

United States
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White River
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Public Concern List / Responses

White River National Forest Travel Management Plan

Eagle, Garfield, Gunnison, Mesa, Moffat, Pitkin, Rio Blanco,
Routt, and Summit Counties, Colorado



**White River National Forest
Travel Management Plan
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

**Eagle, Garfield, Gunnison, Mesa, Moffat, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, Summit Counties,
Colorado**

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Public Concern List / Responses

Chapter 1. Decision Making Process 1-1

PC 9: The White River National Forest (WRNF) should follow multiple-use sustained-yield policy to guide public land management 1-1

- A) To give all user groups access
- B) To use natural resources to their fullest without depleting them
- C) To preserve the integrity of the Forest
- D) To provide adequate opportunities for motorized recreation

Response PC 9 A-D: MUSY statute gives the Forest Service broad authority to manage NFS lands for multiple uses. MUSY defines multiple use in part as “management of all various resources of National Forest so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people.” MUSY specifically provides “that some land will be used for less than all of the resources (16 U.S.C 531(a)). The Act does not direct that all NFS lands be open to all uses.

PC 92: The White River National Forest should provide timely, useful, and accurate information about the Travel Management Plan to the public 1-2

- A) Including readable, accurate maps
- B) Including descriptions of baseline conditions on the ground
- C) Including information about sensitive species

Response 92 C: An analysis of the potential impacts from the alternatives considered in the TMP on all Forest Service Region 2 sensitive species, including plants, that occur on the WRNF is included in the Biological Evaluation.

- D) Because NEPA mandates a "hard look" at environmental impacts

Response 92 D: The WRNF commenced an interdisciplinary team to analyze potential effects and impacts to each alternative presented. Chapter 4 lists the team and their specialty, Chapter 3, Appendix A, B, and C document the analyses.

- E) Because plan alternatives are confusing
- F) Including accurate road and trail inventories
- G) Including printed maps

PC 72: The White River National Forest should make its CD and web page more user-friendly 1-4

- A) Because the database format does not flow well and is not intuitive when attempting to comment on known routes
- B) Because the maps are too small and the minimal details on them make it difficult to get oriented to find a route
- C) Because there are many errors on the maps
- D) Including a list of a prescriptions and applicable rules

Response PC 72 D: Prescriptions and applicable rules were included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Travel Management Plan (TMP) Chapter 1 under Proposed Action, Decision Framework, Other Efforts Factored into the Decision Framework, Chapter 2 under Forest Plan, Important Points Shared by All Alternatives, and Appendix G.

Response PC 92 A, B, E, F, G and PC 72 A, B, C: The WRNF recognizes the complexity of the data presented. Inclusion of every road and trail, area, and how each is going to be managed for travel times all of the alternatives presented, is a lot of data to convey. The scale of maps chosen were based on comments made during the Travel Management process presented during the Forest Plan that stated the maps were not detailed enough. In order to present the level of detail requested by alternative for both summer and winter, a lot of maps were generated. Due to the overwhelming cost of producing all of the maps on paper, the WRNF chose to utilize electronic formats for map presentation. The WRNF hopes to simplify some of the data and maps presented in the first draft in the next round, correct errors that were presented, and make information easier to discern. Many of these changes will reflect ideas presented by the public on how to make better presentations and corrections to be made. It should be noted however there will still be a lot of information to present. The inventory used is the best known to date. The WRNF utilized of latest technologies to record the information. Corrections are made, and will continue to be made, if and when more accurate information becomes available. Maps are corrected as errors are brought to light. One has to remember a map represents geographic features, along with other features for reference. Scale, types of use, publications or electronic abilities, and mapping techniques vary from map to map, especially based on the information each is trying to convey.

PC 93: The White River National Forest should provide opportunities for public comment 1-5

A) Because the Forest Service serves the public and future generations

Response PC 93 A: The Forest Service recognizes the need for public input and includes that opportunity in many ways, including through the NEPA process used for this Travel Management Plan.

B) Including prior to publication of the FEIS

Response PC 93 B: The WRNF is going to produce a subsequent draft EIS (SDEIS) and make that available for public comment prior to releasing the final EIS (FEIS) and Travel Management Plan (TMP).

H) Because many in the equestrian community are unaware of the plan

Response PC 93 H: The WRNF received several letters, comments, and personal contacts from the equestrian community. The WRNF also made presentations to local and state chapters. The WRNF continues to work with and be responsive to the equestrian community as well as all of its publics.

PC 120: The White River National Forest should base its travel management decisions on adequate information with adequate public comment and within an adequate timeframe 1-5

PC 71: The White River National Forest should extend the comment period 1-6

- A) To December 21st, 2006
- B) To allow for more specific and detailed comments
- C) For 90 days
- D) To December 15th, 2006
- E) Because the public has not been adequately informed about the Plan
- F) Because the online map web server was delayed one month
- G) For at least 30 days
- H) Because the current DEIS and Draft Travel Management Plan should be withdrawn
- I) Because of the complexity of the plan
- J) Because the Colorado Horse Council meets after the close of public comment
- K) Because of inaccurate maps

L) To allow for total consensus to be achieved

Response PC 120 and PC 71 A - L: The WRNF has decided to produce a subsequent draft EIS and Travel Management Plan to further incorporate the revision of 36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295. The SDEIS will be an extension of the efforts conducted thus far for this project. The SDEIS will incorporate all the public comment up to the release of this next draft and allow for another comment period.

PC 48: The White River National Forest should allow the public to view comments sent in on the proposed Travel Management Plan 1-9

Response PC 48: The WRNF will include the comments and responses in the subsequent draft EIS. Comments and responses made to that draft will then be included in the final EIS and Travel Management Plan. All letters and comments are part of the record and available to the public.

PC 104: The White River National Forest should not change the Travel Management Plan 1-9

Response PC 104: Opinion noted. The WRNF is in need to update the Travel Management Plan from 1985.

PC 125: The White River National Forest should take no action until a better process is devised 1-9

Response PC 125: The process used to for producing the Travel Management Plan for the WRNF is one that follows Federal laws and regulations. The WRNF needs to re-establish the baseline travel system for the forest. Action is required and needed to accomplish this goal.

PC 140: The White River National Forest should ensure that the NEPA process is followed in developing the DEIS..... 1-9

Response PC 140: The WRNF is following NEPA regulations as well as all other Federal Regulations that apply to producing the Travel Management Plan, DEIS, FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD).

PC 147: The White River National Forest should not revisit 2002 White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Revision (Forest Plan) decisions in the Travel Management Plan 1-9

A) Because open motorized areas should not be non-motorized routes and play areas

Response PC 147: The WRNF will not revisit decisions made in the Forest Plan as part of this Travel Management Plan EIS process. Forest Plan direction will be followed. In the DEIS, Chapter 1, Forest Plan section details how the Forest Plan is followed. In response to the particular concern (A) direction that is more restrictive than directed in the Forest Plan is considered compliant with Forest Plan.

PC 240: The White River National Forest should adhere to policies outlined in the Forest Plan and the OHV Rule 1-10

A) Including Forest Service direction on route designation

Response PC 240: The Forest Service agrees that the “TMP remain consistent with the Forest Plan and the National Forest Service direction to designate routes, and will continue to adhere to the closed unless marked open on a map policy” commenter.

PC 151: The White River National Forest should remove bias from the planning process 1-10

- A) Including bias in favor of non-motorized users
- B) Including bias in favor of vehicle manufacturers
- C) Including faulty and biased analysis of wildlife disturbance
- D) Including bias in favor of mining and logging interests
- E) Because "recreation niche" is a self-defined term and has no legal basis
- F) Including bias in favor of the Aspen Skiing Company
- G) To comply with federal laws

Response PC 151 A - G: The WRNF recognizes there are several interests from both individuals and groups who have particular goals when it comes to what types of recreation and other uses the public should have on public lands. Many feel the Forest Service may arbitrarily make decisions, but the Forest Service does not. In fact the Forest Service works very hard at obtaining all the critical information it can both from the public and scientific study prior to making decisions. This process is in fact the heart of the NEPA process that the Forest Service follows for making decisions. The only agenda the Forest Service has is to accomplish it's mission as best as it can in servitude to the American people. The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Travel Management Plan will not suit every individual's notion of how the WRNF should be utilized. However, the decision will do it's best to meet the mission, and present what is best for the land and the public at large.

PC 157: The White River National Forest should explain how it formed its list of "high-use" activities in the Forest.....1-12

Response PC 157: The use of the term "high use" has different meanings for different resource areas and can result in differing impacts/responses depending upon the resource area being analyzed. The amount of use within the categories identified in the terrestrial wildlife section occurs on the Forest, either broadly or locally, seasonally or year-long, above the level felt necessary to lead to wildlife conflicts. Therefore, from a wildlife standpoint, these uses are all considered to be "high-use" in analyzing potential wildlife impacts. The list of references used for wildlife/human interaction analysis is extensive and is listed in the Environmental Consequences section of the wildlife analysis.

This comment also questioned why some activities were listed as "high use" on page 141 while the same activities are either not identified or shown as a lower percentage of use on table 3.1, page 60. The table reflects visitor use information derived from National Visitor Use Sampling (NVUM) conducted in 2002. Readers should keep in mind that this sampling identified the WRNF as receiving the highest amount of recreational visits for all Forests across the Nation. For example, snowmobiling is identified as contributing to only about one percent of the total forest visits. One percent of 4.69 million visits still represents a significant number of recreational visits and, especially when compared to other National Forest's NVUM data, is considered a high use activity on the WRNF.

PC 223: The White River National Forest should support cooperative planning efforts1-12

- A) To establish cost-sharing mechanisms for off-site impacts
- B) Including Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGA)

Response PC 233 A, B: The WRNF agrees that working with other government agencies in a cooperative spirit with cost-sharing mechanisms will help to create a well defined system.

PC 190: The White River National Forest should collaborate with local residents regarding travel management1-12

- A) Including all user groups
- B) Including the Eagle Valley Trails Committee

C) Including the Golden Horseshoe Group

Response PC 190 A, B, C: The WRNF agrees and tries to collaborate at all levels with local residence for Forest Service operations, including planning efforts such as the Travel Management Plan. The WRNF has and will continue to meet with the various user groups and local trail committees. The WRNF is a member of the Golden Horseshoe Group and as stated in the DEIS supports the efforts of that group.

D) Including talking to the Craig/Moffat County Snowmobile Association to produce an alternate plan

Response PC 190 D: The Craig/Moffat County Snowmobile Association is welcome to submit their ideas.

PC 208: The White River National Forest should clarify its statutory enforcement authority in the Final EIS 1-13

A) Including Executive Order 11644

Response PC 208: Regulations that implement Executive Orders (E.O.) such as 11644 “Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public lands” (1972) as amended by E.O. 11989 (1977) are executed through the Code of Federal Regulations. The E.O. direct Federal agencies to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of the lands. All E.O. are direct orders from the President of the United States. The mechanism for executing those orders are codified in the Code of Federal Regulations, which provides the enforcement regulations for all agencies including the Forest Service.

PC 215: The White River National Forest should be commended for its well-written summary 1-13

A) Because it provides context for the decision

Response PC 215: Thank you.

PC 313: The White River National Forest should be consistent in their approach to travel management so that public materials will be consistent 1-14

A) Including the application of the 2005 OHV rule for snowmobile use

Response PC 313: Thank you for pointing out the confusion. To begin, the WRNF will execute the 36 CFR 212 subpart C Use by Over-Snow Vehicles. The regulation is to provide for regulation of use by over-snow vehicles on National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails and National Forest System lands. The provision states use by over-snow vehicles on National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails and National Forest System lands may be allowed, restricted, or prohibited. Regulation 36 CFR 212.81(c) provides the responsible official with the authority to propose restriction or prohibitions on use by over-snow vehicles using the regulations established in § 212.52, 212.53, 212.54, 212.55, 212.56, and 212.57. These regulations provide the method for establishing where motor vehicles can be allowed, restricted, or prohibited. The product will be a Motor Vehicle Use Map that will show where over-snow vehicles will be allowed, restricted, or prohibited (the map to be complete, has to reflect all three categories). The regulation provides the method, tools, and ability for the WRNF to involve the public and ultimately make decisions on where motorized over-snow vehicles are allowed, restricted, or prohibited, then communicate clearly to the public by use of a Motor Vehicle Use Map. The process and ultimately the map also provide the tools that make enforcement of the decisions easier to execute.

PC 324: The White River National Forest should emphasize additional management effort over management controls 1-14

A) To ensure better long-term results

Response PC 324 A: The forest partially agrees with this statement. The writer is correct in the differentiation between managerial controls and management efforts and is also correct that not all management efforts involve controls. However, certain situations do warrant the implementation of appropriate controls in order to meet Forest management objectives, plans, and/or regulations.

PC 325: The White River National Forest should not exceed the requirements of the OHV Rule 1-14

Response PC 325: The Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule provides direction for the Forest Service on how to designate routes and areas for motor vehicle use on National Forest System lands. The WRNF is not exceeding the Rule, rather using it to help formulate the overall Travel Management Plan for the forest. Other decisions are being made as well in the Travel Management Plan to meet the Purpose and Need.

PC 134: The White River National Forest should provide sufficient resources to implement the Travel Management Plan 1-15

- A) For law enforcement
- B) For signs
- C) To minimize conflicts
- D) To isolate motorized and non-motorized users
- E) Including an Individual Volunteer Enforcement Plan
- F) For road and trail maintenance
- G) Because public lands should not be sold to address budget shortfalls
- H) For parking facilities
- I) For road closures
- J) To facilitate education

Response PC 134 A-J: The ability to provide sufficient resources is dependent upon a number of resources including congressional budget allocation, contributions by volunteers, grants and commercial operators to name a few. While the forest's capability for implementing management decisions is discussed in the DEIS, identifying the actual level of resources is difficult because many of those fluctuate annually.

We do agree that the implementation of the travel plan should be a high priority and it is our intent to provide available resources to sign routes, conduct education and enforcement and to correct resource concerns/issues on all routes, whether designated as part of the system or identified to be decommissioned.

PC 224: The White River National Forest should disclose funding priorities for plan implementation 1-16

- A) Because reliance on non-federal funding does not serve the public interest
- B) To prevent private entities from "buying" access to national forests
- C) Including funding for future route construction and reconstruction

Response PC 224 A, B, C: Until a final decision is made, attempting to prioritize site specific actions for implementation is not practical. Once a final decision is made, all steps necessary to implement the decision will be identified and prioritized. Implementation will rely on resources from many possible areas including federal appropriations, volunteers, grants, fees, etc. There will be no "buying" access to NFS lands because the decisions will already have been made. Any change or addition to the final travel management plan decision will require further NEPA analysis and public involvement.

PC 78: The White River National Forest should provide sufficient staffing 1-18

- A) To maintain existing roads

Response PC 78 A: The WRNF does what it can with allotted budgets, volunteers, cooperative agreements, and county agreements to prioritize and maintain the road system. The WRNF has a very conscientious road crew, and equipment that do their best to maintain the roads and fix resource problems. The WRNF truly appreciates the working agreement we have with the counties to utilize their road crews as well. The WRNF is grateful to the volunteer groups who have adopted roads and have helped to maintain them and prevent resource damage. The Travel Management Plan will help to examine what roads should be authorized as well as to what level of use (and maintenance). The WRNF is seeking to find the balance between what is necessary to serve the public/agency, what can be afforded, and what should be put back into production (natural vegetative state).

- B) Because volunteer organizations are overly relied upon
- C) To enforce separation of users

Response PC 78 B, C: The WRNF does rely on a variety of partnerships and agreements with individuals, groups, organizations and other agencies to accomplish agency goals and objectives, including trail maintenance, education and enforcement. As mentioned in the response above, this travel plan will help the WRNF designate a transportation system where the maintenance needs is more in sync with what we can afford. However, because combining resources with other interested parties is a more economical and prudent way of doing business, the WRNF will continue to pursue partnerships to accomplish agency goals.

PC 231: The White River National Forest should partner with organized user groups to fund trail maintenance, construction, and planning1-18

- A) Including motorized recreationists
- B) To offset the lack of funding from congressional appropriations
- C) To provide a good system of trails for motorized recreationists
- D) Including the Rocky Mountain Enduro Circuit
- E) Because user groups have already assumed these costs
- F) Including the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative
- G) Including the Colorado Association of Four-Wheeled Drive Clubs Inc.

Response PC 231 A – F: The White River National Forest has received assistance from a variety of individuals, groups and organizations and hopes to continue partnering with interested entities on future projects, including the implementation of travel management on the forest. Paragraph 3, page 79 of the first draft of the DEIS addresses this issue.

PC 214: The White River National Forest should not base management objectives on social equity1-19

Response PC 214: Many entities across the country manage public lands for recreation. Several of these entities mission differ from that of the Forest Service. Still others may have limitations such as limited land bases where they can only offer a few quality activities. Others may be located in areas where only certain activities are allowed from safety of social aspects. The White River NF committed in the 2002 Forest Plan decision to provide opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized user groups. The particular citation addressed above is from the Forest Service’s ROS User Guide and are a part of the Forest Service’s objectives.

PC 56: The White River National Forest should consider how the Oregon Equestrian Trail Association and the National Forest in Oregon cooperate.1-19

Response PC 56: The WRNF appreciates the suggestion. We do want to work with the equestrian groups both locally and nationally. We met with local and state chapters during the DEIS phase and hope to continue building this relationship.

PC 275: The White River National Forest should acknowledge the Blue Ribbon Coalition supports the comments submitted by the Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition and the Colorado Snowmobile Association 1-20

Response PC 275: Duly noted.

PC 5: The White River National Forest should schedule a public meeting for Routt and Moffat County area residents 1-20

Response PC 5: Should there be another round of public meetings the WRNF will consider holding one for Routt and Moffat County residents. It should be noted that any citizens of these counties are welcome to contact the WRNF (any of our staff) or their local Forest Service office (who can contact the WRNF).

Chapter 2. DEIS and Alternatives 2-1

PC116: The White River National Forest should provide an acceptable range of alternatives2-1

- A) Including alternatives that can be sustained under current or projected budgets

Response PC 116: 40 CFR 150.14(a) states: “Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives...” The WRNF provided a range of reasonable alternatives that were considered reasonable to meet the purpose and need. How the WRNF developed the alternatives is explained in Chapter 2 Development of Alternatives in the DEIS. When alternatives are developed, many factors / aspects are considered. These considerations of which economics is one are analyzed for both positive and negative effects for each alternative. Analysis is done so the decision maker can examine all the alternatives and their effects in relationship to meeting the purpose and need.

PC 141: The White River National Forest should identify a preferred alternative for the DEIS2-1

- A) Because it is mandated by 40 CFR 1501.14(e) and the Forest Service Handbook
 B) Because the lack of a preferred alternative makes it difficult for the public to read and understand all of the alternatives presented

Response PC 141 A, B: The preferred alternative was identified on the Abstract page of the DEIS.

