than 10 miles a day) in the Middle Fork Judith and in the Pilgrim Creek drainage without having to use the same trail twice during the hike. Shorter one day in and one day out non-motorized hikes are available in the Tenderfoot drainage with Alternative 5. Alternative 5 offers 2 day or longer trips in the west side of the Castles and Crazy Mountains, but such trips require retracing one's route along the same trail. Longer trips in the Crazy Mountains require crossing private land and access permission may be needed.

Significantly longer opportunities occur in all alternatives if hikers are 1)willing to use motorized trails during part of their trip, 2)go on hikes to destinations and then retrace their route back to the starting point along the same trail; 3)hike off of existing trails; or 4)probably the biggest option is to hike on trails when they are not open to motorized traffic. Often this is early in the summer or later in the fall.

3. Policy: Only those undetermined roads and trails that meet the needs of the forest will become system trails and roads. Some determining factors include whether the facility is well-aligned, has reasonable grades, does not duplicate existing trail access, and has no unacceptable resource conflicts or impacts. Cost of maintaining such trails is also a factor (miles of undetermined road and trail becoming adopted into the transportation system).

Table III-8 shows the number of miles of undetermined roads and trails made into system roads and trails by alternative. Alternative 3 had a total of **100** miles, while Alternative 5 kept **143** miles, while Alternative 4 kept less of them than any alternative. Alternative 1 was required to **keep** all undetermined roads **and trails**. By comparison, the action alternatives, at most, kept just under 20 percent of them. Alternative 5 took the closest look at these undetermined roads and trails and kept just 18 percent of them in total, more than any other action alternative. **Costs of maintaining these roads and trails is proportional to the number of miles kept, with Alternative 5 having the greatest associated costs.**

4. Policy: **New trail construction will reflect current construction and maintenance funds availability. ATV trails will largely be limited to existing ATV trails or will use existing low standard roads (miles of new road and trail construction and miles of ATV trails created from roads and trails).**

Table III-9 shows new road and trail construction or reconstruction proposed by action alternatives is exactly the same—5 miles of road and 127 miles of trail. The Forest presently averages about ten miles of annual reconstruction to keep existing trails in good condition. Accomplishing the much larger program proposed will be difficult, unless it is done over a ten to 15 year period of time, or 2) if trail budgets significantly increase, or 3) if the forest deemphasizes reconstruction of its current trail system and emphasizes construction/reconstruction of the action alternative proposals. Such a move, while possible, would create more miles of poorly maintained trail and accompanying impacts to users and other resources. The current Forest Service trails program is flat to declining for the foreseeable future. Funding from the state trails program has been helpful in the past in maintaining our existing trails, and is not expected to greatly increase in the future. Assuming an average construction cost of \$15,000 per mile, costs of proposed trail construction by alternative for 127 miles of proposed trail would be approximately \$1,905,000, not including inflation over the next 15 years.

5. Policy: **New ATV trails will be developed where there are suitable existing low standard roads, rather than through extensive new construction of trails (miles of ATV trail created from roads closed to road vehicles; high clearance roads available to street legal ATVs with licensed operators; miles of new ATV trail construction; miles of road and trail converted to 4x4 trails).**

Table III-5 shows that a number of roads are proposed for closure **to road vehicles** and use by ATVs and other OHVs. Alternative 4 has the most miles so proposed at **92** miles, while Alternative **1 has the least at 34 miles**. Not all of these miles are equally effective. High clearance roads are typically most useful because of their **rough, more challenging nature**.

In the action alternatives, 33 miles of high clearance roads were converted into ATV trails **in Alternatives 3 and 4, while Alternative 5 had the least at 13**. These high clearance roads are rough and often ideal for OHV use.

Any road converted for OHV trail use can be made even more suitable for ATV use through creative trail design that increases vertical and horizontal curves while primarily using the existing road prism.

