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**Payette National Forest
McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts
Snow-free Season**

Travel Management Plan

Record of Decision



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Record of Decision

for Snow-Free Travel Management on the Payette National Forest, McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts USDA Forest Service

Located in Valley, Adams and Idaho, Counties, Idaho

October 2008

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McCall and Krassel Ranger District ROD Travel Map enclosed in a map package

Introduction

The Payette National Forest (PNF) completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to assess and designate a system of roads, trails, and areas open to motorized and non-motorized uses during both snow covered and snow-free periods. The environmental analysis was completed in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the PNF Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations and discloses effects of travel management designations for both summer and winter travel uses on the portion of the Payette National Forest outside of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FC-RONRW).

Due to the complexity of the Forest-wide analysis, I decided to separate my decision by Ranger Districts for snow-free travel management. I issued the ROD for snow-free travel on the Weiser Ranger District in January 2008. This is my second snow-free travel management decision document, and it pertains to the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts. The ROD map included in this packet helps to display my decision. The McCall and Krassel Ranger District's Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), which implements my decision, will be issued when I have completed my decisions on the entire Forest for the snow-free seasons, which should be by December 2008.

The analysis of alternatives and public comment received on the FEIS for the Payette National Forest Travel Management Plan serves as the basis for my decision for snow-free travel management on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts. My decision incorporates by reference the analysis of effects and management direction disclosed in the FEIS, the errata to the FEIS located in Appendix A of this ROD, and the planning record in its entirety.

Background

Management of the PNF is guided by the Forest Plan as directed in the 1976 National Forest Management Act (NFMA). Regulations implementing the NFMA require the Regional Forester to revise forest plans and provide the basis for revision. The initial PNF Forest Plan completed in 1988 identified travel management planning as a significant issue and led to the release of a Forest Travel Map. This Forest Travel Map was revised in 1995 and has been updated on a yearly basis (until 2006) by the PNF *Backroads* map. These maps provided visitors with information on roads, trails, and areas open for various forms of travel on the Forest.

In 2003, the Payette National Forest revised the Forest Plan under regulations formulated in the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 219) in 1982. The purpose of the revision was to guide all natural resource management activities, address changed conditions and directions, and meet the objectives of federal laws, regulations, and policies.

The *Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Land and Resource Management Plan Final EIS* for the Forest Plan identified travel management, including winter access management as issues not analyzed in detail. The responsible official decided to not address travel management in the revision process "due to the broad array of localized issues with travel management that occurs at scales below a Forest Planning unit." The decision was made to address

travel management under a separate, more localized planning process (Forest Plan 2003: V.1: 2-6; USDA Forest Service, 2003a: ROD: 8). National direction for travel management, specifically off-road use of motor vehicles on federal lands, is provided by Executive Order (E.O.) 11644 (February 8, 1972) as amended by E.O. 11989 (May 24, 1977). Forest Service rules at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, part 295 codify the requirements in E.O. 11644 and E.O. 11989. Regulations regarding travel management on National Forest System lands were recently modified (36 CFR 212, 251, 261 & 295). These regulations provide further direction for travel management specifically requiring the designation of roads, trails and areas open to motor vehicle use, and prohibiting the use of motor vehicles off the designated system.

These changes in travel management regulations coupled with increased motorized and non-motorized uses on the PNF necessitate the need for designation of a travel system that will strive to balance travel management needs between different forest uses while sustaining natural resource values.

Purpose and Need for Action

The Payette National Forest Supervisor identified the following as the **purpose** for a revised Travel Management Plan:

- Meet Forest Plan and national direction.
- Limit indiscriminate motorized cross-country travel.
- Designate a system of roads, trails, and over-snow use areas.
- Balance management considerations (such as maintenance costs and public safety) with recreation opportunities.
- Reduce impacts to Forest resources.
- Reduce conflicts between recreational uses.