PC 206: The White River National Forest should enumerate the social benefits of the preferred alternative2-2

- A) Including a comparison of illegal activities under each alternative

Response PC 206 A: To add illegal activities under each alternative for the purposes of how they contribute to social benefits would erroneously acknowledge the acceptance of illegal use on the forest. The Forest Service does not accept the use of the forest for illegal activities.

- B) Including a table comparing expected costs

Response PC 206 B: The recreation and social – economic sections include tables and graphs of the different levels of miles available by alternative for the spectrum of use types. The comparison table in Chapter 2 also gives specific miles of opportunities by use type.

PC 267: The White River National Forest should acknowledge flaws in the alternatives2-3

- A) Because Alternative C decreases overall snowmobiling opportunities
 B) Because Alternative B allows a 20% reduction in recreation opportunities
 C) Because Alternative D counterproductively creates exclusive use areas

Response PC 267 A, B, C: The comment basically supported Alternative C except that it would like to include Alternative B for snowmobiling opportunities, which was the maximum allowed given Forest Plan direction. The comment does not support Alternative D as it felt it would be counter productive for management of recreation opportunities. The opinions and reasons are noted.

PC 234: The White River National Forest should develop an alternative that emphasizes sustainable recreational use2-3

- A) Including minimized user conflict
 B) Including natural resources
 C) Including habitat values

Response PC 234 A, B, C: The comment would like to see an alternative that falls between Alternatives D and E, with an emphasis on a sustainable recreation program while attempting to reduce user conflicts, while also emphasizing natural resource and habitat values. The opinion and reasons are noted.

PC 236: The White River National Forest should support Alternative A2-3

- A) Because the mixed-use analysis is incomplete
- B) Including a collaborative process to develop good, recreational experiences

Response PC 236 A, B: Alternative A cannot be selected because it does not meet legal law, regulation, or Forest Plan direction. Decisions in regards to mixed-use and motorized use designation can and will be made as part of the Travel Management Planning process as directed in the Federal Regulations for Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule.

PC 218: The White River National Forest should support Alternative B2-4

- A) Because it develops greater revenue

Response PC 218 A: The comment is in support of Alternative B because it would generate the most revenue. The comments that no user should be locked out and the travel plan must address the needs of each user have also been noted.

Alternative B involves the minimum actions necessary to bring the forest travel system into compliance with forest plan direction. However, since Alternative B does not factor in other resources such as economic feasibility, recreation experience, sustainability or impacts to the natural resources and wildlife to the extent as other alternatives, it is difficult to determine and compare the level of future revenue that each alternative would generate.

PC 26: The White River National Forest should support Alternative C2-4

- A) Including providing singletrack trails for the broad spectrum of riding abilities
- B) To allow all user groups to enjoy the Forest
- C) Because it provides greater recreational opportunity
- D) Including adequate identification of winter travel routes
- E) Because it minimizes impact on the forest
- F) Including better availability of information
- G) Including more readable maps
- H) To allow motorized travel for senior citizens

PC 10: The White River National Forest should support Alternative D2-5

- A) Including the natural resource and habitat values considered in Alternative E
- B) To meet the broadest range of user groups while preserving and enhancing the Forest's integrity
- C) Including a modification allowing more trails for motorized use
- D) Because of the benefit to families
- E) Because it coordinates motorized opportunities with user needs
- F) Including more loop opportunities

PC 88: The White River National Forest should correct the flaws of Alternative D2-6

- A) Because there is no way to know what anyone's experience level is to safely use the Forest
- B) Because the consideration of "Exclusive Use" in the Forest does not represent a balanced approach as suggested in the Plan's objectives
- C) Because creating 'classes' of user groups is a poor approach to managing recreation opportunities

PC 105: The White River National Forest should support Alternative C for winter recreation and Alternative D for summer recreation, with changes to increase motorized use.....2-7

PC 170: The White River National Forest should support Alternatives C and D2-7

PC 19: The White River National Forest should support Alternative E2-7

- A) Because it best fits budget realities
- B) Because it offers the most natural resource protection
- C) Because it minimizes the impact of road-based activities
- D) To protect Colorado's beautiful, wild, and semi-wild places
- E) To protect wildlife habitat

Response PC 19 E: Potential impacts to a wide range of wildlife species are included in the multiple wildlife analyses sections of the DEIS. The potential impacts are analyzed for all alternatives.

- F) To protect watersheds
- G) To maintain the long-term health of the forest

Response PC 19 G: Potential impacts to a wide range of habitats and to specific wildlife species are included in the various analyses sections of the DEIS. Impacts on a wide range of habitats, wildlife species, and vegetation cover types are analyzed for all alternatives.

- H) Because it is the most protective of natural resources and wildlife

Response PC 19 H: Potential impacts to a wide range of wildlife species and habitats are included in the various analyses sections of the DEIS. The impacts on a wide range of habitats, wildlife species, and vegetation cover types are analyzed for all alternatives.

- I) Because the DEIS does not contain sufficient information to assess environmental impacts

Response PC 218, PC 26, PC 10, PC 88, PC 105, PC 170, PC 19: Many people wrote in and voiced an opinion in clear support or opposition to one of the alternatives (or a combination of alternatives) presented in the draft. Many of these opinions were offered with supporting reasons. The Forest Service does not treat these as votes. Rather the Forest Service reads each comment and reviews them for specific content. Many of the issues raised and reasons for support or opposition are listed in the above sub-public concerns. The reasons demonstrate the same issues that formed the themes for each alternative are still key issues and/or justifications for public desires. Subsequently it becomes apparent that the desires reflect the need for the WRNF to balance travel/recreation use with the protection of the natural resources. Also apparent is that some recreationists support a system that provides them the most opportunity to participate in their sport of choice. Some are willing to share with others who are participating in a different sport, some are not. Some understand the need for balance with other uses / conditions of the forest, others do not. The comments demonstrate the issues originally identified are still the main issues that arise when developing the travel management plan. Namely volume and type of recreation use, user conflict, and protection of the natural resources. The Forest Service will continue to weigh all these issues, ideas, and reasons when developing the subsequent Draft EIS. This subsequent Draft EIS will be based on public input and attempt to take these issues, ideas, and reasons and formulate actions from them.

PC 143: The White River National Forest should explain how it will deal with changes in desired future conditions as the nation's wants and needs evolve2-8

Response PC 143: The recreation section of the Draft EIS highlights recent changes in recreation demands on National Forest system lands, and the White River National Forest's role in meeting future demands as technology continues to change and increase the types of activities in which

people can participate. As changes occur over time, and if newer uses fall outside the scope of those defined in the Travel Management Plan, the Travel Management Plan will be updated to address new uses on the forest.

PC 201: The White River National Forest should recognize that the Travel Management Plan is premature2-9

- A) Because land and resource allocation is unsettled
- B) Because the alternatives propose unknown, future opportunities/probabilities
- C) Because land and use allocation decisions are confusing
- D) Because the plan contradicts the Travel Management Rule and Region 2 Implementation Plan
- E) Because the plan lacks a pro-active implementation strategy
- F) Because analysis of mixed-use roads is incomplete
- G) Because the plan does not fully comply with the OHV Rule
- H) Because not all stakeholders were identified and included in the planning process
- I) Because Alternative A fails to demonstrate a visible baseline for travel management
- J) Because planning processes for road closure and loop potential need to be disclosed

Response PC 201 A - J: The last comprehensive Travel Management Plan for the WRNF was done in 1985. Since then there have been project level decisions, but no forest-wide revision to the 1985 TMP. The WRNF originally tried to revise the TMP with the Forest Plan, but due to complexity and public comment, the TMP was separated out with a commitment to revise it once the Forest Plan decision was signed. The TMP is long over-due for revision. It is important for the WRNF to update and establish the baseline system for travel on its Forest Service System lands. Delaying the plan does not solve current or future issues. The WRNF realizes as with any planning document, that there will be times and site-specific situations where the plan may need to be updated to reflect changes or project level decisions. Examples of when the plan may be updated include updating to meet new direction, updating to clarify a new use, updating to construct a connector for a trail, updating to show a newly constructed road for commodity or public use, updating to reflect recreation management decisions on a particular road or trail due to changed conditions, etc. That is not to say however the plan will be a continuous “open door” as this TMP will reflect the overall baseline system for travel on WRNF System land for at minimum the life of the Forest Plan.

PC 203: The White River National Forest should withdraw the draft Travel Management Plan2-11

- A) Because the document uses unclear, non-specific language
- B) Because the Purpose and Need statement does not comply with NEPA
- C) Because so many important items are poorly presented, uncertain, or unknown

Response PC 203: The WRNF will continue to pursue completing the TMP. The WRNF is following the NEPA process and other Federal Regulations. The TMP is complex, and NEPA requires several components to make this a complete, legally compliant process. In the subsequent DEIS the WRNF will take into account comments from the public including those that pointed out areas of confusion or correction, and hope to simplify and clarify those elements.

PC 212: The White River National Forest should include the April 2006 Recreation Strategy Plan in the DEIS2-12

- A) To establish strategic direction, goals, and objectives

Response PC 212 A: The Forest’s Recreation Strategy contains goals for managing many aspects of the Forest’s recreation programs that are not related to travel management. The forest will make an attempt to better describe those goals that do involve travel management in the second draft.

PC 232: The White River National Forest should provide maps respecting private property boundaries2-13

Response 232: WRNF supports the suggestion to educate and emphasize private lands should be respected by recreation users (or the public). The Forest Service maps reflect the best data available at the time for private and public lands. On some of the maps due to scale and mapping techniques, these may not represent the legal boundary.

PC 245: The White River National Forest should refine the definition of "resource damage"2-13

Response 245: The suggestion to define resource damage is valid and will be added to the subsequent DEIS. 36 CFR 261.2 defines "Damaging means to injure, mutilate, deface, destroy, cut, chop, girdle, dig, excavate, kill or in any way harm or disturb".

PC 187: The White River National Forest should reassess the definition of "non-motorized user"2-13

A) Because non-motorized users should not be defined by what they are not

Response PC 187 A: The Forest appreciates this position and recognizes that there are differences between the experiences sought by the wide variety of recreational users on the forest. While the term "quiet" use may adequately describe many non-motorized activities, it could be argued that it may not fit other activities such as hunting with rifles, rafting in the Glenwood Canyon, bicycling and other non-motorized activities. Since the use of motorized and non-motorized distinctions in this travel plan are consistent with definitions used in our forest plan, in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classes, the Management Area descriptions; and in the recent National Motorized Vehicle Rule, it is our intent to continue to use this term.

PC 247: The White River National Forest should emphasize "use conflict" over "user conflict"2-14

A) Because EO 11644 does not authorize the Forest Service to manage user conflict

Response PC 247: The comment raises a good point about the difference between the definition of use conflict and user conflict. It is true EO 11644 emphasizes that the responsible official shall consider...conflicts among uses. The Forest Service uses both terms, as there are times where the conflict among uses defined as one use conflicts with another use (generally on the same piece of land) vs. where users are in conflict with one another (at times can be users of the same mode of travel). In the TMP the WRNF recognizes both these conditions as they are both pertinent.

Chapter 3. Natural Resources Management _____ 3-1

PC 57: The White River National Forest should preserve the land for future generations.....3-1

PC 299: The White River National Forest should emphasize resource protection.....3-1

Response PC 57 and PC 299: (See PC Response 151 and PC 19) The WRNF believes that National Forests should provide access for both motorized and non-motorized users in a manner that is environmentally sustainable over the long term. The WRNF recognizes the need to manage National Forest System lands for natural values, water quality, habitat, and biological diversity, in balance with all multiple uses of National Forest System lands.

PC 248: The White River National Forest should ensure landscape sustainability3-1

- A) Including reduction of landscape fragmentation
- B) Including a reasonable spectrum of uses

Response PC 248 A, B: Potential impacts to a wide range of habitats are included in the various analyses sections of the DEIS. The impacts on a wide range of habitats and vegetation cover types are analyzed for all alternatives. The Forest Plan included a detailed analysis of fragmentation and landscape characteristics. This analysis is included by reference in the TMP DEIS. All alternatives analyzed in the DEIS will result in fewer miles of roads and trails on the Forest, due to the closure and obliteration of many user-created ways. The TMP DEIS analyzes a range of options for the various types of recreation uses of the Forest, including alternatives designed to reduce the impacts of roads and trails across the forest.

PC 138: The White River National Forest should consider the cumulative effect of closures on other forests3-1

Response PC 138: The WRNF has met with neighboring Forests, BLM, and County agencies to discuss the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the WRNF TMP and the neighbors. These meetings are also conducted to coordinate boundary travel management.

PC 241: The White River National Forest should be forthcoming about reductions in Scenic Integrity Levels3-2

- A) Because scenery is a principal value on the forest

Response PC 241 A: The table showing a reduction of scenic integrity the commenter is referring to is from the Forest Plan and the results from implementing the Forest Plan. It was inserted into this EIS for background. To reduce confusion the subsequent DEIS will focus on effects from the TMP and remove this table.

- B) Including a map of affected areas

Response PC 241 B: The Scenery Management System (SMS) has two different landscape elements which have similar names, Existing Scenic Integrity (ESI) and Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO), but are very different. The ESI is a snapshot in time of the existing condition of the landscape. The SIO is one of the components of the desired condition for scenic quality. SIO's are derived by combining the ESI with other landscape elements. SIO's are expressed as forest plan objectives.

The table 3.10 referred to on page 86 of the Travel Management DEIS was developed as a summary table in the Forest Plan FEIS. This table illustrates the acres of Existing Scenic Integrity (ESI) at the time of the Forest Plan analysis versus the Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) of the selected alternative in the Forest Plan. This table has nothing to do with proposed activities or

events anticipated in the Travel Management Plan. For further information on the scenery related questions, refer to the Forest Plan.

Enforcement and Monitoring **3-2**

PC 130: The White River National Forest should provide a clear and detailed monitoring plan **3-2**

A) To implement the OHV Rule

Response PC 130 A: Implementation of the OHV Rule including monitoring is a responsibility each National Forest is undertaking under the direction of that rule. The TMP may incorporate in the decision certain aspects to monitor. Other monitoring protocols are being implemented through other direction outlined in Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks that resulted from direction outlined in the OHV rule.

B) To determine the impact of existing trails on the forest

Response PC 130 B: The comment wanted existing trails not officially recognized in the final plan to be monitored and, if unacceptable impacts occur, then the trails should be closed. It should be noted that any routes that are not designated for use in the final plan will be considered closed to all motorized and mechanized travel and slated to be decommissioned. The level of decommissioning that will occur on each route will depend on the amount of existing and anticipated resource impacts as well as what is necessary to achieve compliance.

C) To facilitate compliance with standards and guidelines

Response PC 130 C: Compliance with standards and guidelines are monitored in Forest Plan Monitoring protocols outlined in Chapter 4 in the Forest Plan.

D) Including a law enforcement strategy

Response PC 130 D: Upon the issuance of a final travel plan decision, the forest will develop a Travel Management Implementation and Monitoring plan. The Forest recognizes that this plan including the law enforcement aspect, is an important component to the successful implementation of the final decision.

PC 7: The White River National Forest should put rangers on the trail to enforce the rules **3-3**

Response PC 7: Putting additional Forest Service staff in the field to deal with violators will be one component of the implementation strategy that will be developed. Additional possibilities include increased education, improved signing, engineering of routes and increased volunteer monitors. Making management decisions that are aimed at reducing the likelihood and number of violations is also important. The forest will be looking at all of these strategies as we work through the travel management planning decision and begin the implementation process.

PC 124: The White River National Forest should establish a volunteer program to help enforce the rules of the Forest **3-3**

- A) Including providing a training program for volunteers
- B) Including a "deputy" designation for the volunteers
- C) Including establishing criteria for making or reporting a violation
- D) Including establishing fines for violations
- E) Including funding the county to enforce speed limits on the forest's road

PC 199: The White River National Forest should implement adequate enforcement **3-4**

- A) Including more severe fines and penalties
- B) Including signs that facilitate public reporting of non-compliant activity

Response PC124 A – E and PC 199 A, B: There are many ways that interested individuals and groups can assist the FS during the implementation of the travel plan. Successful implementation will be highly dependent upon the public's help and support, including assistance with road and trail maintenance, signing, education and even enforcement. As with many of our Forest regulations, we will rely on the public providing information and reports to assist with the enforcement of our travel mgmt plan. Cooperative agreements with other Federal, State and local agencies to provide assistance are another method we intend to use to expand our enforcement capabilities.

PC 207: The White River National Forest should reduce the number of activities on the Forest that are prohibited3-4

- A) To minimize the cost of implementation and enforcement

Response PC 207: To meet objectives established in the Forest Plan and to comply with the National Travel Management Rule issued in 2005, this Travel Management Plan will designate routes and define accepted modes of travel for each route. The primary goal of the Draft Plan was to identify and evaluate a range of alternatives that meet this objective. Since the final decision will include use designations and restrictions specific to each route, the need for Law Enforcement will be necessary to enforce this decision. The forest also hopes to increase compliance and minimizing the need for enforcement through improved signing and education.

PC 262: The White River National Forest should enforce noise standards3-5

- A) To ensure a quiet backcountry
- B) Including a noise-exclusion zone calculation
- C) Including development of natural, quiet standards

Response PC 262 A, B, C: There currently exists both State and Federal laws pursuant to noise and the use of vehicles. OHV's and snowmobiles. These regulations can and are enforced by both State Park and Forest Service employees as part of their law enforcement duties. Since many factors influence the level and travel of noise for each piece of equipment, i.e. manner in which equipment is used, distance, terrain, weather, etc., it would be difficult to produce a map that accurately displays the "soundscape" for each alternate for the entire Forest.

PC 302: The White River National Forest should include a table in the Final EIS that shows the number of tickets issued by law enforcement for minor and major violations for the previous ten years.....3-5

Response PC 302: Our staff has received and reviewed past information related to law enforcement incidents, warnings and violations over the past several years. Due to the large amount of data and the difficulty in translating each law enforcement code, this information was not included in the draft travel plan. We will attempt to summarize and display law enforcement information related to travel management in the final draft plan.

Water Resources Management3-6

PC 31: The White River National Forest should provide for maximum protection of water resources3-6

- A) Including proper erosion control
- B) To ensure high water quality
- C) To promote healthy riparian corridors

Response PC 31 A, B, C: The WRNF will adhere to laws, regulations, standards and guidelines in the Forest Plan, as well as the Watershed Conservation Practices handbook for implantation of the Travel Management Plan regardless of which alternative is selected.

PC 305: The White River National Forest should mitigate the degradation of water quality in use-impaired streams 3-6

Response PC 305: Two stream segments identified by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as “use impaired” are impacted by sedimentation from the application of traction sand on I-70 which is operated and maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation. The TMP examines only roads and trails under Forest Service jurisdiction. Efforts are underway outside of the TMP to work in cooperation with CDOT on the stream segments.

