

## **EFFECTS ON GRAZING AND SPECIAL USE PERMITS**

The public expressed concerns about the potential effects of travel management on grazing permittees and special-use permittees.

### ***1. EXISTING CONDITION***

#### **a. Existing Characteristics**

Special use permits can be categorized into recreation and non-recreation permits. Grazing permits are strictly for livestock grazing.

#### **RECREATION SPECIAL-USE PERMITS:**

**Recreation Residences:** There are 99 permits, which are located in the North Fork Teton river, Sun River Canyon, and Benchmark areas.

**Isolated Cabin:** There is one permit located in Elk Creek.

**Construction Camp:** There is one permit located in Sun River Canyon.

**West Fork Cabin Rentals:** This cabin was opened for public rental in December of 2004. The cabin is currently available for rental by reservation only from December through April on weekends and holidays.

**Resorts:** 4 permits. One is located in the West Fork of the Teton River; one is in Sun River Canyon; and two are in the Benchmark area. All are accessed from main access roads and associated driveways off main access roads.

**Ski Area Permit:** There is 1 permit and the ski area is located in the West Fork of the Teton.

**Outfitter-Guide Priority Permits administered by Rocky Mountain R.D.:** There are 10 of these permits located throughout the District. All have both wilderness and non-wilderness priority days. All have temporary day-use activities approved by the Forest Service in non-wilderness areas on a yearly basis. They are also authorized to graze horses and/or mules on a total of 12 allotments, of which, six are with the project area.

There are four base hunting camps located in the non-wilderness area of the District. Two of these are currently vacant. All outfitters access the Forest from trailheads located on main access routes.

**Outfitter-Guide Priority Permits administered by other Forests that operate on the Rocky Mountain R.D.:** There are eight of these permits, all of which operate in the wilderness while one of them also operates in a non-wilderness area on the District. One of these permits is for both summer and hunting use, while the remainder are only for summer use. All access the Forest on main access routes.

**Temporary Commercial Outfitters:** There are four of these permits. Two of them operate in the Badger-Two Medicine. Of the two operating in the Badger-Two Medicine, one operates in summer and during hunting season on a day use basis, only. One operates only in the winter season. Neither of these use motorized vehicles in their operations on the Forest. Both are based out of private land at Rising Wolf Lodge.

A third permit operates in the North and South Fork of the Teton on a day use basis for hiking and horseback riding. This operation is based out of private land near the Forest.

The fourth permit operates on a day use basis to hunt in the Falls Creek area. This operation is based out of private land near the Forest.

**Temporary Institutional Outfitters:** These operate in all areas of the District, including both wilderness and non-wilderness. All of these use main access roads to get to trailheads or developed campgrounds. They then continue on overnight progressive trips or take day trips. All of them are strictly hiking trips, with no motorized use or stock involved.

#### **NON-RECREATION SPECIAL-USE PERMITS:**

**Road Use:** There are three private road special use permits for access across National Forest System land to a road on private land and/or private property.

**Electronic Sites:** There is one communication site located on the north end of the projects. In addition, there are five administrative sites located in the Rocky Mountain Division.

**Utility:** There are six utility permits, which includes power and phone lines and natural gas pipelines.

**Irrigation Ditches and Water transmission:** There are three permits, one irrigation ditch and two water transmission lines.

#### **GRAZING PERMITS**

**Grazing:** There are 26 permittees authorized to graze livestock on 22 allotments within the project area. These are located across the entire district, outside of the wilderness.

#### **b. Future Trends:**

Current national direction for recreation residences is to permit no new recreation residence lots. Only the currently existing lots will be permitted. The isolated cabin permit is issued under a life tenure and will not be reissued to a new permittee. The construction camp, the ski area permit, and resorts are not expected to appreciably change in numbers or locations. At this time there is a moratorium on issuing any new commercial outfitter-guide permits in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (BMWC), as well as in the non-wilderness area of the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. The issue of future allocation of new permits for commercial and institutional outfitters within the BMWC is currently being analyzed in Forest Plan revision for the Flathead and Lolo National Forests. Once finalized this decision would be implemented on the Lewis and Clark NF via a Forest Plan amendment. It is not anticipated that numbers of outfitters or locations of base camps would appreciably change with this decision. Any future desired changes in method of transport (i.e. motorized or non-motorized) or area utilized would be made in accordance with the new travel plan.

