

EFFECTS TO OUTFITTER-GUIDE PERMITTEES.

Outfitter-guides provide a valuable piece of the recreation pie to the public. How will each alternative affect that form of recreation?

1. EXISTING CONDITION

The Outfitter Guide (OG) Administrator's Guidebook states: "The reasons to allow outfitting in an area are to assure that the public has reasonable access to National Forest opportunities, that the use resulting from it is of high quality, that the resources are protected, and that clients learn unique attributes of the environment."

A number of permittees operate OG operations in the analysis area. There are nine active OG hunting permits on the White Sulphur Springs and Belt Creek Ranger Districts. In addition, there are four other OG permits which include rock climbing, day use stream fishing, snowmobile trips, and institutional education. Of the permits only three are for overnight use and the remainder are day use only.

There are ten active OG hunting permits on the Mussellshell and Judith Ranger Districts. Eight are for overnight and day use, while two are day use only. Nine of the ten permits are for big game hunting and summer use, while one is summer only.

Outfitter guides have areas that are allocated for their specific use as a permittee; they typically become the only outfitter guide that can use an area, although there may be areas that are shared with another outfitter. Public non-guided recreation continues to be allowed in the area; neither use is exclusive of the other.

Guides may have areas they use to set up temporary "spike" camps that are seasonally put up and dismantled. These camps may include guest lodging, corrals for stock, and logistical support for the operation, including parking and gear storage. Spike camps are typically located away from roads, and are accessed by motorized and/or non-motorized trails.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

a. All Alternatives

1. Direct and Indirect Effects

An outfitter may be affected by the following travel planning decisions:

- Change of trail access from non-motorized to motorized
- Change of trail access from motorized to non-motorized
- Change of road access from open to closed or seasonally closed
- Changes in ROS settings in the areas used by clients to hunt, fish, or otherwise recreate

Change of trail access from non-motorized to motorized. This would typically have the effect of introducing more users into an area that was previously a non-motorized setting. Many clients would not want that kind of a setting, especially if they are taken into an area on stock. The net effect is a reduction of the perceived quality of the area in which a party is being outfitted. For those outfitters that might use OHVs to access non-motorized areas, converting non-motorized trails to motorized would also reduce the hunting quality of the setting, even though it opened up more trails to clients on OHVs.

Table III-3 by alternative shows miles of non-motorized trail by alternative. Table III-6 shows motorized access during hunting season by alternative, by trail and road and by type of vehicle, whether OHV or road. Maps of trail and road treatments by alternative are contained in this analysis and should be referred to for specific trail and road proposed restrictions.

Change of trail access from motorized to non-motorized. This may affect logistical access into an outfitter camp, making it more difficult (time consuming or costly) if previous motorized access is closed permanently or seasonally. At the same time, this effect could increase the desirability of an area in which the outfitter takes hunting clients, by reducing accessibility of an area, and competition from other hunters. If the clients can be taken into an area with stock, the effect can be positive. If the change to non-motorized use impacts camp logistical support, it can be negative. Outfitter-Guides would **not** be allowed, under their special use permits, to drive on trails closed to motorized use in order to access their camps.

Table III-3 shows by alternative the miles of non-motorized trails available. Table III-6 shows motorized access during hunting season by alternative, by trail and road and by type of vehicle, whether OHV or road. Maps of trail and road treatments by alternative are contained in this analysis and should be referred to for specific trail and road proposed restrictions.

Change of road access from open to closed or seasonally closed. Like changing a trail from motorized to non-motorized, this would affect logistical access into an outfitter camp if it is reliant on road access, making it more difficult (time consuming or costly) if previous motorized access is closed permanently or seasonally. At the same time, this effect could increase the desirability of an area in which the outfitter takes hunting clients, especially, by reducing accessibility of an area, and competition from other hunters. If the clients can be taken into an area with stock, the effect can be positive. If the change to non-motorized use impacts camp logistical support, it can be negative. Outfitter-Guides would **not** be allowed, under their special use permits, to drive on roads closed to motorized use in order to access their camps.

Table III-2 shows by alternative the miles of road kept open to motorized use. Table III-6 shows motorized access during hunting season by alternative, by trail and road and by type of vehicle, whether OHV or road. Maps of trail and road treatments by alternative are contained in this analysis and should be referred to for specific trail and road proposed restrictions.

Changes in ROS settings in the areas used by clients to hunt, fish, or otherwise recreate. Typically, changing a motorized ROS setting to non-motorized will benefit the outfitter guide and his clients by reducing ease of public access into an area, and increasing the opportunity when hunting or fishing or viewing wildlife. Such could occur when a trail is made non-motorized, changing the ROS setting from Semi-primitive motorized to Semi-primitive non-motorized or Primitive. Table III-1 shows by alternative ROS acreages. Maps of ROS settings can be found in this analysis.

2. Cumulative Effects

Travel planning affects the kinds of use and seasons of use on existing roads and trails, and on proposed roads and trails contained in travel plan alternatives. The Forest Plan will be revised within the next two to five years, and will affect some existing management areas and their ROS settings. Resource projects in the next couple of decades will follow Forest Plan revision direction, including direction for individual management areas. All of this has the potential to change ROS settings, and their desirability for OG and other public use.