Wildlife and Habitat Management 3-6

PC 4: The White River National Forest should protect wildlife habitat 3-6

- A) Including fewer, but larger security blocks
- B) Including limited trail use in mountain shrub communities

Response PC 4 A, B: Potential impacts to a wide range of habitats are included in the various analyses sections of the DEIS. The impacts on a wide range of habitats and vegetation cover types, including mountain shrub communities are analyzed for all alternatives. The Forest Plan included a detailed analysis of fragmentation and landscape characteristics. This analysis is included by reference in the TMP DEIS. The TMP DEIS analyzes a range of options for the various uses of the Forest, including alternatives designed to reduce the impacts of roads and trails in all habitats across the Forest.

PC 102: The White River National Forest should prioritize management of fish and wildlife 3-7

- A) Including mitigation of the effects of road maintenance on aquatic species

Response PC 102 A: The water used for road maintenance by the White River National Forest annually is a very small amount. By itself, this amount would have no biological effect on the endangered species downstream (whether the depletion occurred or not would not change conditions for these species). However, due to the dramatic cumulative effect water depletions have had on these species (including transbasin diversions, municipal use, agriculture, etc), each additional water depletion is considered an "adverse effect." The calculation of water depletion on the Forest was conservative in that it was based on the assumption that no water used would return to the stream system (100% depletion) and that it all of the water would have otherwise been available to the fish downstream. Both of these assumptions err conservatively.

In addition, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is implementing a Recovery Action Plan designed to mitigate these upstream water depletions. This plan includes augmentation of late summer and fall base flows, spring peak enhancement to benefit physical habitat, habitat restoration, fish passage, nonnative fish management, and propagation.

PC175: The White River National Forest should consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about impacts to threatened and endangered species resulting from off-highway vehicle use..... 3-7

Response PC 175: Informal consultation with the USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service has occurred throughout the development of the DEIS. A Biological Assessment has been prepared and this document will serve as the consultation document for formal consultation with the Service once an alternative has been selected.

PC 178: The White River National Forest should base travel management decisions on forest health and viability3-7

- A) Including use of the best available science
- B) Including fair and unbiased decisions

Response 178 A, B: An extensive library of references has been assembled and used by each resource area in the development of the DEIS. An interdisciplinary team of resource specialist met regularly during the development of the DEIS. These IDT meetings provided the opportunity for interchange and dialog among resource specialist to assure widespread coordination of information and latest research findings. By definition, the interdisciplinary process assures that multiple resource areas are considered during alternative deliberations and analyses. The IDT is not a decision-maker body. The team develops alternatives under the direction of a line officer and then analyzes the potential impacts to a variety of resource areas. The line officer then makes the decision based on evaluation of the work of the IDT.

PC 255: The White River National Forest should implement new wildlife monitoring indicators and measures3-7

- A) Including the American Elk as an indicator species

Response 255 A: American elk is an MIS for the WRNF and a thorough analysis of the potential impacts on elk from all alternatives is included in the wildlife section of the DEIS. Potential impacts to a wide range of wildlife species and habitats are included in the various analyses sections of the DEIS. The impacts on a wide range of habitats, wildlife species, and vegetation cover types are analyzed for all alternatives.

- B) Including Game Management Units to analyze wildlife impacts

Response 255 B: Individual Game management Units are too small to be used for the analysis of big game species. The Division of Wildlife lumps GMAs into geographic specific Data Analysis Units (DAU) which depict distinct population groups of the specific species. These DAUs are the units used for analysis by the DOW for population modeling, setting hunting season frameworks, and long range planning and are the appropriate scale for analysis in the DEIS.

- C) Including analysis of marten and mink trapping

Response 255 C: The public use of leg hold traps was banned in Colorado in 1996 (except for very specific situations). The trapping of mink and marten using leg-hold traps has been illegal in Colorado since that time. Therefore, this is not an issue to be considered or analyzed in this document.

PC 297: The White River National Forest should acknowledge flaws in the Biological Evaluation3-8

- A) To promote wolverine population recovery

Response PC 297: The TMP DEIS BE acknowledges the potential impacts to wolverine, especially disturbances, from human use of occupied habitats, including denning habitats. The BE for the Forest Plan, incorporated by reference in this DEIS, indicates that wolverine use a wide range of habitat conditions, including alpine. Impacts to a range of habitats including alpine habitats are analyzed in the general wildlife section of the document. All alternatives result in fewer miles of roads and trails than currently exist on the Forest and specifies allowed uses on all routes on the Forest.

Vegetation Management _____ **3-9**

PC 44: The White River National Forest should recognize that killing plants and destroying seeds modifies the gene pool and introduces human-caused loss of genetic diversity..... **3-9**

Response PC 44: The comment is outside the scope of the Travel Management Plan.

PC 298: The White River National Forest should develop an effective weed-control strategy **3-9**

- A) Including decommissioning of roads and trails
- B) Including eradication of weeds around roads and trails

Response PC 298 A, B: Thank you for your comments. Noxious weeds are a serious problem. The White River National Forest has developed an Invasive Species Action Plan which includes the treatment along roads and trails as one of the highest priorities. Treatment of noxious weeds along roads recommended for decommissioning is also a high priority. Program funding levels for noxious weed treatment are developed nationally on an annual basis and are not tied directly to a specific travel management plan.

Timber Management _____ **3-10**

PC 85: The White River National Forest should allow logging operations **3-10**

- A) To prevent wildfire
- B) To create natural conditions for wildlife
- C) To make hunting easier
- D) Including clear cuts
- E) To keep the forest in a manageable state

Response PC 85 A - E: The issue of logging operations is outside the scope of the Travel Management Plan. The only issue relevant to logging operations are roads that may need to be retained for logging operations or decommissioned if in the foreseeable future the only reason for them is logging and it is not anticipated there is a need for them or access can be done through temporary roads. Also it should be noted that the analysis examines access to suitable timber lands and lands that may need access for salvage. Site-specific timber sale projects are examined in site-specific NEPA documents as projects are proposed.

PC 172: The White River National Forest should only allow domestic use of lumber **3-10**

Response PC 172: The issue of domestic use of lumber is outside the scope of the Travel Management Plan.

Grazing Management _____ **3-11**

PC 90: The White River National Forest should prohibit livestock in some areas of the Forest **3-11**

- A) Including wilderness areas
- B) Because they damage the environment
- C) Including areas with sensitive vegetation
- D) Including trails that are impassable

Response PC 90 A - D: The issue of domestic livestock grazing is outside the scope of the Travel Management Plan. Domestic livestock grazing is addressed in the Forest Plan and the allotment specific NEPA documents.

PC 126: The White River National Forest should provide information about livestock grazing on Forest lands3-11

- A) Including the number of grazing permits granted
- B) Including the number of animals involved
- C) Including whether grazing by domesticated herds is a problem
- D) Including the impacts of grazing

Response PC 126 A, B, C, D: The effects analysis focuses on the impact of the various travel management alternatives on the existing resources and uses. Since the alternatives will not affect the number of grazing permits or the number of animals, these issues are not pertinent to the decision. The impacts of domestic livestock grazing are addressed in the Forest Plan and the allotment specific NEPA documents.

PC 265: The White River National Forest should not perform motorized predator control in wilderness areas3-12

- A) Because it sets a bad example

Response PC 265: The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, Wildlife Services is responsible for predator control on public and private land. The use of motorized vehicles (ATVs) for predator control is not allowed within wilderness nor is the use of poisons for predator control permitted on the White River National Forest.

PC 194: The White River National Forest should make determinations on stock usage of trails as part of a trail management plan and not as part of an overarching Travel Management Plan3-12

Response PC 194: The WRNF is currently an open forest for stock and foot travel. The WRNF in the SDEIS made a determination that only certain trails due to safety considerations has restrictions to stock use on very few trails. Most equestrian users agreed that the trails with restrictions make sense as they are not places a rider or pack animal should be and/or there are alternatives that are more desirable. The WRNF did hear from many about the restrictions to stock use and concur that since it is an open forest, and the Travel Management Plan is looking at what is legal and not legal, that restrictions to stock use be only when absolutely necessary. The WRNF concurs with this philosophy for the Travel Management Plan. That is not to state however that there may be places on the forest where stock use or even foot travel is discouraged, though not necessarily illegal. These situations will be relayed through recreation management maps and guidance.

Oil, Gas, Commodity Production 3-12

PC 171: The White River National Forest should prevent mining and oil drilling3-12

Response PC 171: This request is outside the scope of the Travel Management Plan.

JB PC 251: The White River National Forest should consider the impacts of commodity production and forest-health management on the Forest's travel system3-13

- A) Including development of reasonably foreseeable route requirements
- B) Because commodity extraction routes should not be managed on a project-by-project basis
- C) To protect wildlife, water, scenery, and recreation

JF PC 266: The White River National Forest should make oil and gas companies responsible for environmental recovery3-13

- A) Including road restoration

Commercial Development **3-14**

PC 23: The White River National Forest should address private development within the Forest **3-14**

- A) Because private entities are blocking public access

Response PC 23: The WRNF agrees that where possible, in places where access is needed to the forest and it can be managed, access should be allowed. The WRNF works with counties and towns to help identify these important locations. Ultimately though on private or other non-Forest Service land, the WRNF can only suggest where these locations should or could be.

PC 30: The White River National Forest should restrict commercial permitting on public lands **3-14**

- A) Including the Aspen Ski Company
- B) Including Vail Resorts

Response PC 30 A, B: Permit issuance is outside the scope of this Travel Management Plan. There are a wide range of existing authorities, regulations, directives and guidance regarding the issuance and administration of Special Use Permits. Permits are also issued in accordance with the Forest Plan and within capacity guidelines identifying the amount of commercial vs. non-commercial uses on Forest System lands.

Chapter 4. Transportation Management 4-1

PC: The White River National Forest should address travel management comprehensively 4-1

- A) To identify present and future resource management priorities
- B) Including expansion from commodity and management demands
- C) Including socio-economical analysis

Response PC 292 A, B, C: The TMP did focus on public use and what uses in what locations would be legal on the WRNF. Chapter 3 on effects did include social and economic analyses. It is not possible to anticipate all future commodity use or potential new construction needs. These will be evaluated as the projects are proposed. In the project evaluations they will be also examined in light of the over-all travel management picture. Analyses and design of the Travel Management Plan are based on priorities set by the Forest Plan. While these may be programmatic in nature, they do set the stage for how the WRNF sets priorities. Adjustments are made for annual events or changes. These changes such as increase in natural gas production or beetle infestation are analyzed against Forest Plan goals and objectives. Actions are also analyzed in NEPA and possible Forest Plan amendments if necessary. All actions are subject to public input and are balanced with the overall goals of the forest.

PC 209: The White River National Forest should address new road and trail construction 4-2

- A) Including types of trails an aging population is likely to demand
- B) Because new construction is an important tool in transportation management
- C) For timber operations
- D) For gas and oil operations
- E) To provide for successful closure of unsustainable, non-system routes

Response PC 209 A, B, C, D, E: It is not possible to anticipate all future new road and trail construction needs or proposals that may be presented for recreation, commodities, or private land access. Each new road when they are proposed will be looked at for best location, design, temporal need, and how they fit into the overall travel management scheme. Though there may be future needs for new roads and trails, these proposals will be based on need, best location, best design, temporal need, and how they fit into the overall travel management scheme. They are not considered in the Travel Management Plan. The Travel Management Plan's focus is on establishment of the baseline from which new road and trail construction can be analyzed from in the future should the need arise.

The need to close unsustainable, non-system routes will not be deferred in anticipation of what may be needed in the future. The routes not identified in the TMP as system routes will be slated for restoration.

PC 279: The White River National Forest should clarify legal rights of access 4-3

- A) Because the plan should not disregard any established rights or claims on existing roads and easements

Response PC 279 A: The Travel Management Plan is designed to designate the travel system available to the public. The purpose is not to determine, claim, disregard, or establish existing rights or easements on roads and trails. Rights are established outside of the TMP. Existing rights that are on record are maintained. It should be noted that rights and easements require the claimant to have legal documentation supporting the right or easement for the road or trail of which they claim to have legal rights. Otherwise roads and trails on National Forest System lands are under ownership and jurisdiction of the National Forest Service.

- B) Including management of open space, access easements, and trailheads under county jurisdictions

Response 279 B: The Forest Service can only exercise its rights over easements, trailheads, roads and trails that fall under its jurisdiction. For other access not under Forest Service jurisdiction the Forest Service does and will continue to work with those owners, including other government agencies to maintain points of access or open space in conjunction with the management of the forest.

PC 69: The White River National Forest should designate any road and trail segments that are adopted and maintained by OHV clubs as open4-4

Response PC 69: In most cases, when the Forest Service has entered into a “formal” agreement with an individual, group or organization to conduct maintenance on a route, it is likely that the route is already a system route and that the future designation of that route is unlikely to change through this travel plan decision. However, it should be noted that there are situations where individuals and/or groups have performed maintenance on routes without the consent of the Forest Service and in those situations, the work performed will not factor into this decision making process.

PC 111: The White River National Forest should delineate open play areas from designated routes4-4

- A) To minimize user conflict

Response PC 111: The WRNF will be presenting a clearer picture of open play areas for winter use in the supplemental draft. Motorized routes will only be displayed when necessary for legal purposes in restricted areas. Play areas will be displayed as open motorized areas.

PC 62: The White River National Forest should support seasonal closure of roads/trails4-4

- A) To protect wetlands
- B) To protect riparian soils

Response PC 62 A, B: The WRNF supports seasonal closures to protect any natural resource including wetlands and riparian soils when necessary. The TMP will follow guidance in Forest Plan, regulatory laws, and Watershed Conservation Handbook direction to protect wetlands and riparian resources. Along with the seasonal closure option the TMP also looks at closing routes, or not having routes in these areas.

- C) To protect wildlife
- D) Including closure to vehicles after significant snowfall

Response PC 62 D: The TMP will have summer and winter season dates for when summer motorized travel is in effect and when winter motorized travel will be then in effect. These dates were based on average years for snowfall and some consideration for hunting season. Each District Ranger does have the authority to close any route when resource damage would become an issue, such as after a significant snowfall.

- E) To resolve user conflict

Response 62 E: While most of the seasonal restrictions that are being evaluated are for the protection of resources, the draft travel plan also states “at anytime a decision maker can issue an order to restrict access to protect users and/or resources as necessary”.

- F) Including restricted access during sensitive, wildlife migration and reproductive periods

Response 62 C, F: Important wildlife seasonal habitats are evaluated using a range of data sources, including personal knowledge of forest wildlife biologists, input from wildlife specialist from other agencies, maps from a variety of land management, state and non-governmental organizations and other resources. Wildlife season use dates used in the TMP are the dates developed in coordination with the CDOW during the development of the Forest Plan. Seasonal-specific closures will be evaluated during the development of the final document.

PC 281: The White River National Forest should address the availability of routes for fire management4-5

A) Including county roads and trails

Response PC 281 A: County roads are the responsibility of the respective counties and not the Forest Service. Routes and fire management is addressed in the DEIS analysis section.

B) Including insect and disease activity

Response PC 281 B: Roads for insect and disease activity are analyzed as project proposals are initiated. When projects are proposed any existing system routes will be considered for any transportation needs to implement the project.

PC 311: The White River National Forest should align travel and recreation opportunities with management capability4-5

Response PC 311: The comment expressed concern that that the Forest was confusing its capability with management desire. As identified within the Draft Travel Plan, the Forest recognizes that the two are closely related but also identifies that one of the objectives of the travel plan is to provide a transportation system that is more in line with the Forest capabilities, both from a resource base as well as financial.

Roads Management 4-6

PC 173: The White River National Forest should expand road-impact corridors to one mile wide4-6

PC 174: The White River National Forest should disclose how the TMP will meet road-density standards4-6

Response PC 174: All alternatives meet the Forest Plan standards for road densities. Road density standards from the Forest Plan were used in the HABCAP analysis completed for elk in the DEIS. Please refer to that section.

PC 204: The White River National Forest should restrict new roads and infrastructure4-6

A) Including for natural gas exploration

Response PC 204: New road construction for any purpose will undergo the proper NEPA procedures.

PC 253: The White River National Forest should limit travel to established system roads4-6

A) Including closure of non-system routes

Response PC 253: The WRNF is obligated to examine routes to determine the best system for overall travel across the forest. This ruling was established in the Motor Vehicle Use Rule. That is not to say every single bandit route has to be examined prior to establishment of the legal system,

rather, the Forest Service only needs to look at routes that may have been established, be well used, well designed, may have been created prior to NEPA, or undergone NEPA and not added to the inventory, etc. Once this process is accomplished and the system determined the WRNF can undertake an aggressive approach to remove non-system routes determined not necessary for the travel system.

PC 254: The White River National Forest should reduce high road densities4-7

- A) To protect watersheds

Response PC 254: Road densities are measured in the analysis sections of the DEIS and will be in the SDEIS. Density requirements will follow Forest Plan guidance. The reduction of high road densities in key areas including watersheds is one consideration the decision-maker has to make when comparing analysis pros and cons.

PC 282: The White River National Forest should affirm the authority that guides forest management4-7

- A) including the ability to build and use roads

Response PC 282: A listing of laws, rules, and regulations guiding Forest Service direction is listed in the TMP. Some of these that relate to road use and road building include 36 CFR 212, 215, 261, Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks under the 7000 series.

PC 293: The White River National Forest should address requirements for permanent resource management roads4-8

- A) To disclose reasonably, foreseeable actions and impacts from travel infrastructure
- B) Including the viability of temporary roads

Response PC 293 B: Temporary roads are examined during site-specific project proposals. Because they are temporary and not part of the over-all travel management system for public use it would be erroneous to examine them as such. It is not possible to anticipate the amount or locations of these routes as well. Any temporary road would be examined through project initiation and the NEPA process. It is during that analysis that these would be measured against the travel management system baseline.

- C) Including higher standards and maintenance on roads used by commodity traffic
- D) Because the assumption that no new road construction will be required is false
- E) Including permanent additions for vegetation management
- F) Including fire management
- G) Including gas development
- H) To determine impacts on air quality

Response PC 293 A, D, E, F, G, H: The WRNF does not assume that no new road construction will be required, rather that in the process of establishing the baseline in this TMP effort, it was impossible to anticipate all future new road construction needs, locations, or temporal status. Any new road would be examined through project initiation and the NEPA process. The time to examine the impacts of a new road will be during project initiation. These roads will be measured against the established baseline set by the TMP.

PC 295: The White River National Forest should address road maintenance4-11

- A) Including Level 3 roads

Response PC 295 A: An examination of level 3, 4, and 5 roads will be included in more detail the supplemental draft to look at mixed use, including the need for what maintenance level these roads should be retained at.