#### **c. Desired Condition:**

Permitted uses would meet the travel management alternative selected, employing only those kinds of transportation allowed in the travel plan.

## **2. ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER CONSEQUENCES**

### **a. Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative**

#### ***1. Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects***

There would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to permittees by continuation of current travel management.

### **b. Action Alternatives 2- 5**

#### ***1. Direct and Indirect Effects***

Closure of Hannan Gulch Road to motorized use to the general public in Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 could possibly affect lion hunting by two outfitter-guides in that drainage. The road is presently used by these outfitters to help guide lion hunters. Under these alternatives the outfitters utilizing this area would be required to access Hannan Gulch by non-motorized means from the dispersed campsites on the north side of the Hannan bridge.

In Alternative 2 the area immediately surrounding the West Fork rental cabin would be closed to snowmobiling for the last two weeks that the cabin is available for rental. In Alternatives 4 and 5 the area would be closed to snowmobiling for the entire month of April. This would decrease desirability to snowmobilers who want to stay at the cabin during that time.

In Alternative 3 closure of the area immediately surrounding the West Fork rental cabin would decrease the cabin's desirability for recreationists who want to stay there and snowmobile.

#### ***2. Cumulative Effects***

Cumulative effects are the same as described below as "Common to All Alternatives".

### **c. Effects Common to all Alternatives**

#### ***1. Direct and Indirect Effects***

Physical access to the following permits would not be affected by any of the alternatives:

- Recreation Residences: Main access roads remain open in all alternatives. Driveways to these residences remain open in all alternatives. Motorized access remains available in all alternatives.
- Isolated Cabin in Elk Creek: Same effects as for Recreation Residences
- Construction Camp: Main road would remain open, providing motorized access.
- Resorts: Main access roads and driveways would remain open to motorized use.
- Ski Area: Main access road remains open to motorized use. Motorized use for maintenance within the permit area is allowed under special use permit provisions.
- Outfitter Guide Permits (other than Priority Permits outside Wilderness that use the Hannan Gulch Road for motorized access when lion hunting): None of these permits use motorized vehicles out of trailheads. Motorized access to trailheads would be maintained because main access roads are open in all alternatives.

## ***2. Cumulative Effects***

Fina/Longwell and Chevron/Devon drilling proposals are not expected to affect recreation permittees. Wood Lake Campground/Picnic area rehabilitation would not affect permittees.

Undetermined roads and trails: Undetermined routes occur only in Alternative 1 and are those trails and roads whose origins (when and how they were created) are not known. In Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5 the undetermined roads and trails in Alternative 1 were assigned some other designation. In all cases, if a road is determined to be solely an access road or driveway for a recreation residence or resort, that route would be included in the permit as a special use road and be the responsibility of the permittee.

Prescribed fire or wildfire could occur in the future anywhere on the district and could temporarily impact permittees, depending on the severity of such fire and whether it impacted facilities and landscapes used by the permittees.

Similarly, timber sale activity could impact permittees, depending on the location of such activity, the number and size of harvest units, kinds of silvicultural systems employed, and associated mitigation methods.

Northwest Pipeline activity on the north end of the district would not impact access to recreation permittees. There will be no effect on any of the recreation permittees, non-recreation permits or livestock grazing permittees.

### **d. Effects common to All Action Alternatives**

#### ***1. Direct and Indirect Effects***

Recreation residences and resorts located in areas where cross-country snowmobiling is prohibited or seasonally restricted would have reduced winter motorized recreation opportunities. Alternative 3 is the most restrictive and limits snowmobiling to designated main access roads. It prohibits any cross-country snowmobiling or snowmobiling on system or non-system trails. The maps for each alternative show those areas where cross-country snowmobiling is prohibited.

Areas in each of the alternatives that are closed to motorized use may increase desirability for some outfitting. All outfitting on the District is presently non-motorized. Some outfitters have expressed the feeling that they might see increased desire from clients for trips in the non-wilderness areas if these areas were closed to motorized use.

#### ***2. Cumulative Effects***

Cumulative effects are the same as described above as “Common to All Alternatives”.