The **need** for revision of the Travel Management Plan was identified in the 2003 PNF Forest Plan and Record of Decision (ROD) (Forest Plan 2003). The responsible official for the Forest Plan made the decision to address travel management under a separate, more localized planning process. The Forest Plan provided a framework for travel management planning. This framework requires that travel management emphasize maintenance and restoration of watershed conditions, species viability, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and functioning ecosystems. The clear identification of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use will enhance management of National Forest System lands; sustain natural resource values through more effective management of motor vehicle use; enhance opportunities for motorized recreation experiences on National Forest System lands; address needs for access to National Forest System lands, and preserve areas of opportunity on each National Forest for non-motorized travel and experiences.

During the Forest Plan revision process, Payette National Forest specialists identified a variety of resource concerns related to travel management including conflicts between recreational uses, and impacts to wildlife, fish, and water quality from cross-country motorized travel, and use of unauthorized roads. These concerns were captured in the Payette National Forest Travel Plan FEIS as "Management Requirements" (FEIS page 2-5-

through 2-56). Inconsistent travel management direction across the Forest was also causing problems with the enforcement of travel regulations. Much of the eastern portion of the PNF was closed to cross-country motorized travel, while large areas on the western portion of the PNF were open to cross-country motorized travel.

The **need** for revision of the PNF Travel Management Plan is also supported by a nationwide awareness within the Forest Service of the harmful effects of indiscriminate off-road travel. The proliferation of user-created routes is a major challenge on the Payette National Forest and examples of significant environmental damage, safety issues, and use conflicts are well established. This problem nation-wide led to the Forest Service Final Rule (Final Rule) in the Federal Register: 36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, 295 "*Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use*" (Federal Register 2005: 70 FR 68264). This Final Rule requires designation of roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use. The Final Rule prohibits use of motor vehicles off the designated system, as well as use of motor vehicles on routes and in areas inconsistent with the designation.

Designations and prohibitions under the Final Rule do not apply to legally documented rights-of-way held by States, counties, or other local public road authorities. Only National Forest System (NFS) roads and NFS trails may be designated for motor vehicle use under the Final Rule and in this Travel Plan for the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts.

Decision

After a thorough review of the Payette National Forest Travel Management Plan FEIS, consideration of Tribal, cooperator, agency and public comments, and resource specialist input, I have selected to implement Alternative E as described in the FEIS, for the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts (Which includes the analysis for portions of MA 6 and 9, and MAs 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13 in their entirety) with the following modifications:

Snow-free Travel Management Modifications:

- In MA 10, Trail 132 (two-wheel motorized in Alternative E, proposal 10-4) will be designated non-motorized.
- In MA 12, Trail 290 (two-wheel motorized in Alternative E, proposal 12-7) will be designated closed, no longer maintained, and dropped from the Forest Trail inventory. Non-motorized use is still allowed, although the trail bed will disappear over time.
- In MA 12, Trail 98 (two-wheel motorized in Alternative E, proposal 12-8) and Trail 301 (two-wheel motorized in Alternative E, proposal 12-12) will be designated non-motorized.
- In MA 12, portions of Trails 70 (proposal 12-21), 71 (proposal 12-10), 73 (proposal 12-9), and all of Trail 75 (proposal 12-11) were proposed for non-motorized designation in Alternative E. I have decided that these trails will remain as they are

described in Alternative A, which designates the original two-wheel motorized segments, two-wheel motorized. The portions of Trails 70, 71, and 73 that are non-motorized in Alternative A, and were not proposed for any changes remain non-motorized. See Appendix C for mileage details for each trail portion.