B) Because the proposed maintenance cycles exceed forecasted budget allocations

Response PC 295 B: The analysis did show the National Forest does not receive enough money for the roads needed to serve the public at this time. This is one part of the decision making matrix the decision maker has to take into account along with possible solutions which include more than just elimination of roads. Examples include lowering maintenance levels, partnerships, utilizing road use permits (sharing of maintenance responsibilities), etc.

C) Including impacts to wildlife

Response PC 295 C: The number of miles and types of uses on trail systems were evaluated in each alternative. The potential impacts to wildlife from these trails were included in the analyses used for wildlife throughout the document. In the wildlife analyses, roads and trails were not necessarily broken out according to whether the route was a road or trail, but rather on the type of use the route is designated for, e.g., motorized, non-motorized, horse, etc under each alternative. Many of these categories are mainly trails, rather than roads. Changes in the category of uses on routes across the Forest are taken into account in each alternative as the number of miles of each category is analyzed. No new construction of roads or trails will be authorized under this decision. Analysis for any new construction of trails or roads would occur during a separate, subsequent NEPA process. During analysis, the expected effects of road and trail maintenance were considered to be an integral part of the continuation and operation of all roads and trails. The potential effects on wildlife of road maintenance were considered in the wildlife analyses.

PC 38: The White River National Forest should revise its “miles of road to be maintained” measure to more accurately reflect the cost of road maintenance.....4-12

Response PC 38: The WRNF will look at to the best of its ability including more information on road maintenance. For level 3, 4, and 5 roads these costs will be further analyzed in the SDEIS, however, one also has to bear in mind the WRNF also has a very well established partnership with the counties for help in maintaining some of these roads.

PC 58: The White River National Forest should keep roads open to full sized vehicles4-12

A) Including level 2 roads

Response PC 58: Each road including the level 2 roads will be examined for what uses would be best served. Most will likely retain use to FSV. Some may be recommended for ATVs in which case these would be converted to trails.

PC 70: The White River National Forest should limit access of small motorized vehicles to roads used by full-sized vehicles4-13

A) To protect wildlife habitat

Response PC 70 A: The DEIS analyzes a range of uses for both motorized and non-motorized activities. The amount and location of ATV, motorcycle, and snowmobile access on roads and/or trails varies by alternative.

B) Including restriction of snowmobile travel

Response PC 70 B: The Forest Plan includes standards and guidelines designed to assure the Forest is properly managing for lynx and lynx habitat needs. Several of these standards and guidelines specifically address restrictions on public winter access, including snowmobile access. The wildlife analyses include winter uses and incorporates standards and guidelines from the Forest Plan.

PC 86: The White River National Forest should stop grading four-wheel drive roads4-13

- A) Because it provides no benefit to backcountry, automotive enthusiasts
- B) Because it creates more silt in runoff
- C) Because it turns up new rocks in the road bed

Response PC 86 A, B, C: Most four-wheel drive roads are not graded unless grading is necessary to prevent resource damage. Some roads may appear to be four-wheel drive roads, when in fact they are suppose to accommodate passenger cars. These get graded. Some of these may through examination may be better as four-wheel drive roads in which case maintenance levels would be dropped and then maintenance needs would be reduced to focusing only on resource protection needs.

PC 27: The White River National Forest should not adopt a "closed unless marked as open" policy4-13

- A) Because the Forest is inadequately marking and maintaining "closed roads" where violations currently occur

Response PC 27: The closed unless marked as open policy is now National direction as outlined in the Motor Vehicle Use rule. This policy was developed to prevent resource damage from occurring across forest lands from "unmanaged" recreation use. The policy allows for the Forest Service to establish and maintain a system of travel routes across the forest.

PC 2: The White River National Forest should close roads4-14

- A) Because some roads were illegally cleared
- B) Because there are too many roads on public lands

Response PC 2 A, B: The TMP is examining the road system to determine what would best service the Forest in a sustainable manner. This includes determining which roads individually would also meet those needs.

- C) Including all four-wheel drive and all-terrain vehicles

Response PC 2 C: The notion of removing all four-wheel drive and all-terrain vehicles is an opinion. The National Forest at this time feels these uses are legitimate recreation and access uses that are appropriate in the right locations on National Forest System lands.

- D) To protect habitat

Response PC 2 D: The alternatives in the DEIS analyze various scenarios of the number and locations of roads and trails across the Forest. All alternatives result in fewer miles of roads and trails than currently exist on the Forest and each alternative specifies the allowed uses on each route on the Forest.

- E) To protect water resources

Response PC 2 E: There are times when road closures to protect water resources may be necessary and other times when mitigations can be incorporated to provide access where necessary. The TMP takes into account the need for providing access while incorporating protection measures as outlined the Forest Plan and Water Conservation Handbook.

- F) Including education and enforcement efforts to increase public cooperation

Response PC 2 F: The WRNF agrees a program that incorporates both education and enforcement would help to increase public cooperation. We hope to establish many methods to do both, especially emphasizing education, thus hopefully reducing the need for extensive enforcement.

- G) To allow the transportation system to operate within fiscal limits

Response 2 G: The WRNF will examine in the subsequent draft the balance between the need to provide a transportation system for public access and use, the budget to maintain such a system, and the need to also protect lands. The decision maker will have to weigh all these factors to determine what system will be finalized for travel across the forest.

H) Including portions of routes that originate or exit onto private property

Response 2 H: Road closures for routes that lead to or exit private property are generally closed at logical locations where closures can be managed. To place a ¼ mile limit would be arbitrary and may not be able to be geographically logical.

PC 294: The White River National Forest should address road decommissioning and closure4-15

- A) Because decommissioning a road does not erase its impact
- B) Including methods of closure for temporary and user-created roads

Response PC 294 A, B: The correction will be made to use the term decommissioning correctly. When a road is turned into a trail the term is conversion, and will be corrected in the subsequent draft. Methods of closure do vary depending on terrain, costs, potential impacts, ability for the route to return to production, the ability to close effectively. All these factors are measured when determining how to decommission a route. Each will be looked at for the most effected measures when implementation of the decision can be made.

C) Including impacts on the aquatic system

Response PC 294 C: The commenter is correct in pointing out the statement needs to be clarified. Rather than stating "For this analysis, it is assumed that when a road is closed it is closed effectively, such that it ceases to have impacts on the aquatic system" the statement should read when a "road is effectively closed and the ground is back into production". While the comment continues to state that road closures are optimistic assumptions on the lack of impacts, it should be noted that the goal of road decommissioning is to put the ground back into production. In some cases this may take some time, other situation the ground may recover quickly. Nonetheless one should not discount the goal.

Trails Management 4-16

PC 238: The White River National Forest should establish trail objectives4-16

A) To determine appropriate trail use

Response PC 238 A: Overall objectives for each type of trail are already established and identified within Forest Service Manuals, Handbooks and CFR's. These objectives have been used by the Forest to help identify routes that meet or have the capability to meet existing standards and specifications as well as in identifying the range of possible uses for each route.

PC 15: The White River National Forest should keep the trails open to all non-motorized user groups4-16

Response PC 15: While we appreciate your comment and willingness to share the trail with all other non-motorized users, the goal of the plan is to evaluate and designate the appropriate use and/or uses for each route, including all motorized and non-motorized uses. This evaluation includes the analysis of many factors such as compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, existing and/or potential conflicts and public input. While some routes may be designated open to all uses, this analysis will result in the designation of other routes for a limited/specific type of use and/or uses.

PC 49: The White River National Forest should prevent unauthorized trail building..... 4-16

Response PC 49: The Forest Service has regulations that prohibit the unauthorized construction of trails. While we are aware that the construction of some illegal routes has occurred intentionally, we also believe that other user routes have been created by those without the knowledge or intent of any wrong doings. We believe that through the implementation of a “travel by designated route” plan, including education, that there will be a significant reduction in the future creation of unauthorized roads and trails.

PC 184: The White River National Forest should close non-system, user-created routes4-16

A) To prevent deterioration of wildlife habitat

Response PC 184 A: The DEIS specifically analyzes each road or trail in each alternative to determine if it should be included in the Forest system. All alternatives result in fewer miles of roads and trails due to the closure of user-created ways that are do not contribute to meeting the desired conditions of any alternative. User-created roads and trails that are not identified for inclusion onto the official Forest system will be closed to use and scheduled for rehabilitation.

B) Including budget prioritization for route closure

Response PC 184 B: The WRNF will begin work on a travel implementation plan upon the completion of the analysis and issuance of a final travel plan decision. The prioritization of goals, objectives and financial resources will be a likely component of this plan. In addition to the prioritization of Forest allocations, our plan will also include strategies to achieve travel implementation work with outside funds and/or partners.

C) Including open space buffers around communities

Response PC 184 C: The WRNF will continue to work with local communities to determine where trails and trailhead are appropriate when they go from private or other government lands on to Forest Service lands.

PC 230: The White River National Forest should create standards and guidelines for user-created trails4-17

- A) Because they serve important recreational uses
- B) Including identification of management specifications
- C) Including signs to indicate management-preferred trails
- D) Because trail closure will encourage more unauthorized trail building
- E) Including incorporation of sustainable routes

Response PC 230 A - E: As identified within the draft travel plan, this analysis includes the evaluation of user created routes or “ways” for possible designation into the Forest Travel System. The evaluation of each route will consider factors such as compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, existing and/or potential conflicts as well as information provided from the public. These routes will also need to meet existing objectives, standards and specifications as identified within Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks. Routes that are determined to provide a benefit to the public and are consistent with the above factors are likely candidates for inclusion into the transportation system. All routes designated for inclusion will be signed on the ground and shown on the new travel maps.

Note: The draft travel plan may include the designation of some routes that currently do not meet established standards with the caveat that they be brought up to standard prior to being formally included within the transportation system. In addition, each Forest unit will continue to evaluate and conduct road and trail reconstruction/construction work in the future as necessary to meet transportation needs. Proposals that involve new ground disturbance will require the unit to conduct additional analysis in accordance with NEPA. These evaluations and analyses will occur in a process that is in addition to and separate than this one.

F) Because unauthorized routes cannot be added as system roads within roadless areas

Response PC 230 F: No alternative proposed adding roads in inventoried roadless areas.

G) Including specification of criteria for incorporation

Response PC 230 G, I: Standards and guidelines are established in Forest Planning. However specifications for whether a route should be incorporated into the system or should be removed relies on several regulations including Forest Plan direction. Such factors include rules on NEPA which examines need, resource impacts and protection, Forest Plan direction which looks at compatibility with prescriptions and standards and guidelines to meet desired conditions across the forest, and other factors such as CFR's, Manuals and Handbooks. Final judgment is based on all these factors.

H) Including closure of unsustainable routes

Response PC 230 H: As mentioned above in "Response PC A – E", to include or remove a route from the system will be based on the evaluation of numerous factors. Since unsustainable routes would not meet existing road or trail standards, these routes will not be designated into the system during this process. Unless the Forest Unit proposes to perform work to bring them to standard in the future (and conduct additional analysis) routes not designated as part of the transportation system will be identified for decommissioning.

I) Including considerations for land prescription compatibility

Response PC 230 I: See PC 230 G above.

J) Including old resource extraction roads no longer in use

Response PC 230 J: The WRNF is examining all roads no longer needed for use where they have jurisdiction. It should be noted some of the extraction roads may have right-of-way or easements on them which the WRNF would have to honor.

K) To show compliance with NEPA

Response 230 K: Examining unauthorized roads for adding into the system was authorized for a one time examination for implementing the Motor Vehicle Use Rule. Each road was verified as to it's condition and existence prior to consideration. Some roads may be added when it makes sense to do so, which includes the examination of condition and resource impacts. Some of these roads will not be added and therefore be slated to return to production. This process is compliant with NEPA as the Forest Service is disclosure procedure and decision making process as well as allowing for public involvement.

L) Including penalties for unauthorized trail construction

Response 230 L: Many unauthorized routes were initially created by those traveling off of system routes for one purpose or another. These "tracks" were sometimes followed by others until the path became an "established" route. Through much of the forest, off route travel was only prohibited if the travel caused damage to the land or streams. The definition of "damage" is fairly arbitrary and proved extremely difficult to enforce. In many situations the off route damage by any one traveler was relatively insignificant and the issuance of a violation to that individual difficult. However, the cumulative effect of continued use on routes that were not designed or constructed to established standards, results in significant impacts.

Upon the issuance of the final travel plan decision restricting "travel to designated routes" and with the subsequent release of maps identifying route designations, the forest will be able to better enforce off route travel and assess penalties associated with this use.

PC 67: The White River National Forest should adopt a shared-use trails strategy4-21

- A) To reduce user conflict
- B) To discourage unauthorized trail building
- C) To preserve access to mountain biking trails
- D) Because separating trail users would create regulation and staffing difficulties
- E) To disperse users across trail systems
- F) To promote cooperation and mutual respect
- G) Because shared trails are cost effective
- H) To enhance peer regulation

Response PC 67 A – H: The attitude and willingness to share the trail is appreciated and to much extent, supported by the Forest Service. However, leaving every trail open to all uses would not meet management goals nor would provide an enjoyable experience for all uses. The goal of the plan is to evaluate and determine the appropriate use and/or uses for each route, including all motorized and non-motorized uses. The evaluation includes the analysis of many factors such as compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, trail standards, specifications and objectives, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, existing and/or potential conflicts and public input. While the level of shared and separation of uses fluctuates between each alternative (see response below), all alternatives identify some routes designated for all trail uses and other routes designated for a limited and/or specific type of use(s). Although the extent varies between alternatives, each alternative identifies trail systems or parts thereof where users will need to “share the trail”.

- I) To prevent ecosystem impacts

Response PC 67 I: Alternative C of the DEIS emphasizes shared uses of Forest System roads and trails at a higher level than the others. Alternative D emphasizes more of a separation of those uses. Alternative E identifies a transportation system that emphasizes a greater reduction of impacts on natural resources. The analyses for terrestrial resources identify the differences in expected impacts from each of those alternatives.

- J) To build a coalition of summer trail users

Response PC 67 J: See response to PC 67 A – H above.

PC 193: The White River National Forest should eliminate shared-use trails4-22

- A) Because hikers are being displaced by bikes/horses

Response PC 193: As discussed in the above response to PC 67, each alternative identifies a mixture of shared use as well as trails designated for a limited type of use or uses. The level of shared vs. separated use trails vary between alternatives. Alternative D places a higher emphasis on trail designations to provide a greater separation of uses. With a limited number of trails and resources, the Forest can not provide complete trail systems to completely meet the desire of each use type, therefore, the need to share certain routes and or areas will always be necessary.

PC 68: The White River National Forest should not support a user-specific trail system4-22

- A) Because the forest cannot afford the cost
- B) To promote multiple-use and tolerance
- C) To prevent interference with wildlife habitat and travel corridors

Response PC 68 C: Alternative C of the DEIS emphasizes shared uses of Forest System roads and trails. Alternative D emphasizes separation of those uses. Alternative E manages recreation uses to reduce the impacts on natural resources. The analyses for terrestrial resources identify the differences in expected impacts from each of those alternatives.

- D) Because user conflict does not justify trail segregation
- E) Because separation of use is counterproductive to user education

Response PC 68 A, B, D, E: The content of these comments are very similar to those previously identified in PC 67 expressing a desire for shared trails. The response to PC 67 as well as the response to PC 193 discusses the Forests analysis and alternatives regarding shared and separated use trails. Please read the above responses.

PC 242: The White River National Forest should implement preferred-use trails4-24

- A) To prevent controversial, single-use designations
- B) To keep trails open to mountain biking
- C) To address user conflict

Response PC 242 A, B, C: To meet the requirements within the 2005 Planning Rule, the Forest must specifically designate routes and/or areas for summer motorized travel. Since a “preferred” use is not legally enforceable, trail users who knowingly choose to ignore the identified “preference” could do so without recourse. While there may exist opportunities to implement a preferred use system in specific situations and/or locations, we do not feel that this concept is feasible for a travel plan of this magnitude nor would it allow the Forest to meet identified requirements.

PC 117: The White River National Forest should levy fees for trail use4-24

- A) To fund trail maintenance
- B) To optimize vehicle access to public lands

Response PC 117 A, B: The Forest Service has authorization to levy or collect fees for certain activities, goods and/or services and only under specific authorizations that congress has passed. Overall, the charging of fees for general trail use is outside the scope of this planning process.

PC 13: The White River National Forest should oppose restrictions creating single-use trails4-25

- A) Because conflicts can be resolved through discussion and education
- B) Because restrictions cause conflict between groups

PC 54: The White River National Forest should separate trails where user conflicts have become serious4-25

- A) Including separating motorized and non-motorized winter trails

Response PC 13 A, B & PC 54: Under each alternative, transportation routes are evaluated for designation for the full spectrum of uses. The evaluation includes the analysis of many factors such as compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, trail standards, specifications and objectives, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, existing and/or potential conflicts and public input. While different aspects receive a greater focus dependent upon the alternative, all alternatives include a mix of shared and separated use trails. While certain trail restrictions are necessary to comply with the above factors and/or to address conflicts, the ability for users to share certain routes and areas will still be imperative to the overall success of the final travel plan decision.

PC 61: The White River National Forest should provide separate stock and hiker trailheads4-26

- A)To alleviate conflicts

Response PC 61, A: Thank you for your suggestion. While this may be a viable option in a few existing specific situations, due to economic and resource factors, the implementation of this alternative for the majority of the Forest stock and hiker trails is not feasible at this time. Since

providing separate trailheads would involve new construction in most situations, the proposal is not within the scope of this decision. In light of this suggestion however, there have some trailheads are designed to accommodate both user groups in separate areas, with unique parking features and other accommodations. This along with separate trailheads is something that each Forest unit may consider and evaluate incorporating in the future.

PC 162: The White River National Forest should close unsafe trails and segregate other trails4-26

- A) To help maintain safe recreational opportunities for all visitors while preserving the forest environment

Response PC 162 A: This comment also included an understanding and acceptance for all alternatives while specifically identifying support for Alternative D. The comment acknowledged the Forest’s intent to provide safe recreational alternatives while preserving the Forest. We appreciate your overall support and understanding with this planning process.

PC 195: The White River National Forest should segregate trail users by trail width4-26

- A) To minimize conflict
- B) To allow users to self-segregate

Response PC 195 A, B: While existing and/or desired trail width is currently a primary factor in evaluating acceptable trail uses, designating trail use on width alone would not allow the Forest to meet and comply with the requirements as identified within the Planning Rule and/or the Forest Plan.