Table III-2 shows miles of high clearance roads that are open to high clearance road vehicles, including pickups and SUVs, as well as street legal OHVs, including ATVs operated by licensed drivers. Miles of available high clearance road are substantially less in action alternatives than in the existing situation (Alternative 1).

Table III-5 shows total miles of ATV trail opportunities by alternative. Alternative 3 provides more ATV trail opportunities than other action alternatives, while Alternative 4 provides the least. Alternative 5 is in between.

No roads in the action alternatives are converted into 4x4 trails, which would accommodate both road and OHV traffic, as well as non-motorized use. Doing so would allow non-street legal vehicles to use these trails, and also increase riding opportunities for youth 12 to 16 years of age.

For the ATV user looking at maximum road and trail opportunities, Table III-5 shows that, for action alternatives, the total miles of road and trail open to street legal licensed operators is highest in Alternative 3 and lowest in Alternatives 4 and 5. All three action alternatives are within 15 percent of each other in providing total miles of road and trail available.

6. Policy: The needs of the disabled for forest access are recognized, analyzed, and accommodated within other resource constraints (miles of motorized (by motorized type) and non-motorized trails ; miles of road open to road vehicles and high clearance vehicles; acres by ROS settings).

Individuals with disabilities vary widely in the impacts of disabilities to their mobility on the national forest. **Some are able to walk only on flatter trails.** Some unable to walk can ride horses with the assistance of others. Others are able to ride ATVs while others can not. Most are able to use road vehicles, including passenger cars, and high clearance vehicles such as pickups and jeeps and other SUVs. None of the alternatives, including Alternative 1, propose new wheelchair accessible trails. That can be accomplished outside this travel planning process with normal environmental analysis for specific trails, and is typically non-controversial. It should be noted that wheelchair opportunities in the Little Belts, Castles, and Crazies are limited to roads and trails in some campgrounds and trailheads, and that more opportunities are needed.

Those with disabilities can refer to Tables III-2 through III-6 to find their preferred mode of transportation. **Table III-2 shows that in terms of total mixed traffic and non-mixed traffic roads (ie. total roads),** Alternative 1 provides more motorized road opportunities than any other alternative, recognizing that all undetermined roads and trails are kept in this alternative. Alternative 3 provides the second highest miles of road opportunities for individuals requiring road vehicles, with its combination of mixed and non-mixed roads. Alternatives 4 and 5 provide slightly less miles of mixed and non-mixed road opportunities. **Table III-5 shows** there are significantly more miles of ATV trails in Alternative 3 than in Alternatives 4 and 5.

None of the alternatives were specifically designed to create closed system roads for hiking by those seeking flatter hiking opportunities because of age or physical condition. Nevertheless, closed system roads that are non-motorized can provide good opportunities for hiking if they are identified to the public on maps or other literature.

Any closed road is typically available for use by hikers or stock users. It is the original system roads that are closed to motorized use that offer the flattest, most favorable grades for easy walking because they were typically designed and typically don't exceed certain grade maximums. These roads often are intended to be reopened for anticipated future timber harvest, but may often be closed for many year between timber harvest entries. Table III-3 shows by alternative the miles of existing system roads that are closed to motorized use during the non-winter time of year. Such road opportunities range from 196 miles in Alternative 1 to 286 miles in Alternative 5M, with other alternatives being in between these mileages. The large majority of roads are in the Little Belt Mountains.

7. Public comment: Single track trails will typically be maintained, rather than converted to two-track trails accommodating ATVs.

Table III-4 shows by alternative the single track motorcycle trail miles maintained for motorcycle use, while excluding ATV use. These single track trails are also available for all non-motorized users. Alternative 3 has more miles than any other action alternative, while Alternative 4 has the least.