- In MA 12, proposal 12-2, I am choosing the No Action Alternative (FEIS pages 2-44 and 2-45). The No Action Alternative for 12-2 (portion of Trail #76) is two-wheel motorized, but currently closed to both two-wheel motorized use and pack and saddle stock use due to safety conditions under a Special Order (SO) (as explained on page 2-44 of the FEIS). The only use currently allowed under the SO is foot traffic (thus why it was displayed in the FEIS tables as non-motorized). If funds are ever available to repair this section of trail, it could be reconstructed and re-opened to two-wheel motorized and pack and saddle stock use, because the Special Order only closes it until the repairs are completed. Since the present Special Order closure allows for only foot traffic use, that is how it was displayed in the “existing condition tables”. This may have caused some misinterpretation of the complete existing condition, and clarifying wording using an errata, will be added to the FEIS to better describe the existing condition (two-wheel motorized, closed to all but foot traffic under a SO) of proposal 12-2, Alternative A.
- In MA 12, proposal 12-17a, Road 50673, the Hamilton Bar road, will remain open to the 0.3 mile point, not the 0.7 miles point as described in the FEIS. This will better accommodate a turn-around area and trailhead for recreation users. A gate will be placed at this point and recreational use will be two-wheel motorized for the remaining 3 miles (proposal 12-17b) until it reaches the existing two-wheel motorized trail #76. This mileage error will be corrected with an errata statement added to Appendix A.
- In MA 13, proposal 13-1, Quartz Creek Route is designated as follows: Trail open to off highway vehicles (Special Designation) for the first 1.1 miles, designated open trail to vehicles 50 inches or less in width for the next 1.1 miles, then designated open trail to motorcycles for the remaining 3.8 miles. All forms of non-motorized use are allowed. This designation and mileage better clarifies allowed use of this route as analyzed in Alternative E.
- In MA 13, the dispersed camping area at the Lick Creek Ford on Big Creek will be closed (See USFWS and NMFS Terms and Conditions below). A viable route across Big Creek, to access trail #004 (Lick Creek Trail) will be analyzed in 2009 – 2010.

A more detailed explanation of these modifications can be found beginning on page ROD-10.

Compliance with ESA Consultation Modifications:

Consultation with the USFWS and NMFS resulted in some Terms and Conditions to avoid jeopardy to listed species. These are actions the Forest Service is required to perform. They are summarized below and include:

- (1) Immediate (Forest Service fiscal year 2009) physical closure of the Hamilton Bar Road below Hamilton Bar to use by the general public of any motorized vehicles other than those with only 2-wheels.
- (2) Immediate (spring of 2009) physical closure of the dispersed campground on Lick Creek Ford at Big Creek and appropriate signage indicating that the ford is closed to motorized vehicle use; appropriate access to the Payette National Forest trail system at another location will be secured following additional analysis; immediately (Forest Service fiscal year 2008 but no later than early in fiscal year 2009) begin discussions with private landowners in the affected Lick Creek Ford area to secure access to private property using some other route.
- (3) Immediately (Forest Service fiscal year 2009) begin internal processes to identify, prioritize, and close those travel routes that have not been or will not be designated open for public use, including reducing the resource impacts of culverts, fords, and non-maintained road surfaces.
- (4) Immediately close fords along designated motorized routes found to be in close proximity to redds and take steps to permanently eliminate the ford to protect the redd area.

For the remainder of this document, Alternative E – modified will be referred to as the Selected Alternative. Implementing the Travel Management Final Rule and designating a system of roads and trails will eliminate unregulated motorized cross country travel. Motorized travel on unauthorized routes will no longer be allowed. Cross country motorized travel is not allowed. Forest users using motorized vehicles may travel up to 300 feet from the centerline of designated roads where topography allows, and no resource concerns have been identified on the ground and 100 feet from designated motorized trails, for the purpose of dispersed camping. Many of these road corridors have been identified on the McCall Ranger District. These areas are displayed on the enclosed ROD map as open to motorized access for dispersed camping with a “dot” symbol. Areas where motorized access to dispersed camping is not allowed except in designated areas (some roads on the McCall Ranger District – and the entire Krassel Ranger District) will not show as “open” on the MVUM. Instead, these designated camping sites and their access will be signed on the ground with a camping symbol, and recreational users will be able to utilize these numerous areas for dispersed camping.

Dispersed camping areas with resource degradation will be evaluated and managed through administrative actions and larger scale analysis, and may be closed or relocated to allow for restoration (See Monitoring item E-8 in the FEIS).