PC 73: The White River National Forest should not segregate hiking trails and horseback trails4-27

- A) To prevent vegetation overgrowth
- B) Because it would create management problems

Response PC 73 A, B: The draft travel management plan did not restrict hiking and horseback travel to designated routes. However, there a few specific routes that were identified and analyzed in the draft plan for hiking only. Under the current situation, as depicted in Alternative B, the White River National Forest has 2,462 miles of trails open to hikers with 2,300 (94%) of those open to horse travel. While the total miles of trail that would be designated for horse use increases under each of the other DEIS Alternatives, Alternative D identifies the greatest amount of segregation between hiking and horseback trails. This alternative, formulated to resolve user conflict through segregation, identified that while 86 percent of all trails would remain open to horseback and hiker while 12 percent of the total would be designated as hiker only. Overall, the DEIS identified that the vast majority of trails would be designated for both hike and horseback use. The rationale for evaluating segregation between the two uses on the remaining trails is generally related to safety or existing resource and/or user conflicts.

PC 243: The White River National Forest should not use trail design as a rationale for segregating non-motorized trail use4-27

- A) Because design requirements for mountain biking and foot travel are similar
- B) Because trails were not originally constructed for hikers or horses
- C) Because mountain biking requires minimal change to trail design

Response PC 243 A, B, C: While the Forest agrees with some of the comments included in this submittal, there are certain items that we will address. While design requirements are similar between all non-motorized trails and there are times when one design may work for all, there are differences in some of the standards and specifications well as the overall trail objectives between the three. For example, while the installation of a log puncheon across a creek may be suitable

and preferred crossing for a mountain bike, these structures often create an unsafe crossing for horses. While the preferred drainage structure on hiker and horse trails may include the installation of rock water bars, these structures are not as contusive to Mountain Bike use as other structures such as rolling dips.

The Forest agrees that there are trails that currently provide for or may be easily altered to safely accommodate all uses. In addition to meeting trail objectives, specifications and standards, the analysis of routes also includes the evaluation of each route to a wide variety of other factors such as compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, existing and/or potential conflicts and public input.

The comment questioned the original intent of many of the Forest Trails. As discussed in the DEIS, the majority of today’s single track trails are a result of use and the establishment of travel ways that occurred during a time when the primary transportation occurred via foot or horseback.

PC 291: The White River National Forest should not alter trail specifications to accommodate new vehicle technology4-28

A) Because ATVs wider than 50 inches should be prohibited from trails

Response PC 291: The WRNF is not altering any existing trail specifications. There is a category of trails that allow for vehicles greater than 50 inches. These trails have to be designated and designed for that purpose.

PC 182: The White River National Forest should consider railroad grades for trail use4-28

A) Because it does not disturb habitat

Response PC 182: The Forest Service has historically promoted the conversion of abandoned railroad beds to trails. The White River National Forest will continue to explore and evaluate potential “Rails to Trails” possibilities in the future.

PC 22: The White River National Forest should provide proper trail maintenance4-28

- A) Including diversions made of logs or rocks to prevent the formation of gullies
- B) Including switchbacks to prevent washouts

Response PC 22: The Forest agrees and recognizes the need to conduct additional trail maintenance on our existing system. As mentioned in the DEIS, the amount of monies the Forest is allocated for trail maintenance is insufficient and has created a backlog of trail work. The Forest will continue to pursue partnerships and grants to help reduce the amount of work needed.

PC 55: The White River National Forest should recognize the assistance loggers, cattle, and sheep ranchers provide in keeping trails open.....4-29

Response PC 55: As stated in the DEIS, the Forest recognizes that many of the routes are kept open by a variety of individuals, groups and organizations.

PC 91: The White River National Forest should require horseback riders, hikers, and other user groups to maintain trails4-29

Response PC 91: While the Forest appreciates the volunteer work that a variety of trail users have conducted, seldom has this work been “required”. Due to the fact that the Forest generally has a greater difficulty in receiving maintenance funds in comparison to funding for construction/reconstruction projects, the forest has pursued agreements with interested individuals where the Forest’s use of project construction funds were conditional based on a partners commitment to conduct future maintenance. While, outside of the above situation, the Forest

cannot require the public to conduct trail maintenance, the Forest does and will continue to pursue partners interested in providing future assistance.

PC 127: The White River National Forest should provide evidence of maintenance contributions from snowmobilers4-29

Response PC 127: The comment includes reference to a statement in the DEIS that identifies conflicts between cross-country skiers and snowmobiles that occur due to inequities in responsibility. It should be noted that this comment was generated from a study (Cordell 1999) and included the statement that “generally, the snowmobile has contributed in some manner to trail maintenance”. It should be noted that the majority of snowmobile trail grooming that occurs on the White River National Forest occurs through the assistance of volunteers and through monies received from the state snowmobile registration funds. The amount of revenues generated from these registrations as well as the amount of funding provided for snowmobile trail grooming may be acquired through the Colorado State Parks.

PC 163: The White River National Forest should use volunteers to maintain trails4-29

- A) Including the Boulder County Sheriff's Horse and Rescue Association
- B) Including the Boulder County Horseman's Association
- C) Because recreational use should not require a fee

Response PC 163 A, B C: Thank you for your comment and expressed interest in conducting volunteer work. The Forest has and will continue to work with on establishing partnerships with individuals, groups and organizations interested in conducting volunteer trail maintenance.

Transportation-Related Structures4-30

PC 63: The White River National Forest should consider using barriers and fences to keep people on trails and out of sensitive areas4-30

Response PC 63: In some cases these techniques may have to be employed. Barriers are currently used to block routes that are decommissioned or unauthorized to keep people from using them. Fences can be used, but may be limited due to wildlife concerns. These would be part of implementation and be utilized especially to protect resources.

PC 64: The White River National Forest should build bridges4-30

Response PC 64: Bridge locations and construction are based on need, type of accommodation, and ability to maintain. The WRNF does have many bridges across the forest for various uses.

Loop Opportunities4-30

PC 107: The White River National Forest should open segments of classified road that make a loop to unlicensed vehicles4-30

- A) To reduce per-mile impacts from these vehicles and increase enjoyment of the trail

PC 159: The White River National Forest should provide more trail loop opportunities4-30

- A) Including use of logging roads
- B) To minimize cost of road maintenance
- C) To provide more efficient recreation

PC 249: The White River National Forest should not concede loop opportunities to the motorized community4-31

A) Because it would render the forest vulnerable to criticism

Response PC 107, 159 A-C and 249, A: The forest recognizes the publics' desire for a loop experience. As part of the DEIS analysis, the Forest did identify and evaluate the inclusion of non system routes as connectors with existing system routes for potential loop opportunities. Loop opportunities were explored for all user types, motorized and non-motorized alike. It should be noted that many other factors were also included in this analysis and, although a specific route may be important to make a loop, there may be other factors involved that conflict with the designation of that route.

Chapter 5. Recreation Management 5-1

PC 103: The White River National Forest should not limit the use of public land..... 5-1

Response PC 103: The WRNF is not limiting the use of public land, rather it is establishing where certain uses can be used in a sustainable manner. While National Forest System lands are available for public use, the Forest Service also has a responsibility to ensure the lands meet the mission of to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

PC 66: The White River National Forest should foster tolerance and acceptance of all legal users 5-1

Response PC 66: Under the current transportation system, there exists some confusion whether or not various routes are open for travel and/or which type of travel is acceptable. The "rules" for these routes may be interpreted differently between users, often times resulting in an increase in conflicts. The goal of the Travel Management Plan is to designate the legal mode(s) of travel for every route on the Forest and through maps, signing and education, provide forest visitors a clear understand of where each type of use may and may not travel. Overall, the travel plan should result in an increased awareness and acceptance of the identified legal use for each route.

PC 77: The White River National Forest should maintain the current amount of public access 5-1

A) To maximize the public's stake in resource preservation

PC 106: The White River National Forest should maximize recreational use on the Forest 5-2

- A) Including maintaining off-road vehicle trail mileage
- B) Including allowing snowmobile access
- C) To provide money to local areas

Response PC 106, B, C: The DEIS identified and evaluated four different alternatives for the public to review. Alternate C was formulated to place the most emphasis on providing recreation opportunities. While Alternative C demonstrates the greatest overall number of recreation opportunities, it is questionable if this alternative provides the highest quality of recreation experiences. Alternative E placed the least emphasis on recreation opportunities and a much greater emphasis on the natural resources and wildlife.

D) Including motorcycle use

Response PC 77 and PC 106, A, D: As identified in the DEIS, the WRNF currently identifies approximately 2,500 miles of Forest Development Trails (summer) in the transportation system. While the number of miles proposed for each type of use change between alternatives, all other alternatives evaluated as part of the DEIS propose an increase in the total number of "system" trail miles. Specific to motorcycles, Alternative E identifies less system motorcycle trail mileage than what is identified in Alternative B.

PC 149: The White River National Forest should consider that providing for multiple uses and sustainability in an environmentally acceptable manner does not require providing fewer recreation opportunities 5-2

Response PC 149: The WRNF is seeking a balance between providing for multiple recreation uses and meeting other resource and wildlife objectives. Based on identified Forest Plan objectives, the forest agrees that in some locations, the forest can provide for a multitude of uses and still meet established objectives. However, this is not the case in all areas on the forest and

the travel plan analysis will help determine those areas that can and can not accommodate all uses.

PC 17: The White River National Forest should recognize that heavily restricting forest use will negatively impact tourism and the economy 5-3

Response PC 17: None of the alternatives presented heavily restrict forest use, rather they present variations on types of use in different locations on and across the forest. Therefore, the economic contributions from access to National Forest lands were not an issue highlighted during the scoping process. The DEIS and subsequently the SDEIS will include information on the contribution of all types of access to the White River National Forest and surrounding county economies. The level of analysis depends upon the availability of statistically valid use information.

PC 112: The White River National Forest should encourage responsible and dispersed recreational use..... 5-3

Response PC 112: The forest agrees with this comment and, through the implementation of the final travel plan, will be better able to facilitate responsible dispersed use.

PC 114: The White River National Forest should define and discuss what “quality recreation” and “quality recreation experiences” mean and how they are monitored 5-3

Response PC 114: The definition of quality varies greatly between users and it is practically impossible to provide a definition that each user agrees with. Chapter 3 in the DEIS cites a number of different surveys and reports in an attempt to identify the goals and expectations of the various user groups. Studies similar to the ones cited in the DEIS will provide the framework for future monitoring.

PC 95: The White River National Forest should conduct monitoring and analysis of recreation use 5-3

A) Including the use of key indicators and measures

Response PC 95 A: The Forest has and will continue to conduct monitoring of various recreation activities on the forest to access use, impacts and provide a framework for necessary changes. Some of findings from past surveys, such as NVUM, were cited in the DEIS. Other future ideas for measuring other recreation experiences could be utilized as necessary. While recreation is a large component of the travel management plan, the focus is on travel and key indicators and measures were developed so comparisons could be made between alternatives relative to the purpose and need.

B) Including considering resource capacity in capacity calculations

C) Including noting the difference between ‘People at One Time’ (PAOT) values of trails with outfitted recreation versus trails with dispersed recreation

Response PC 95 B C: The capacity analysis that is cited in the DEIS identifies the total recommended “People At One Time”, PAOT’s, for a variety of forest landscapes. These calculations represent the total number of people that the land can accommodate at one time without creating a negative impact on the resource and/or the recreation experience. These values do not change between outfitted use and dispersed recreation. Outfitter use is generally issued and administered based on a percentage of overall PAOT’s to ensure that the commercial use does create use above the total numbers.

PC 142: The White River National Forest should undertake a recreation needs assessment 5-4

A) To Identify the current and future needs of the motorized recreation community

- B) Including a policy regarding proportional resource allocation
- C) Including a policy establishing target allocations

Response PC 142 A - C: The majority of the information requested in this letter has been identified within the travel plan DEIS. The WRNF recognizes that it is highly unlikely that the final travel plan will meet the needs and expectations of all, if any, recreation trail user. While it is the forests' intent to develop a travel plan that provides safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities for each user group, these opportunities will be provided in a manner that coincides with other resource objectives and will not be allocated based on the goal of providing equal "proportions".

PC 296: The White River National Forest should consider forest-wide recreation capacity analysis5-5

- A) Because the Travel Management Plan affects recreation capacity

Response PC 296 A: Capacity analyses have been conducted on both wilderness and non-wilderness lands. Since capacities are directly linked to the transportation system, the forest recognizes the link between travel management and the recreation capacity.

PC 186: The White River National Forest should expand the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum5-5

- A) To provide a clear picture of types of recreational experiences
- B) To establish a basis for monitoring the recreational settings and experiences established in the Travel Management plan
- C) Including a narrative description and map locations of subdivided ROS classes
- D) Including specific indicators and measures that would result in adaptive management actions

Response PC 186 A – D: The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, ROS, provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation environments, activities and experience opportunities. This framework includes national guidelines to ensure a consistent interpretation of the goals and objectives for each classification for all forests. Pursuant to national direction and guidance, the White River National Forest will continue to use the existing and established ROS classifications as identified in the DEIS.

PC 222: The White River National Forest should develop mechanisms to prevent displacement of traditional recreational uses5-6

- A) Including identification of desired future conditions on specific trails

Response PC 222, A: For each system trail on the Forest, a Trail Management Objective, TMO, worksheet is developed identifying trail standards, specifications and objectives as well as the future management goals for each route. Each TMO will be reviewed and updated as necessary upon the issuance of the travel plan decision.

- B) Including monitoring triggers for invasion and succession
- C) Because trail upgrades should not conform to the more dominant use

Response PC 222 B, C: The establishment of designations for specific trail uses will in effect limit the amount of future invasion. There should also be some expectation for the occurrence of future succession, just as has occurred in the past. There exists a wide range of definitions of "traditional use" based on a variety of perspectives. While one objective of the Forest is to provide for these traditional uses, the forest also recognizes that flexibility is necessary to meet the expectations of recreation users of today as well as in the future. While the transportation system that existed 100 years ago would obviously not accommodate the expectations of today's public, the forest recognizes that the current system will continue to require change to meet the needs of the future.

PC 223: The White River National Forest should plan for new and unanalyzed forms of recreation5-7

- A) Including interim closure to and analysis of new forms of recreation

Response PC 223 A: Just as the uses developed during the last 25 years has created additional recreation opportunities as well as resource challenges, the forest understands that new and improved uses will continue to arrive on the Forests’ doorstep in the future. It is for this reason that the Forest recognizes the need to develop a travel plan that may be updated and adjusted as necessary to provide for new opportunities as well as to address new impacts.

- B) Including long-term, recreational trends that may impact ecological conditions

Response PC 223 B: The consideration of both short term and long term trends are considered in the analysis. The concept of developing this baseline TMP is to help establish long term trends across the forest where users can anticipate where certain uses will be allowed or not allowed and what to expect when they go there.

PC 164: The White River National Forest should not remove recreational facilities on the Grand Mesa5-7

- A) Because maintenance is less costly than removal
- B) Because facility removal will result in more pollution

Response PC 164: The Grand Mesa is part of the GMUG National Forest. The WRNF cannot make decisions for facilities on GMUG National Forest Service lands.

PC 176: The White River National Forest should not require user groups to pay for plan implementation5-8

- A) Because it diminishes the public's ability to comment (Provided by NEPA) on which trails will be open or closed to them
- B) Because it conflicts with the appropriations of Congress
- C) Because of the impact on the forest's fee access programs
- D) Because it is undemocratic and economically discriminating
- E) To comply with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

Response PC 176, A - E: The above comments are generated in reference to a statement in the DEIS that suggests an expectation for users to pay for future trails. It should be noted that this travel plan evaluates and will ultimately make decisions on existing routes. Any future trail developments will have to undergo an analysis separate than this one. While the cost to construct and maintain future trail developments is a valid concern, a proponents ability or lack thereof to pay for improvements will not be the sole factor in deciding whether or not future improvements are made. The forest recognizes that it will need to continue to explore opportunities for outside funding and assistance from a variety of sources.

PC 308: The White River National Forest should create quiet recreation areas5-9

- A) Including areas close to population centers

Response PC 308, A: While there are some “quiet use” opportunities near population centers, it should be noted that generally, the ROS classifications assigned to lands near population centers and developments are such that allowed the initial developments to occur and also minimize the ability to create quiet recreation areas (SPNM or Primitive ROS classes) nearby.

PC 326: The White River National Forest should not allow the terms "recreation conflict" and "quality recreational experience" to dictate decision making.....5-9

Response PC 326: While neither of the above terms dictate the decision making process, they are both factors that are used in the evaluation of each route during the travel planning process. As identified in the DEIS there are also a number of other factors involved in this evaluation process.

PC 81: The White River National Forest should provide access to hunters5-9

A) Because hunters provide a large economic benefit to the State

Response PC 81: The travel plan will provide the same level of access to all members of the general public. For the most part, if a trail is open for ATV use during the summer months then it will also be open during the fall hunting season and vice versa. A few exceptions such as seasonal limitations may be warranted on certain routes to address site specific situations, i.e. closing a route during June to minimize impacts to a critical elk calving area. While the forest recognizes that a certain level of access is needed to accommodate a variety of activities, including hunting, the forest is optimistic that the development and implementation of this travel plan will result in an improved overall hunting experience.

PC 183: The White River National Forest should separate motorized from non-motorized uses5-10

A) To accommodate all aspects of forest usage

B) Including fully managed summer and winter use areas

C) To include prohibiting non-motorized recreation in designated motorized use areas

Response PC 183 A, B, C: While the degree to which the separation of routes varies between alternatives, the DEIS identifies a range of transportation alternatives, each identifying routes and areas that provide separation of uses as well as routes and areas where a mixing of uses will occur. While we agree that there may be opportunities to identify some motorized areas where non-motorized use is prohibited, these situations are fairly limited. The travel plan does not propose to restrict non-motorized or non-mechanized travel to designated routes. During most situations, non-motorized use on a route does not conflict with or detract from the motorized use experience. If a forest unit decides that this situation does exist on/in a specific route/area, the unit will still be able address the conflict through a variety of methods in the future.

Motorized Recreation5-11**PC 96: The White River National Forest should accurately represent motorized recreation in the DEIS5-11**

A) Because the DEIS does not include motorized recreation as one of the top ten activities on the Forest

B) Including notation of motorized routes in miles versus acre

Response PC 96 B: Forest Plan identifies goals and objectives for landscapes across the forest and does not specifically identify route by route designations. Therefore, the Forest Plan identifies landscapes suitable for motorized and/or non-motorized use. Those landscapes are identified in acres. The Travel Plan DEIS is where the route by route designations are analyzed and where "miles" are more relevant as a comparison tool.

C) Because survey data does not accurately reflect the growing interest in OHV recreation

Response PC 96 A, C: Although NVUM data shows that motorized use is not within the top 10 as far as number of users on the WRNF, the forest does acknowledge that the use received is still significant. The information identified in the DEIS is from survey's conducted in 2002. The forest realizes that motorized use, especially OHV use, on the Forest has increased since that time. The Forest also realizes that motorized use occurs on a more limited number of acres than other uses.