8. Policy/Public comments: Hunters will have opportunities to hunt in motorized settings and non-motorized settings during archery and rifle big game seasons (ROS settings by acre; miles of road and trail open during archery and rifle big game seasons)

This issue is one of providing enough of each setting to satisfy the needs of both motorized hunters, typically hunting from or accessing hunting areas with road vehicles or OHVs, and non-motorized hunters that prefer to walk or ride horses. Table III-1 shows miles of motorized (Rural, Roaded Natural, and Semi-Primitive Motorized) and non-motorized (Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized and Primitive) settings available by alternative.

Table III-7 recognizes that not all acres of the same ROS settings are of equal value. The presence or absence of larger blocks of non-motorized ROS settings are shown in this table. Generally, larger non-motorized blocks are less likely to be illegally used by OHVs and road vehicles because such activities can more easily be monitored, especially at trailheads serving these areas. Their mass discourages illegal use, and greatly reduces the possibility of social conflict. They may also increase hunting success by non-motorized users because they are more remote and difficult to access.

Table III-6 shows miles by alternative of roads and motorized trails for hunting access during the September archery season and the rifle big game season in October and November. Generalizing, the most road vehicle and motorcycle access occurs with Alternative 1 and then Alternative 3, in that order, with the least in Alternative 4. Alternative 5 has less than in Alternatives 1 and 3. ATV access miles during archery season are greatest in Alternative 3, followed by Alternatives 1, 5, and 4.

Table III-1 shows acres of various ROS settings. Those wishing to hunt in non-motorized settings should seek semi-primitive or primitive non-motorized settings. Alternative 4 provides the most acres of these settings, while Alternatives 1 and 3 provide the least. Alternative 5 is in between.

9. Policy: The Forest is to provide quality recreation settings so that people can create their own high quality recreation experiences. (A general summary by alternative of each alternative's effects on recreation).

Undetermined roads and trails. Alternative 5 proposes to keep more miles of these than any other action alternative, followed by Alternative 3, while Alternative 4 has less than any action alternative. Quality of alignment and riding experience are questionable on many of these undetermined trails. They are not designed, typically, and often are user created. They have not been maintained. Keeping a lot of these miles as part of the transportation system will reduce the available maintenance funds for other, more important parts of the road and trails system. All of the action alternatives kept less than 20 percent of them, reflecting a desire to minimize those kept, and associated additional maintenance costs.

Youth OHV loops. Alternative 4 provides none of these. Alternative 3 and Alternative 5 each provide about four youth OHV loops. These loops are intended to provide opportunities for young riders to learn to ride on terrain that is easy, while just having fun on a motorized vehicle. These areas are typically near dispersed areas where families can camp. **These loops** also provide opportunities to keep this kind of recreation out of and away from campgrounds, where it won't disturb campground users.

Use of Mixed Traffic Roads to expand recreation trail opportunities for motorized use. Mixed traffic roads provide another opportunity to create motorized loops where road vehicles and non-street legal trail vehicles with unlicensed operators age 12 to 16 can mix **on forest roads.** **That analysis will be done in a separate analysis, but estimates of that analysis are provided in Table III-2 to help the reader become aware of possible future options for mixed traffic roads.** Alternative 4 **potentially** provides 27 miles of these opportunities, the least of any action alternative. Alternatives 3 and 5 **might** provide roughly the same mileage at **357** and **365** miles, respectively. Mixed roads can increase quality loops when properly selected for safety and when connecting otherwise unconnected motorized trail opportunities.

Large blocks of non-motorized areas for non-motorized use. Alternative 3 is very much like Alternative 1, providing no large blocks of non-motorized land. Table III-7 shows that Alternative 4 provides larger ROS blocks and Alternative 5 somewhat less. Large blocks of non-motorized ROS settings provide quality recreation opportunities for all kinds of hikers, stock users, and mountain bikers to enjoy themselves in a quiet setting on trips lasting several days. This opportunity is not available in Alternatives 1 and 3 because blocks are mostly less than 10,000 acres each in size. Alternative 4 offers opportunities for longer hikes on non-motorized trails. Alternative 5 offers somewhat less opportunities, but more than Alternatives 1 and 3, which offer no long non-motorized hiking opportunities.