Therefore, the Forest does feel that it is warranted and prudent to establish management plans for the future travel of OHV use on the Forest. In, addition, the establishment of a travel plan and designation of motorized use to specific routes is necessary to comply with the National OHV rule.

D) Including the implications for single-track motorized recreation

Response PC 96 D: The comment specifically addressed “Cumulative Effects” statements on pages 167 and 168 of the DEIS. It should be noted that these cumulative effects were written specific to the affects on Wildlife. Within the Affects to Wildlife section, the Forest documents that the variability between each alternative results in relatively small “local” impacts related to specific issues and/or areas. Related to recreation, the Forest acknowledges, and states throughout the DEIS, that each alternative results in a variety of implications for all recreation users.

E) Because the document presents conflicting information regarding available winter acreage

Response PC 96 E: The comment identified a discrepancy between the winter motorized acres identified in the Forest Plan compared to those identified in the travel DEIS under Alternative B. The Forest Plan identified all winter acres based on ROS classifications. Classifications of SMP, RN and R, totaling about 941,000 acres, were identified as motorized winter acres. The Travel Plan DEIS took a more detailed look at those acres and subtracted acres where motorized recreation opportunities for the general public are not feasible or possible. For example, Ski-Based resorts, MA 8.25 in the Forest Plan, have an ROS classification of Rural and were identified in the Forest Plan as winter motorized acres. This ROS classification is accurate and winter motorized use does occur in those acres, as authorized in Special Use permits. Since use of these areas are for “authorized use only” and not open for general public travel, these acreages were not included in the Travel Planning analysis. The forest will plan to more clearly describe and identify the winter recreation analysis process in future documents.

PC 3: The White River National Forest should prevent adverse impacts from motorized recreation5-12

A) Including impacts to wildlife

Response PC 3 A: Alternative C of the DEIS emphasizes shared uses of Forest System roads and trails. Alternative D emphasizes separation of those uses. Alternative E manages recreation uses to reduce the impacts on natural resources. The analyses for terrestrial resources identify the differences in expected impacts from each of those alternatives. Potential impacts to a wide range of habitats and to specific wildlife species are included in the various analyses sections of the DEIS. Impacts on a wide range of habitats, wildlife species, and vegetation cover types are analyzed for all alternatives. Travel management related impacts to wildlife vary with the volume, timing, and type of travel, the species of wildlife in the area, the habitats involved, time of day or season of year, and a myriad of other factors. Several recent literature reviews of recreation impacts to wildlife have been completed. These include, “Effects of Winter Recreation on Wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Area: A Literature Review and Assessment (Olliff et al 1999), “Effects of recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife Habitat” (Joslin and Youmans 1999) “The Environmental Impacts of Recreation: a Bibliography” (Unpubl. Report 1999), “Forest Roads: A Synthesis of Scientific Information” (Gucinski and Furniss 2000), “Wildlife and recreationists: Coexistence through management and research” (Knight and Gutzwiller 1995), and “Effects of off-road recreation on deer and elk” (Wisdom et al 2004). These exhaustive reviews of past studies contain a wealth of information concerning the impacts on wildlife of vehicular and other types of recreation use. Many of the reports cite the effects of roads on habitat fragmentation, isolation of rare and unique habitats such as bogs or alpine areas, direct effects such as collisions with animals, physical destruction of habitats, abandonment of habitats and physiological reactions to stress related to the impacts of travel management. The widespread, detrimental impacts of human disturbance to wildlife are well documented throughout these reports. These literature sources were used in the development of the analyses for wildlife in the DEIS.

B) Including impacts to water

Response PC 3 B: It is recognized that motorized access and recreation are part of the opportunities and needs on Forest Service lands. Laws, regulations, and plans are in place to minimize impacts from motorized use. The TMP helps to address where these uses are allowed to occur. Since on the WRNF all motorized travel has to be on designated routes, better controls and mitigations can be engineered to help mitigate impacts to water. The TMP provides information to compare alternatives to balance the needs between access and water quality.

C) Including impacts to air quality

Response PC 3 C: The TMP provides an analysis of air quality. Please refer to the DEIS and SDEIS for more specific information on the impacts.

D) Including impacts to open space

Response PC 3 D: By allowing motorized travel on designated routes only, impacts to open space will be reduced.

E) Including impacts to soil

Response PC 3 E: When a route is designated for motorized use or any use for that matter, design criteria and maintenance techniques are employed to limit soil erosion and displacement.

F) Including impacts to vegetation

G) Including user conflicts

Response PC 3 G: Due to a large range of existing expectations and desires between all recreation users, the forest recognizes that the plan will not eliminate all conflicts. However, one of the travel planning process objectives is to develop a plan that will result in at least a reduction of existing use conflicts. This is often obtained through just the designation of routes and areas and establishing a clear understanding of where each use may and may not travel.

H) To comply with the OHV Rule

Response PC 3H: The TMP will comply with OHV Rule and in fact is the planning mechanism to get the WRNF aligned with the rule.

I) Including prevention of invasive exotic species

Response 3 F, I: The impacts of motorized recreation on vegetation and exotic species are identified by alternative in Chapter Three of the DEIS. The alternatives have varying degrees of impact on both native and non native plant species. Alternative E responds to the issues of managing recreation use to reduce the impacts caused by recreation on the natural resources and wildlife.

J) Including explicit application of route designation

Response PC 3 J: The travel plan will result in the designation of routes and identification of acceptable use(s) on each route for the entire summer transportation system. The plan will also identify routes and/or areas where motorized use is prohibited, restricted or allowed during the winter. The WRNF travel planning process has exceeded the application requirements as identified in the National OHV Rule.

PC 6: The White River National Forest should keep trails open for motorized recreation5-13

A) To allow people with disabilities to access the Forest

Response PC 6 A, E, J: Any wheelchair or device that meets the definition of a wheelchair is allowed anywhere people are allowed to go. The definition of a wheelchair is any device or mobility device, including one that is battery-powered that is designed solely for use by a mobility-impaired person for locomotion, and that is suitable for use in motor pedestrian areas. Federal laws, regulations and policies do not require areas that prohibit motorized use to make exceptions (minus wheelchairs) because a person has a disability. All people are to have the same opportunities meaning special compensation is not required for a person with a disability, just that they have the same opportunity i.e. is not singled out. For example the Forest Service does not have to provide a person with a disability the right to use an ATV for access to hunt, when the rest of the public is not allowed to. Under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no person with a disability can be denied participation in a Federal program that is available to other people solely because of his or her disability. In conformance with section 504, wheelchairs that meet the definition of 36 CFE 212 are welcome on all NFS lands that are open to foot travel. There is no legal requirement to allow people with disabilities to use OHVs or other motor vehicles on roads, trails, and areas closed to motor vehicular use because such an exemption would undercut the resource protection afforded by the closure and therefore could fundamentally alter the nature of the Forest Service's travel management program (7 CFR 15e.103).

B) To attract tourism

Response PC 6 B, K, M: While tourism is a main component of the local economy, tourism for the area is made up of many components and activities. Travel on the National Forest is also one component of why people come to recreate and vacation in the area. The TMP is a mechanism to plan for access and travel uses (both motorized and non-motorized) to accommodate tourists and locals alike. The TMP is not excluding motorized uses, rather providing quality and sustainable places for those uses.

C) Because fines can be used as an enforcement tool for those who do not follow the rules

Response PC 6 C: As described in the DEIS, one of the issues of the Travel Regulations currently in place is that it does not provide clear regulation about where each use can occur. While some illegal off route use has occurred intentionally, the forest recognizes that under the existing regulations, additional use has occurred as unintentionally. The Forest hopes that the development of a clear and understandable travel plan, coupled with good signage and education, will result in an increased compliance with travel regulations.

D) Because closing trails will put too many users on the trails that remain open

Response PC 6 D, F, I: In comparison to the current transportation system as shown in Alt. B, each one of the other alternatives result in an increase in the total number of system trails, including those designated open for motorized use. One of the goals of this travel planning process is to achieve a balance between the development of a transportation system that meets the current and anticipated recreation demands, as well as one that is sustainable from both an economic and a resource base.

E) Because older people and younger families use motorized travel to access to the backcountry

Response PC 6 E: See Response PC 6 A above.

F) Because public demand for off-highway vehicle opportunities increases yearly

Response PC 6 F: See above response to PC 6 D

G) Because noise standards can be enforced rather than closing trails and roads

Response PC 6 G: State and Federal laws currently exist related to noise standards and the use of vehicles, OHV's and snowmobiles on public lands. These regulations can and are enforced by both State Park and Forest Service employees as part of their law enforcement duties.

H) Because motorized travel places limited stress on wildlife

Response 6H: Travel management related impacts to wildlife vary with the volume, timing, and type of travel, the species of wildlife in the area, the habitats involved, time of day or season of year, and a myriad of other factors. Several recent literature reviews of recreation impacts to wildlife have been completed. These include, "Effects of Winter Recreation on Wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Area: A Literature Review and Assessment (Olliff et al 1999), "Effects of recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife Habitat" (Joslin and Youmans 1999) "The Environmental Impacts of Recreation: a Bibliography" (Unpubl. Report 1999), "Forest Roads: A Synthesis of Scientific Information" (Gucinski and Furniss 2000), "Wildlife and recreationists: Coexistence through management and research" (Knight and Gutzwiller 1995), and "Effects of off-road recreation on deer and elk" (Wisdom et al 2004). These exhaustive reviews of past studies contain a wealth of information concerning the impacts on wildlife of vehicular and other types of recreation use. Many of the reports cite the effects of roads on habitat fragmentation, isolation of rare and unique habitats such as bogs or alpine areas, direct effects such as collisions with animals, physical destruction of habitats, abandonment of habitats and physiological reactions to stress related to the impacts of travel management. The widespread, detrimental impacts of human disturbance to wildlife are well documented throughout these reports. These literature sources were used in the development of the analyses for wildlife in the DEIS.

I) Including preservation of snowmobiles trails and areas

Response PC 6 F: See response to PC 6 D above.

J) To comply with federal laws (ADA)

Response PC 6 J: See Response PC 6 A above.

K) Because it helps the economy

Response PC 6 K: See Response PC 6 B above.

L) To provide for scenic quality

Response PC 6 L: Scenery is an integral component of all forest settings and heavily contributes to the visitors' experience. Scenic resources vary by location and existing natural features including vegetation, water features, landform, geology, and human-made elements. All activities that forest visitors experience are performed in a scenic environment defined by the arrangement of the natural character of the landscape along with components of the built environment. Management of multiple resources has altered the natural landscape character. Management decisions are not only based on multiple use, but also providing a range of experiences across the forest for both motorized and non-motorized customers. Scenery, as well as other natural resources, must be managed in the present to maintain quality scenery for future generations and to provide a range of experiences for a variety of users of the forest.

M) Because motorized recreation is important to local communities and local economies

Response PC 6 E: See Response PC 6 B above.

PC 37: The White River National Forest should contain motorized users within designated areas.....5-15

Response PC 37: The Forest Plan identified landscape/area objectives where motorized recreation would be encouraged, allowed, restricted and/or prohibited. This travel planning process evaluates a range of alternatives while ensuring that each proposal is consistent with the objectives identified in the Forest Plan.

PC 50: The White River National Forest should add more motorized roads/trails5-16

- A) Because ATV users pay fees to the state
- B) Including singletrack
- C) Including increasing snowmobile opportunities
- D) Because motorized recreation is increasing at an 18% annual rate
- E) Including multiple-use trails
- F) Because motorized recreation provides a funding source to the Forest

Response PC 50 A - F: In comparison to the current transportation system as identified in Alternative B, each of the other alternatives result in an increase in the number of system trails, including those designated for motorized use. Alternatives C, D, and E would result in an increase to the number of system trail miles designated open to ATV's. Only Alternative E would result in a decrease in the number of system trail miles open to motorcycles. Many of the above comments focused on the need to have more trails designated open to meet recreation demands. While recreation needs are a large part of this evaluation and it is the forests goal to provide for recreation opportunities, many other factors are involved in this analysis such as existing Forest Plan, Manual and Handbook guidelines and objectives as well as minimizing impacts on other resources such as soils, watershed, vegetation and wildlife.

PC 52: The White River National Forest should restrict motorized vehicle access5-17

- A) To prevent user conflicts

Response PC 52 D: As identified in the National OHV Rule as well as the DEIS Travel Plan, one of the objectives in developing the travel plan includes the restricting of specific uses to designated routes to reduce user conflict.

- B) But not horse or hiker access as such restrictions will lead to litigation

Response PC 52 B: The WRNF currently is open unless posted closed to both horse and hiking use. Some trails and areas may be restricted due to wildlife or resource concerns, though these are likely to be very limited.

- C) Including prohibitions for summer vehicle use in winter

Response PC 52 C: The definition for over-snow vehicles is found in the Travel Management Rule for Motorized Use 2005 which is the official national definition and incorporated into the Code of Federal Regulations. The definition for *over-snow vehicles* – *a motor vehicle that is designed for use over snow and that runs on a track or tracks and/or a ski or skis while in use over snow* (§212.1). The vehicle is one that has to be designed for use over snow, in other words created originally for that intent, not retrofitted.

- D) And create guidelines for motorized use on designated trails

Response PC 52 D: The travel plan will result in the designation of all travel routes and the identification of the use/uses that each route is “open to” and “closed to”. These designations will be displayed on maps and each route will be signed as such on the ground. In addition, the forest will continue to use and distribute additional materials such as “leave no trace” and “tread lightly” to provide additional education about the appropriate use of the forest.

E) And close unauthorized routes

Response PC 52 E: The Forest Service and the WRNF agree unauthorized routes need to be closed and put back into production. Producing the TMP is one of the steps the WRNF is taking to achieve that goal. The TMP will identify the authorized system, and thus a program to close unauthorized routes can be implemented post identification and decision making of the system.

PC 192: The White River National Forest should ban motorized use in all non-motorized areas5-18

- A) To provide safer trails
- B) To preserve the backcountry experience

Response PC 192 A, B: The WRNF will identify where winter (direct response to comment) motorized activity will be allowed, restricted, and prohibited. Since non-motorized uses are allowed in most areas of the forest, there is bound to be some overlap. However, areas will also exist where the uses will be separate.

PC 239: The White River National Forest should not limit motorized vehicle access to private property near the town of Carbonate.....5-19

- A) Including the Town of Carbonate and its associated mining claims
- B) Including revisions providing summer and winter motor vehicle access on all travel routes

Response PC 239 A, B: The Forest Service is not obligated to provide PUBLIC access to private lands. Private landowners totally surrounded by Federal land have a right of access that provides for the reasonable use and enjoyment of their private property. A landowner must contact the Forest Service to perfect that right by applying for and obtaining a Special Use Authorization for the appropriate type of access. A private road easement grants the right to construct and use a road that is not part of the forest road system. The Forest Service may decide not to adopt the road to Carbonate from Forest Service Road 602 as part of their road system and the maintenance of that route could become the responsibility of the private landowners that obtain special use authorizations. In situations where access predates the Forest Service, a person can petition the County to have the road declared a historic county road.

PC 79: The White River National Forest should recognize that sheep have a greater impact on the land than OHVs vehicles driven by hunters5-19

Response PC 79: The impacts of livestock grazing are addressed in the Forest Plan and allotment specific NEPA documents. This specific issue is outside the scope of the Travel Management Plan.

PC 82: The White River National Forest should consider a permit system that allows hunters to access the trail system using OHVs5-20

- A) Including a required trail use/safety course

Response PC 82 A: Currently all OHV's operated on public lands are required to have a permit (registration) through the Colorado State Parks. This process allows the State to provide information and education to users regarding the proper use and etiquette involved with operating an OHV on public lands. The Forest also continues to provide existing education to all trail users through the dissemination of "Tread Lightly", "Leave no Trace" and "Stay the Trail" materials. It is our hope that these efforts will result in a greater number of responsible trail users.

PC 94: The White River National Forest should use concessionaires to transport winter, non-motorized users between trailheads.....5-20

Response PC 94: The issuance of a Special Use Permit to provide commercial transport services is outside the scope of this process. Depending on the type and location of proposed services, the Forest does accept and evaluate Special Use Applications on a case by case basis.

PC 109: The White River National Forest should explain how it plans to meet the needs of OHV users 5-20

Response PC 109: While it is the Forests goal to meet and provide some level of recreation opportunity for a multitude of uses, the Forest does not expect to fully meet the needs and/or expectations identified by all, if any one, use group. The level of opportunities for each group will vary depending on existing land prescriptions and objectives, resource and user conflicts and management and resource capabilities.

PC 189: The White River National Forest should establish a speed limit for OHVs 5-20

Response PC 189: The establishment of speed limits is one method of safety control the Forest Service can instill on it's roads and trails, not only for OHVs but for all vehicle use. The Forest Service engineering department is responsible for conducting safety studies and recommendations for roads. Mitigations for safety vary and will be implemented to best suit each situation. There may be times speed limits are appropriate, and thus would be posted for certain roads for all users.

PC 216: The White River National Forest should address vehicle-supported, dispersed camping 5-21

- A) Including designation of dispersed camp zones or camp spurs
- B) Including demarcation of where vehicle-dispersed camping is allowed
- C) To ensure safety
- D) Including reinstatement of the 300' vehicle-usage zone

Response PC 228: Thank you for your comment. As discussed on page 16 of the DEIS, the OHV Rule provides the Forest the opportunity to authorize the limited use of motorized vehicles within a specified distance of certain designated routes for specific activities. The Forest is currently proposing to allow motorized travel for up to 300 ft, as long as such travel does not damage the resources, for dispersed camping. It should be noted that some units have special orders in place restricting and/or prohibiting this 300 ft allowance where specific resource and/or safety concerns exist. The Forest has never and is not proposing the allowance of off route travel for the retrieval of down game.

PC 228: The White River National Forest should disallow motorized game retrieval 5-21

- A) To stop the proliferation of unauthorized routes

Response PC 228: The WRNF currently does not and will not allow motorized game retrieval.

PC 237: The White River National Forest should include "Allowed" as a motorized-use designation 5-22

Response PC 237: The WRNF winter map will show allowed, restricted (and what the restricted routes/areas are), and prohibited areas for motorized winter use. This will provide the complete picture for all WRNF System lands.

PC 290: The White River National Forest should clarify motorized vehicle classes 5-22

- A) Such as the classes that include motorcycles
- B) Including non-highway, legal full-sized motorized vehicle

Response PC 237 A, B: For the travel management plan and the subsequent Motor Vehicle Use Map to be produced subsequently after the plan, legal definitions are based on those found in CFR regulations, State laws, and Forest Service manuals and handbooks. The TMP includes the definitions used for the various motorized vehicles the plan is setting direction for.

Winter Motorized Recreation _____ **5-22**
PC 319: The White River National Forest should stop reducing winter motorized opportunities **5-22**

Response PC 319: See response to PC 89 below

PC 89: The White River National Forest should continue to allow snowmobile access **5-24**

- A) Because area closures should only be allowed when supported by clear and accurate site-specific scientific analysis
- B) To all areas of the forest
- C) Because there are management options, such as emissions controls, that can be used instead of closures to deal with problems that snowmobiles might cause
- D) Because restrictions should only be required where significant wildlife or wildlife habitat would be damaged

Response PC 89 D: Travel management related impacts to wildlife vary with the volume, timing, and type of travel, the species of wildlife in the area, the habitats involved, time of day or season of year, and a myriad of other factors. Several recent literature reviews of recreation impacts to wildlife have been completed. These include, "Effects of Winter Recreation on Wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Area: A Literature Review and Assessment (Olliff et al 1999), "Effects of recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife Habitat" (Joslin and Youmans 1999) "The Environmental Impacts of Recreation: a Bibliography" (Unpubl. Report 1999),"Forest Roads: A Synthesis of Scientific Information" (Gucinski and Furniss 2000), "Wildlife and recreationists: Coexistence through management and research" (Knight and Gutzwiller 1995), and "Effects of off-road recreation on deer and elk" (Wisdom et al 2004). These exhaustive reviews of past studies contain a wealth of information concerning the impacts on wildlife of vehicular and other types of recreation use. Many of the reports cite the effects of roads on habitat fragmentation, isolation of rare and unique habitats such as bogs or alpine areas, direct effects such as collisions with animals, physical destruction of habitats, abandonment of habitats and physiological reactions to stress related to the impacts of travel management. The widespread, detrimental impacts of human disturbance to wildlife are well documented throughout these reports. The Forest Plan includes standards and guidelines designed to assure the Forest is properly managing for lynx and lynx habitat needs. Several of these standards and guidelines specifically address restrictions on public winter access, including snowmobile access.

- E) Because snowmobile use can be separated both visually and audibly from cross-country ski areas
- F) Because snowmobiles have minimal environmental impact
- G) Because snowmobilers can police and maintain the trails independently
- H) Including use in play areas

Response PC 319, PC 89 A, B, C, E, F, G: The baseline for identifying the range of winter recreation opportunities was established as part of the White River Forest Plan Revision in 2002. The Forest Plan identified a variety of landscapes and winter management goals, objectives, standards and guidelines and prescriptions based on a wide range of factors such as wildlife habitat, soil, air, water and land resources as well as to provide for a range of recreation opportunities. The travel plan DEIS identifies a range of winter travel alternatives that comply with the Forest Plan document as well as other existing rules, regulations and directives.

PC 197: The White River National Forest should limit snowmobile access **5-28**

- A) To preserve natural, quiet conditions
- B) Through implementing safety restrictions for snowmobile users

Response PC 197 B: While this travel plan DEIS evaluates various modes of travel on the full range of identified routes and/or areas. The primary decision identifies each route and "what" form

of travel may occur on each route. It will also identify “when” such travel may occur. However, the establishment of new legal regulations regarding “who” is allowed to operate each type of equipment is outside the scope of this decision.

- C) Using boundaries based on topographic features
- D) To designated routes only

Response PC 197 A, C, D: As identified in the above response to PC 89, the 2002 Forest Plan is the baseline used to establish winter travel plan alternatives. The Forest Plan identified a variety of landscapes and winter management goals, objectives, standards and guidelines and prescriptions based on a wide range of factors such as wildlife habitat, soil, air, water and land resources as well as to provide for a range of recreation opportunities. Each alternative identifies areas where winter motorized travel would be allowed, restricted or prohibited. The delineation of each area included the use of ridges, drainages and other landmarks that would facilitate the ability for users to identify the boundaries “on-the-ground”. While motorized travel would be allowed throughout the designated “open” areas, travel within the “restricted areas” would be restricted to designated routes.

- E) To protect wildlife

Response PC 197 E: Travel management related impacts to wildlife vary with the volume, timing, and type of travel, the species of wildlife in the area, the habitats involved, time of day or season of year, and a myriad of other factors. Several recent literature reviews of recreation impacts to wildlife have been completed. These include, “Effects of Winter Recreation on Wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Area: A Literature Review and Assessment (Olliff et al 1999), “Effects of recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife Habitat” (Joslin and Youmans 1999) “The Environmental Impacts of Recreation: a Bibliography” (Unpubl. Report 1999), “Forest Roads: A Synthesis of Scientific Information” (Gucinski and Furniss 2000), “Wildlife and recreationists: Coexistence through management and research” (Knight and Gutzwiller 1995), and “Effects of off-road recreation on deer and elk” (Wisdom et al 2004). These exhaustive reviews of past studies contain a wealth of information concerning the impacts on wildlife of vehicular and other types of recreation use. Many of the reports cite the effects of roads on habitat fragmentation, isolation of rare and unique habitats such as bogs or alpine areas, direct effects such as collisions with animals, physical destruction of habitats, abandonment of habitats and physiological reactions to stress related to the impacts of travel management. The widespread, detrimental impacts of human disturbance to wildlife are well documented throughout these reports. The Forest Plan includes standards and guidelines designed to assure the Forest is properly managing for lynx and lynx habitat needs. Several of these standards and guidelines specifically address restrictions on public winter access, including snowmobile access.

- F) To protect water resources

Response PC 197 F: Impacts from winter motorized activities on water are disclosed in the effects analysis.

PC 98: The White River National Forest should address adverse impacts caused by snowmobiles5-29

- A) Including impacts To water quality
- B) Including impacts to air quality
- C) Including impacts to soil quality
- D) Including impacts to vegetation
- E) Including impacts to elk

Response PC 98 A - E: Chapter 3 of the DEIS included analyses for both summer and winter travel activities. Analyses are preformed to measure impacts. These are evaluated at the forest level as that is the scale of the project. Mitigations are proposed when necessary. Analyses are

unbiased and not based on whether people want or do not want a certain activity to occur on Forest System lands.

PC 148: The White River National Forest should identify routes and areas where over-snow vehicle use will be restricted or prohibited5-29

- A) Because application of the OHV Rule to snowmobiles is optional
- B) Because there is conflicting text in the Plan regarding the use of the Motor Vehicle Use Map and the OHV Rule

Response PC 148 A, B: The use of the Motor Vehicle Use Rule for winter though optional reflects the course the WRNF was taking when it undertook the TMP. Therefore creating a MVUM map for winter use is a logical product that will be able to be produced from the TMP. While the comment seemed to be confused on why the TMP also displays where winter over-snow vehicles are allowed, the reasoning follows that if one displays where use is restricted or prohibited, what is left is where use is allowed. To display allowed open areas, restricted areas and the routes where use is allowed within, and the prohibited areas gives the complete picture (map) for all WRNF System lands for motorized winter travel.

PC 155: The White River National Forest should provide a more accurate description of "practical areas" for snowmobiling5-30

- A) Because the current description shows a lack of understanding of how and when snowmobiles are used

Response PC 155 A: As indicated in the DEIS, the Forest Recognizes that travel may and does exist through areas that were not identified as part of the "practical" acres. The mapping of these "practical" areas was NOT done to develop or propose winter travel boundaries nor has the Forest suggested that these areas be evaluated as such. This exercise was done to demonstrate that, while both motorized and non-motorized use may occur over the entire forest landscape, the majority of the use occurs in much smaller "practical areas". This demonstrates that, independent on the total "available" acres, due to access limitations, winter use will likely be concentrated in a much smaller percentage than the total available acres. Due to this situation, the forest recognizes that it is difficult to meet all the expectations of each winter recreation use.

PC 158: The White River National Forest should consider that some of the public does not consider a roadless area closed to snowmobiles5-31

Response PC 158: Under current direction (2001 Roadless Rule) inventoried roadless areas are not closed to snowmobiles. Non-motorized winter areas are based on many factors including direction outlined in the Forest Plan, recreation management needs, and resource protection measures such as effects to wildlife.

PC 310: The White River National Forest should encourage the motorized industry to adopt more stringent noise and emission standards5-31

- A) To reduce user conflicts

Response PC 310 A: Currently, there are some national as well as state regulations in place regarding noise and emissions on motorized equipment. Forest employees do conduct inspections and enforcement related to existing standards. In addition, nationally, the forest service continues to work with industry to identify issues and provide recommendations regarding the reduction of noise and emissions on a variety of equipment that is used on National Forest System lands.

PC 321: The White River National Forest should not attempt to corral snowmobilers into concentrated areas5-31

A) Because it decreases the quality of the experience

Response PC 321, A: The proposed plan identifies areas that are open, restricted or closed to winter motorized use. Many of the “closed” or “restricted” areas were identified to protect either wildlife habitat or to provide an area for a non-motorized experience. The “open” areas are fairly large areas where winter motorized travel can occur throughout the entire area without the feeling of being “corralled”.

Mountain Biking5-32

PC 8: The White River National Forest should keep trails open to mountain biking5-32

- A) Because mountain biking is important for tourism
- B) Because mountain biking causes less disturbance and damage than other uses
- C) Because vacationers will go elsewhere if trails are closed
- D) Because there are not sufficient resources to create a dedicated trail system
- E) Including user-created, non-system trails
- F) Because mountain bikers are courteous and cooperative
- G) Because environmental impacts are minimal
- H) Because trail closure will cause crowding
- I) Because mountain bikers contribute to trail maintenance
- J) Including singletrack trails
- K) Because it is unfair to have some trails closed exclusively to mountain bikers
- L) Because overall, mountain bikers respect the rules and stay on trails

Response PC 8, A – L: Like other recreation uses, the Forest recognizes the need and importance of providing mountain bike opportunities on the White River National Forest. While the Forest understands and agrees with the many of the above statements, there are numerous other factors involved in the evaluation of each route and use designation. Other factors involve compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, resource and economic capabilities, existing and/or potential conflicts and public input such as the ones identified above.

PC 16: The White River National Forest should continue to provide opportunities for a broad spectrum of mountain bike riding abilities5-35

- A) and educate allowing all users on how to share trails harmoniously
- B) Including opportunities for dual track and single track users

Response PC 16, A, B: The above response to PC 8 identifies the Forests recognition, goal and the evaluation involved in providing opportunities for trail uses, including Mountain Bikes. The Forest agrees with the importance of and will continue to focus efforts on the education of all trail users regarding the need to share trails. While the forest will look at opportunities to provide a range of experiences for each use type, to ensure that the travel plan is compatible with other resource objectives, it is impossible to expect that the forest will provide for all experiences in all areas.

PC 20: The White River National Forest should recognize that mountain biking is an integral source of recreation in the State of Colorado.....5-35

Response PC 20: The Forest recognizes that all trail uses are an integral source of recreation in Colorado as well as on the White River National Forest. The goal of this travel planning process is to identify areas and routes that are most conducive for each travel use to promote a quality, safe and resource compatible transportation system.

PC 29: The White River National Forest should restrict mountain bike use 5-35

- A) To protect wildlife
- B) To prevent user conflicts

Response PC 29 A, B: As identified in the response to PC 8, the Forest recognizes that all the recreation trail uses are valid uses of the National Forest and the need exists to provide opportunities for each. However, these opportunities need to be allowed, restricted and prohibited in accordance with existing Forest plans and objectives, in a manner that is compatible with other resources, as well as other uses on the National Forest.

PC 40: The White River National Forest should recognize that mountain biking is a very destructive activity 5-36

- A) Because it accelerates erosion
- B) Because it creates V-shaped ruts.
- C) Because it widens trails

Response 40 A, B, C: The WRNF recognizes that trails can produce negative effects such as erosion and water diversion when not properly maintained, designed, and managed. That is one of the main reasons for designating a mechanized trail system. By designating a trail system and only allowing mountain bikes to be allowed where designated the Forest Service can then invest in properly designing and maintaining these trails

- D) Because it kills small animals and plants
- E) Because it disturbs wildlife
- F) Because it fragments habitats and ecosystems

Response 40 D, E, F: Travel management related impacts to wildlife vary with the volume, timing, and type of travel, the species of wildlife in the area, the habitats involved, time of day or season of year, and a myriad of other factors. Several recent literature reviews of recreation impacts to wildlife have been completed. Effects are addressed in Chapter 3. Many studies have concentrated on roads and motorized use, and the effects to wildlife. More and more studies are also being conducted for non-motorize uses as well including mountain bikes. Overall human interaction with wildlife can be recognized as having some impacts. The amount and degree depends on uses, timing, and volume.

PC 41: The White River National Forest should acknowledge that mountain biking has a greater impact on the environment than hiking does 5-36

- A) Because mountain bikers cover larger distances than hikers
- B) Because mountain biking adversely affects wildlife
- C) Because mountain biking is one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities

Response PC 41 A, B, C: Numerous studies have been conducted attempting to quantify the impacts of each recreational trail use on the environment. While arguments can be made for and against each activity, the forest believes each one can create impacts and the severity of those impacts will vary dependent on a number of factors such as the type of soil, time, and frequency of use as well as the existing type and condition of trail structures. The evaluation of each route takes many of these factors into account and attempts to recommend uses that the forest feels is compatible with the existing trail condition.

PC 42: The White River National Forest should recognize that mountain biking may conflict with other uses of the Forest 5-38

- A) Because some mountain bikers seek excitement and risk while other users seek relaxation from their use of the forest

Response PC 42, A: The forest realizes that each user group is made up of a variety of individuals with a range of expectations and objectives for their recreation experience. While the DEIS identifies that “goal interference” can often occur between user groups, this can also occur between members of the same group. While the forest cannot expect to provide for all expectations in all areas, the forest feels that there exists enough variety within the transportation system to provide a variety of experiences for each group across the entire forest.

PC 43: The White River National Forest should research whether allowing mountain bikes on trails will result in the overuse of trails 5-38

Response PC 42: While it is implausible for the Forest to conduct research on every route to determine the likelihood of overuse, the Forest is aware of existing routes where current use meets or exceeds the trails capacity as well as other routes where overuse may occur in the foreseeable future. It is on those routes that the Forest will evaluate alternatives to reduce the likelihood of overuse. While limiting the trail to a specific trail group is one option, there are also other possible methods to accomplish this goal such as limiting improvements on certain access roads, limiting parking space at trailheads or limiting or reducing other associated amenities.

PC 46: The White River National Forest should recognize that movement rates and probabilities of flight responses of elk resulting from encounters with OHV use and mountain biking are greater than similar encounters with horseback riding and hiking 5-38

PC 179: The White River National Forest should refer to and regulate mountain biking as non-motorized recreation 5-39

- A) Because mountain bikes have the same effect on trails and wildlife as hikers
- B) Because mountain biking is quiet, low-impact, and human-powered
- C) Because mountain biking is distinct from motorized use

Response PC 179 A, B, C: The comments included concern that Mountain Bikes were being lumped into the same category as motorcycles and recommended using only two classifications of trail users, motorized and non-motorized. While all uses share some commonalities in their reason for recreating on the National Forest, the Forest recognizes that Mountain Bike use is different than Motorcycle use in that they often have differing goals, expectations and impacts on the resources. The same can be stated between ATV and Motorcycle use as well as Mountain Bike and Horse use, etc. The forest feels that there are obvious differences between each trail user group and the Forest will continue to identify and make designations accordingly.

Non-Motorized Recreation 5-40

PC 11: The White River National Forest should keep the trails open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians 5-40

- A) Including trails around the ski mountains of the Vail Valley
- B) Because maintaining separate trails is costly

Response PC 11 A, B: The attitude and willingness to share the trail is appreciated and too much extent, supported by the Forest Service. The goal of the plan is to evaluate and determine the appropriate use and/or uses for each route, including all motorized and non-motorized uses. The evaluation includes the analysis of many factors such as compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, trail standards, specifications and objectives, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, existing and/or potential conflicts and public input. While the level of shared use vs. separation of uses fluctuates between each alternative, all alternatives identify some routes designated for a multitude of trail uses and other routes designated for a limited type of use(s). Although the extent varies between alternatives, each alternative identifies trail systems or parts thereof where users will need to “share the trail”.

PC 12: The White River National Forest should keep trails open to bikes and hikers, but closed to horses 5-41

- A) Because horses pose more dangers to other trail users
- B) Because horse waste is not removed from the trail

Response PC 12 A, B: While the above concerns about allowing horse travel have been noted, the Forest recognizes and understands that each type of trail use may result in specific resource impacts and concerns to other trail users. The forest also recognizes that each trail use is an acceptable use on the National Forest and, through this planning process, is trying to develop an appropriate transportation system for each use.

PC 24: The White River National Forest should prioritize the preservation of natural areas, wildlife habitat, and opportunities for non-motorized uses 5-41

Response PC 24: The forest identified four different alternatives for evaluation in the DEIS. Based on the content of this letter, the writer is in support of Alternative E, where the forest places more emphasis on the preservation and protection of the natural resources.

PC 97: The White River National Forest should designate more areas for non-motorized winter use 5-42

- A) Because areas have been disproportionately allocated to motorized use
- B) Because non-motorized users outnumber motorized users
- C) To minimize conflicts and provide for public safety
- D) To preserve the tranquility of the forest
- E) Including larger buffer zones that exclude motorized uses
- F) To mitigate habitat fragmentation
- G) To preserve the winter backcountry experience
- H) Because non-motorized inventories were based on inaccurate information
- I) as a result of a rigorous analysis of physical resource limitations

Response PC 97 A – E, G - I: The Forest Plan identified areas where winter motorized travel was emphasized, limited and/or prohibited. As discussed in the DEIS, these areas, as identified in the Forest Plan were used to provide the baseline, Alternative B, for the winter travel management planning process. To be consistent with the National OHV Rule, these areas are referred to in the Travel Plan DEIS as allowed, restricted and prohibited. The 2002 Forest Planning efforts resulted in a decrease of winter motorized use acreage from 1,197,000 to 941,000. Alternatives C, D, and E in the Travel Plan DEIS all demonstrate a reduction in the number of acres open to winter motorized travel when compared to Alternative B.

Response PC 97 F: The Forest evaluated the existing levels of snow compaction in the 2002 Forest Plan. The Forest recognizes the potential for reduced lynx prey from competing predators due to snow compaction providing increased access. One of the Terms and Conditions in the Biological Opinion for the plan required the Forest to develop a baseline snow compaction map of existing routes and play areas. This map was submitted to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Forest Plan contains a guideline that limits increases in designated snow routes and play areas to “no net gain” within each Lynx Analysis Area. This guideline does not apply to general dispersed recreation uses, but does give the Forest increased management of commercial and permitted uses. As a portion of the Forest Plan approximately 84,000 acres of the Forest was designated in Forested Landscape Linkage areas to provide for habitat security areas for large carnivores and other wildlife species. These areas have specific desired conditions and standards and guidelines that provide for the maintenance of security habitats for these species in important areas on the Forest. Any seasonal specific closures will be evaluated during the development of the final document.