Smith River floating experiences. A quiet floating experience is desired for floaters by the Forest Service, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Alternative 3 allows motorized users to reach the river **on every existing trail and road.** **This increases more than any alternative** the likelihood of encounter between floaters and OHV users, and the introduction of more noise into the river corridor. It also increases the possible conflict

between OHV users and floaters at boat camps. Alternative 4 provides no motorized access to the Smith River from trails to its east. While this does the best job of any alternative in helping maintain quiet along the river, it totally eliminates the opportunity for motorized recreationists to access the river, from the east. Alternative 5 allows one **ATV access road** to the river south of Trail 311 **from the beginning of July until the first of December, and another for motorcycles along Trail 342 year round**. The remainder of the trails to the river are non-motorized. **It provides new trail construction around private property to access both Trails 311 and Road 263. Road 263 can be accessed from above only by OHV's or by non-motorized means.** Alternative 5 prohibits use of boat camps on the river by non-floaters during the primary floating season, eliminating the potential for most conflict over boat camps. This alternative provides limited motorized access to the river while largely maintaining quiet along the river and eliminating most potential for conflict over boat camps.

Loop opportunities for OHVs, especially ATV's. Loop opportunities are difficult to quantify because of the large number of possible loop **combinations** and starting points. One way to compare alternatives for loop opportunities is to simply compare miles of trail and road available for OHV use. Tables III-4 and 5 are helpful here. Alternative 3 would then provide more loop opportunities for motorcycles because it maintains **over** 200 more miles of motorcycle trails than any of the other action alternatives and more ATV trails than the other action alternatives. Alternative 5 provides the next highest number of loop opportunities of action alternatives. Both Alternatives 3 and 5 **potentially could** provide **significant** mixed traffic roads to increase loop opportunities for OHVs. Alternative 4 provides the least amount of ATV trail opportunities, but does concentrate those **170** miles of trail into approximately 6 loops across the Little Belts. This alternative provides the least opportunity for motorcyclists because it disaggregates existing motorcycle trail loop opportunities into small trail segments with little connectivity, other than by using existing roads. Motorcycle trail systems are concentrated into about three small areas, none of which provide loop opportunities without the use of existing non-mixed traffic roads. Motorcyclists do have the opportunity to use the **170** miles of ATV loops, but their short lengths do not meet motorcyclist desires for long day ride opportunities.

Motorized and non-motorized quality trail opportunities. Tables III-3 provides a good summation of motorized and non-motorized opportunities by alternative. Miles of opportunity, whether motorized or non-motorized don't necessarily reflect quality of trail opportunities. The quality of the trails; their maintenance conditions, alignments, effects on other resources, locations **and loop opportunities**, and travel plan restrictions, are other indicators of opportunities. Alternative 3 provides **the most miles of opportunity for motorized users of any of the action alternatives**, but also keeps **16** more miles of undetermined trails than Alternative 4, and **34** more miles of undetermined trails than Alternative 5. **All of the action alternatives propose 132 miles of new trail construction.** New construction and more miles of trail to maintain will reduce maintenance and reconstruction of existing trails, reducing their ability to provide a quality setting. Alternative 3 favors the motorized user over the non-motorized user, with largely the same effects as Alternative 1, providing few non-motorized opportunities.

Alternative 4 concentrates ATV use onto existing roads and several ATV loops, providing opportunities not available in the existing situation. The quality of these loops can be improved because they represent fewer miles to maintain than any other alternative. While accommodating ATVs with loops, however, the miles of opportunity are less than any other alternative. Additionally, the alternative chops up the opportunities for motorcyclists,

eliminating most opportunities for longer rides and reducing motorcycling to very few areas, including the ATV loops it proposes. It largely ignores the desire of motorcyclists for single track trails, rather than sharing with ATV users on wider trails (see Table III-4). Alternative 4 provides the best opportunity for non-motorized recreationists because it makes about **67** percent of all trails non-motorized and creates larger blocks of semi-primitive non-motorized **and primitive** ROS settings (see Tables III-3 and 7).