J) And ensure funds for enforcement of restrictions on winter motorized use

Response PC 97 J: While education and enforcement are both important components to the future success of the travel plan, the enforcement of winter travel regulations are often more challenging than summer since “area boundaries” are more difficult to sign and/or define and are less distinguishable to users when the terrain is covered in snow. Selecting boundaries that are discernable during the winter and placing a high focus on education will be instrumental to achieving a high rate of compliance with the winter travel plan.

PC 166: The White River National Forest should prohibit mechanized use of wilderness areas and close some areas to equine and livestock use.....5-45

Response PC 166: Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.16, all motorized and mechanized use is prohibited in a national forest wilderness. Overall, foot and horse travel will not be restricted to designated routes. However, the forest has proposed a few trails that would be designated for foot travel only based on specific resource and/or safety issues.

PC 167: The White River National Forest should provide for the needs of winter, non-motorized users5-45

- A) Because traditional users are being displaced by snowmobiles
- B) To preserve quiet, backcountry experiences for skiers/snowshoers
- C) Including enforcement of restrictions on motorized, winter travel
- D) Because snowmobiles are incompatible with non-motorized uses

Response PC 167 A - D: The Forest Plan identified areas where winter motorized travel was emphasized, limited and/or prohibited. As discussed in the DEIS, these areas, as identified in the Forest Plan were used to provide the baseline, Alternative B, for the winter travel management planning process. To be consistent with the National OHV Rule, these areas are referred to in the Travel Plan DEIS as allowed, restricted and prohibited. The 2002 Forest Planning efforts resulted in a decrease of winter motorized use acreage from 1,197,000 to 941,000. Alternatives C, D, and E in the Travel Plan DEIS all demonstrate a reduction in the number of acres open to winter motorized travel when compared to Alternative B.

E) To protect air quality

Response PC 167 E: The effects section discusses air quality due to motorized use. There is recognition of close proximity effects due to emissions from snowmobiles. The TMP by designating areas for non-motorized use hopes to accommodate those users who want to have a non-motorized winter experience away from snowmobiles.

- F) Including user education
- G) To promote social equity

Response PC 167 F, G: The WRNF will take a very aggressive approach to user education for all levels of recreation use. Emphasis will not only be on where the appropriate user should go but also on proper etiquette among users. Though many feel it is their right to certain uses and non-uses of Forest Service lands, social equity in a proper sense should recognize that the Forest Service lands were set aside for ALL citizens. That does not mean that every parcel will be divided to accommodate every citizen rather experiences and lands set aside as public lands will be utilized to meet the overall mission for which they were set aside for and meet needs of the public at large.

H) Because access points are placed too far from huts

Response PC 167 H: The comment expressed concern about the Forest’s demonstration of “practical” areas because skiers often recreate more than the 3 miles away from access points. As indicated in the DEIS, the Forest recognizes that use does and will continue to occur in some of the areas that were not identified as “practical”. The analysis was an attempt to demonstrate the

areas that were most “commonly” used by all winter recreational users and demonstrate that there is a limited amount of area available for the “average” winter recreation user, both motorized and non-motorized, primarily due to the fact that there is less vehicle access to dispersal points during the winter months.

- I) Including incorporation of practical, winter-use areas

Response PC 167 I: This comment identified support for the winter practical use analysis. Your support is appreciated. See the above response to PC 167 H for additional information regarding the analysis.

PC 168: The White River National Forest should restrict expansion of ski areas into undeveloped backcountry areas.....5-47

- A) Because winter backcountry users are increasing

Response PC 168: The forest recognizes your concern. However, the evaluation of ski area improvements and/or an expansion would be conducted through a totally separate NEPA analysis and is outside the scope of this travel plan DEIS.

PC 198: The White River National Forest should emphasize the forest's non-motorized recreation niche5-48

- A) Including wilderness trail management for horses and hikers
 B) Including exclusion of mountain biking from the motorized management category
 C) To control potential resource or user harm
 D) To benefit wildlife
 E) Including the preservation of singletrack
 F) Including developed recreation proximal to communities
 G) Including an alternative that better fits the forest's non-motorized backcountry niche

Response PC 198 A – G: As identified in the DEIS, there are many factors that are involved in the evaluation of each route designation. Existing management objectives and strategies as identified in the Forest Plan, the Forest Recreation Strategy, ROS classifications and other guidelines in manuals, handbooks and CFR's, resource impacts and improvements, are incorporated into this evaluation. The alternatives identify a range of acceptable uses that could occur for each route and area while still being meeting the above objectives.

PC 287: The White River National Forest should allow all non-motorized users to have access to all non-motorized trails5-49

- A) Including mountain bikes being limited to existing trails

Response PC 287: The DEIS does identify that in all alternatives, mechanized use, including mountain bikes, will be restricted to designated routes as directed by the Forest Plan. The evaluation to determine which routes will be included as part of the forest transportation system as well as the type of use(s) allowed on each route includes the analysis of many factors. Factors include compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, existing trail specifications, standards and objectives, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, resource and economic capabilities, existing and/or potential conflicts with other uses as well as the public input received in response to this DEIS. While it is safe to assume that many of the “non-motorized” routes outside of wilderness will be designated for mountain bike travel, it is also safe to assume that mountain bike travel on some routes will simply not be compatible with some of the above factors.

PC 307: The White River National Forest should take into consideration in the final Travel Management Plan that winter hut users prefer to have a quiet experience when traveling from hut to hut 5-49

Response PC 307: Thank you for your comment. The Forest recognizes the desire of backcountry skiers to have a “quiet” experience and, through the designation of motorized “allowed”, “restricted” and “open” areas, the forest will be able to clearly identify areas which each type of user group can go to acquire their desired experience.

PC 327: The White River National Forest should direct non-motorized users into wilderness areas 5-49

A) To provide a quiet, recreational experience

Response PC 327: The concept of “directing” non-motorized users into the wilderness could compromise the identified objectives of some of the wilderness lands. While non-motorized, non-mechanized recreation is a viable use in the wilderness, wilderness lands are also separated into different compartments, each with a variety of objectives. The objective of some wilderness lands, such as MA 1.11 areas, do not include the designation of Forest Development Trails, even for hiking, and the forest does not wish to “promote” a higher level of recreation. The “directing” of use to these areas would be in conflict with existing management goals and direction.

Equestrian Recreation 5-50

PC 39: The White River National Forest should keep trails open for horse and stock use 5-50

- A) Because trails can be shared by multiple users
- B) Because horses allow trail access to disabled individuals
- C) Because some people need horses for transportation and to carry personal gear
- D) Because of the "Right to Ride" bill now before Congress
- E) Because of the economic benefit
- F) Because horses provide search and rescue
- G) Because horses keep the trails open and properly maintained
- H) Because the National Forest is required to serve the public
- I) Because any closure of the National Forest to horses sets a bad precedent for other areas
- J) Because elderly people use horses to access the National Forest
- K) Because horseback riders offer volunteers to help the Forest Service
- L) Because urban growth has increased usage in National Forests
- M) Because horses do not damage the environment
- N) Including signs and user education
- O) Because horse use is historical and part of our heritage
- P) Because closure will result in litigation
- Q) Because any harm that horses do to the environment can be mitigated
- R) Because there is no evidence to suggest horses spread weeds
- S) Including designation of appropriate routes
- T) Because the proposed closures are not justified
- U) Because the prohibition of horses must comply with NFMA and NEPA
- V) Including where cattle are allowed

Response PC 39 A - V: The Forest understands and recognizes the validity of some of the above statements, concerns and rationale expressed against route closures to horses. It should be noted that the majority of these comments have also been expressed by every other user group who recreates on the Forest. While the Forest supports and intends to provide opportunities for all recreational uses on the Forest, it also recognizes that all uses cannot be accommodated on every Forest acre and/or route. Specific to horse travel, the DEIS does not propose to restrict travel to designated routes. In addition to being allowed to travel across the forest landscape, in each

alternative, the forest proposes to designate the vast majority of routes as open to horses. There do exist a few routes, as identified in the DEIS, as "hiker only". These routes are being evaluated as such due to specifically identified issues such as existing safety and/or resource concerns.

PC 51: The White River National Forest should recognize the importance of stock use 5-54

- A) Because it will be a loss to the public, and other public land users
- B) Because stock users pay taxes too
- C) Because it stimulates economic activity
- D) Because it provides a resource for recreation
- E) Because it sets a precedent for other areas

Response PC 51: Please see the above response to PC 39

PC 74: The White River National Forest should make the public aware of the economic benefit that the horse industry provides..... 5-55

Response PC 74: The WRNF does recognize the contribution of the horse industry as well as all other recreation uses that occur on the forest. The WRNF fully accommodates horse use across National Forest System lands and therefore would not have an effect on the equestrian economy.

PC 76: The White River National Forest should allow horseback riding but make all other forms of access illegal 5-55

Response PC 76: While the forest recognizes that the use of horses is a valid and acceptable use on the Forest, it also recognizes the importance of providing opportunities for all recreation trail uses. This evaluation will help the forest determine routes that should be included within the Forest Transportation system as well the use(s) each route will accommodate. These determinations are based on a variety of factors such as compatibility with existing land prescriptions and/or designations, existing trail specifications, standards and objectives, impacts to the resource, wildlife objectives, safety, resource and economic capabilities, existing and/or potential conflicts with other uses as well as the public input received in response to this DEIS.

PC 99: The White River National Forest should consider creating a cooperative program with horsemen and horsewomen patrolling the Forest to identify problems 5-55

Response PC 99: Thank you for your suggestion and interest in providing assistance. The Forest is always interested in partnering with volunteers interested in providing help and assistance on the National Forest. Interested individuals, groups and/or organizations are always welcome to contact their local forest unit to discuss these opportunities further.

PC 100: The White River National Forest should consider installing trail signs that instruct horseback riders to dismount and move their mounts' droppings to the side of the trail 5-56

Response PC 100: The forest agrees that the education of all trail users is an important component to the successful implementation of this travel plan. In addition to providing maps, signs and other information on the ground, the forest will continue to develop, promote and distribute additional educational materials regarding proper trail etiquette.

PC 101: The White River National Forest should limit the size of outfitter groups 5-56

- A) Because most damage to trails is caused by large outfitter groups, not individual horse riders

Response PC 101 A: Outfitters providing a service on the National Forest are required to have a Special Use Permit that is issued and administered by forest personnel. These permits include a

variety of clauses or stipulations that the outfitter must adhere to. Many of these clauses are specifically related to the protection of forest resources. In addition, permits identify the amount of commercial use that the outfitter may provide in each area. In addition to identifying the total number of service or client days an outfitter may provide, outfitters are also often limited further by the maximum number of clients and stock that can on the forest at one time.

PC 133: The White River National Forest should not link horseback travel with motorized and mechanized travel 5-56

A) Because horseback travel is far more similar to foot travel

Response PC 133 A: The comment identified support for the forest’s use of individual categories for all five summer recreation trail uses. The forest agrees that each user group often has differing goals and expectations and that each type of use may result in a different type of impact to the resources. Therefore, the forest agrees that each use should be evaluated and analyzed as a separate type of use in the DEIS.

PC 165: The White River National Forest should ban horse travel in all wilderness areas 5-56

A) Because horses take away from the wilderness experience

Response PC 133 A: Like all recreational trail uses, the forest recognizes horse use as a valid use of the White River National Forest and will continue to provide opportunities for such use. This evaluation will help identify routes where each use is compatible with the resource, as well as other uses. The evaluation will help determine areas/routes that are compatible for each use as well as where each use should be restricted and/or prohibited.

User Education 5-57

PC 227: The White River National Forest should increase user education 5-57

A) Including an outdoor learning partnership with accredited educational providers

Response PC 227 A: The comment specifically identified the need to provide special use permits for educational activities. While the forest does issue and administer a number of permits, many of which as “Semi-Institutional” outfitter permits, to facilitate the education of the public, the issuance of special use permits is outside the scope of this analysis.

- B) To protect wetlands
- C) To maintain natural resources

Response 227 B, C: Educating the public is a very import aspect of what the Forest Service does and hopes to continue to do as part of implementing the Travel Management Plan as well as other activities across the forest. Several articles and documentaries have helped educate the public as to what good land stewardship is.

D) Including signs addressing user-created routes

Response PC 227 D: The comment focused on providing education to the public about the resource damage resulting from “user created” trails. The forest appreciates your suggestion and agrees that education is an important component to reducing the creation of unauthorized routes in the future.

User Conflict **5-58**

PC 18: The White River National Forest should design guidelines that reduce user conflict and provide singletrack5-58

- A) Including keeping open existing trails to reduce motivation of unauthorized trail building

Response PC 18 A: Existing trail design standards, specifications, and objectives are one of the components involved in evaluating and identifying the forest transportation alternatives. By restricting travel to designated routes and by clearly identifying the allowable and prohibited uses for each route, the forest is optimistic that the plan will result in a reduction of unauthorized trail building activities.

PC 32: The White River National Forest should recognize that motorized recreation is incompatible with non-motorized uses5-58

- A) Because motorcycles and ATVs destroy trails and roads
 B) Because of safety issues
 C) Because of destruction to the environment

Response PC 32 A, B, C: The forest recognizes that each recreation trail user group may have differing goals and expectations regarding their forest experience. The forest also acknowledges that not all uses are compatible, either from a resource and/or social perspective, for each route. In addition to proposing routes as part of the forest transportation system, the DEIS identifies a range of acceptable uses for each route. Depending on the alternative, the Forest has identified some routes where motorized and non-motorized will be separated, and others that will require the users to continue to “share the trail”.

- D) Because non-motorized users like a quiet backcountry experience
 E) Including skiers and snowmobiles

Response PC 32 D, E: Similar to the above response to PC 32 A, B and C, the forest has evaluated and proposed some winter areas where uses will be separated and other areas that will remain open for a multitude of recreational uses.

PC 45: The White River National Forest should recognize that any decrease in conflict between mountain bikers and hikers will likely be a result of hikers avoiding trails used by bikers, not a result of the two user groups becoming more familiar with each other5-59

Response PC 45: While the forest agrees that conflicts will decrease through the separation of trail users, since all proposed alternatives identify some routes that will remain open to multiple uses, the forest hopes that continued education will result in an acceptance to “share the trail”.

PC 121: The White River National Forest should monitor recreational user conflict5-59

- A) Because monitoring is required by CFR 212.57
 B) Including annual evaluation of recreation use and conflicts
 C) Including triggers to determine when thresholds have been met
 D) Including conflicts between snowmobilers and skiers/snowshoers

Response PC 121 A, B, C: As documented in the DEIS, upon the completion of this evaluation and with the issuance of a final travel management plan, the forest will develop a travel management implementation and monitoring plan. In addition to providing guidance on the implementation process, monitoring will identify and recommend future changes, either to the implementation plan or to the travel plan itself.

PC 152: The White River National Forest should remove skiers using snowmobiles to access backcountry areas as a conflict issue 5-60

- A) Because this is only a conflict when these non-motorized users try to eliminate, influence, or control motorized use on those motorized trails

Response PC 152 A: See Response below for PC 322.

PC 229: The White River National Forest should recognize "separation of use" as a necessity in some areas 5-60

- A) To reduce conflict

Response PC 229 A: The comment provided support for the separation of uses. The DEIS provided four alternatives for the public to review. Alternative D was formulated to emphasize the separation of uses when possible.

PC 322: The White River National Forest should better outline conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users 5-60

- A) Because this is only a conflict when these non-motorized users try to eliminate, influence, or control motorized use on those motorized trails

Response PC 152 A and PC 322 A: The travel plan DEIS is proposing to establish areas where winter motorized travel will be allowed, restricted or prohibited. By designating and identifying each area, non-motorized users will be able to know where they can go for a non-motorized experience. If they choose to recreate in one of the other areas, they will do so with the understanding and expectation of encountering motorized use. The Forest will try to better describe the winter recreation alternatives in the subsequent draft plan.

Chapter 6. Public Lands Management 6-1

PC 1: The White River National Forest should protect roadless areas6-1

- A) Because there is little public support for more road-building
- B) Because of legal ramifications
- C) Including relocation of motorized trails outside of roadless areas

Response PC 1 A, B, C: The WRNF TMP does not propose any new road or the adoption of any user-created roads in roadless areas. There are some motorized trails in some of the roadless areas that are proposed, some that have been traditionally used and some that lead to motorized networks. There are some motorized trails that are also proposed to become non-motorized in roadless areas. The next DEIS will continue to take a hard look at all the proposals in inventoried roadless areas.

PC 60: The White River National Forest should use key indicators and measures for roadless area management.....6-1

Response PC 60: The following key indicator was used for inventoried roadless areas. It is a measurable indicator that can be used to compare alternatives:

..... Solitude and remoteness in roadless areas: Measured in total motorized trail miles

PC 84: The White River National Forest should not create any new wilderness areas6-2

- A) Because wilderness areas restrict most forms of recreation
- B) Because wilderness areas are being created without representation
- C) Because the forest needs to be managed
- D) Including roadless areas

PC 113: The White River National Forest should let Congress designate wilderness6-2

Response PC 84 and PC 113: The decision for wilderness designation and inventoried roadless areas (including management direction) is outside the scope of the TMP. Only congress has the authority to designate wilderness. The TMP will be designed to recognize the rules and regulations in place for wilderness and inventoried roadless areas, along with the current boundary designations for these areas.

PC 145: The White River National Forest should allow for adjustment of the interim directives if roadless areas are managed as "de facto" wilderness with respect to recreational user needs6-3

Response PC 145: Rules and regulations for the designation and management of inventoried roadless areas are outside the scope of the TMP.

PC 196: The White River National Forest should improve accessibility to public lands6-3

- A) To improve public health

Response PC 196: The Forest Service recognizes the need for people to be able to access public lands. The Forest Service also recognizes the need for access points to be done in a responsibly including encouraging legal access as well as in ways that do not create resource damage. The alternatives presented trails and points of access to those trails so that these needs could be met and as stated in the comment "make it more attractive ...experience the beauty of our public lands."

Access is open as far as foot and horse travel, mountain bikes, and motorized travel do have to seek points of access. This best meets the needs as stated above.

PC 202: The White River National Forest should identify management prescriptions on adjoining public lands 6-3

- A) To evaluate compatibility of travel routes
- B) To promote regulatory consistency across management boundary

Response PC 202 A, B: The WRNF did work with it's neighbors and will continue to do so for travel management for adjoining public lands. The WRNF is using this information to help design the travel system and be more consistent, provide opportunities perhaps not met elsewhere, or because certain opportunities are provided elsewhere able to provide other types of opportunities.

- Damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources;
- Harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats;
- Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands; and
- Conflicts among different classes of motor vehicle uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring Federal lands.
- In addition, the responsible official shall consider
- Compatibility of motor vehicle use with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account sound, emissions, and other factors.