Alternative 5 significantly reduces miles of motorized trail available, but still maintains **many** more miles of motorized trail than non-motorized. It **keeps** more miles of undetermined trails than any other alternative **in order to keep or create as many loop and motorized opportunities as possible within resource constraints**. Like Alternative 3, it provides youth OHV loops for young riders. It has the **same** amount of proposed new road and trail construction **as other action** alternatives, targeting opportunities to connect and create loop opportunities **and** providing more quality OHV riding opportunities. Alternative 5 greatly reduces the predominance of motorized to non-motorized trails, creating significantly more opportunities for quality non-motorized recreation in quality settings of significant size, and will assist hikers, hunters, stock users, and mountain bikers seeking settings that can be used for two or more days **of hiking or horse riding** without encountering motorized users. This alternative recognizes the desire of many members of the public for **separation of trails** for motorized and non-motorized users, while maintaining quality opportunities for OHV users to enjoy their recreation.

Protects motorized trail connectors between areas of each mountain range. Like protecting and providing loop opportunities for OHVs, this can best be measured by total miles of motorized trail available. Alternative 1 provides the most connectors, since trails are mostly motorized. Alternative 3 is very much like Alternative 1, although it keeps far fewer undetermined trails. It has the second highest number of motorized trails opportunities and the second highest number of motorized trail connectors. It does this, however, without addressing other resource concerns. Alternative 5 makes every effort to maintain trail connectors while addressing other resource concerns. As a result, there are fewer connectors in Alternative 5 than in Alternative 3. Alternative 4 does the least effective job of providing motorized trail connectors because it concentrates OHV use into several smaller, unconnected areas, forgoing opportunities for long day rides on single track trails by motorcyclists.

2. Cumulative Effects

It is anticipated that motorized use, especially ATV use, will continue to increase, creating more pressure on limited miles of roads and trails. Desires **of** the non-motorized community for a larger share of the trail system for non-motorized use will grow as quiet opportunities become less available on private lands, and as the nation becomes more urbanized. This will create more conflict. Federal (and state trail grants) budgets for construction and maintenance will likely remain static **to slightly declining** over the next several years, limiting the Forest's ability to construct new trails or convert old ones to different kinds of use, including ATV. **Over time fewer miles** of trail **will be** available to motorized use in the future. This necessitates the need for a transportation system that is more efficient and able to handle the needs for long loop motorized opportunities while providing substantial miles of non-motorized trail for hikers, backpackers, and stock users unwilling to use motorized trails. This issue is explored in more detail in the recreation issue "Cumulative Effects of Past Closures" later in the **recreation** section **of this analysis**. Use will increase over time,

creating more impacts from both motorized and non-motorized users on other resources. **The illegal construction of user-built trails, if it continues, will impact resources and create social conflict, potentially necessitating the need to close more motorized trails to keep environmental impacts of motorized use to the levels described in this analysis for all resources.**

c. Effects Common To All Alternatives

All alternatives will affect where, when, and how Forest roads and trails can be used in the Little Belts, Crazy, and Castle mountain ranges. All alternatives will **allow use that** impacts trails and road surfaces, whether from motorized or non-motorized use. Effects to natural resources will occur and will vary by alternative. All alternatives affect recreationists and any others using the forest transportation system in the analysis area.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum(ROS) acres are determined based upon the times that roads and trails are open to motorized use. During the seasons that single-track trails and primitive two-track trails become non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized acreages will be reduced and semi-primitive non-motorized and primitive acres will be increased. Typically, Roaded Natural and Rural settings remain the same acreages, regardless of time of year.

The existing annual program of trail reconstruction and rerouting of trails in poor locations would continue with all alternatives, but would be increased by all action alternatives.

d. Effects Common To All Action Alternatives

All action alternatives will create effects different from the existing situation.