As the Forest begins to implement travel planning, monitoring of dispersed campsites will occur alongside all designated open roads and restrictions to areas open to dispersed

camping use may occur if damage to resources due to unexpected natural events, or by motorized vehicle access into these sites occurs. Over time, the Forest could move toward more restrictions to dispersed camping along these open road corridors if resource damage occurs. Any changes to dispersed camping allowances would be apparent in the annual update of the MVUMs. **On both McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts, dispersed camping off all roads and trails, when accessed by foot, horse, or other non-motorized travel is not restricted or designated.**

Traveling off of designated roads or trails for any other purpose, except those that I discuss below, may only be pursued with a written authorization. Game retrieval using motorized vehicles off of designated roads and motorized trails is prohibited. Fire wood permits, Special Use authorizations, and Mining plans of operation are some of the written authorizations that may incorporate explicit allowances for cross country motorized travel.

Because I have chosen to issue several combinations of district-wide decisions, and the FEIS analyzed the Forest by Management Areas, to avoid confusion I have developed and incorporated into my decision Tables 1 and 2 located in Appendix C displaying open road and trail designations specific to the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts. My decision designates a system of motorized roads and trails that are generally similar to those managed under the 1995 Travel Plan as amended by the most current *Backroads* publication. The majority of both the McCall and Krassel Ranger District's have been closed to motorized cross-country travel for many years, so the new designations are similar to the previous allowed motorized use system.

My decision is consistent with the 2003 Payette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the 2005 *Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule* (Federal Register 2005: 70 FR 68264). In addition my decision is based on a review of the Project Record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk. Motorized designation will be by vehicle class (roads open to all vehicles, trails open to all vehicles, trails open to off highway vehicles only, trails open to vehicles 50" or less in width, , trails open to motorcycles only) and time of year. The MVUM developed using this decision will display this information using the National Mapping standards for MVUMs.

Rationale for the Decision

During the travel planning efforts I have gained an increased understanding and appreciation for the complexities and controversy surrounding travel management on the PNF. For this decision regarding snow-free travel management on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts, I have considered the site specific public comments and resource issues identified through the planning process and have strived to strike a balance between the various motorized and non-motorized uses, and the natural and cultural resource values across the PNF. I am sure that no single user or group will completely agree with my decision, but I do hope they can appreciate that their comments and concerns have been heard and considered in context of all the comments and resource issues associated with

travel management on the PNF. Appendix B includes a summary of public comments and agency responses.

With the Selected Alternative, use on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts will, in many ways, continue as it has in the past. Users will continue to be able to camp in both dispersed and developed recreation sites. Under different authorizations and permitting, users will be able to continue to collect firewood, harvest Christmas trees, conduct mining, grazing and timber operations, and conduct other authorized uses on the forest. Work associated with these activities will continue as they do now, through contracts, operating plans, plans of operation, special use authorizations, and established authorization processes.

As stated in the Final Rule, motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued pursuant to Federal law or regulations is exempted from designations made under 36 CFR 212.51 and restrictions and prohibitions established by the Final Rule. Prohibitions, Section 261.13 of the Final Rule, state that while the written authorization is an exemption, use of motor vehicles contrary to the written authorization is prohibited.

While this decision does not address every issue or resource concern associated with travel management, it makes important steps towards meeting Payette NF Forest Plan requirements and implementing national direction for travel management. Specifically, this decision will eliminate unmanaged cross country motorized travel and provide a network of designated travel routes for motorized and non-motorized uses during snow-free seasons on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts.

The Selected Alternative was developed based on input received for both the DEIS and the FEIS and reflects the most inclusive integration of site-specific comments received from our diverse forest recreational users. The Selected Alternative provides for a diversity of motorized and non-motorized opportunities for the snow-free seasons in a manner that reduces the potential for conflict between uses and maintains and protects important natural and cultural resource values.

While making my decision I considered effects on the Payette National Forest's natural and cultural resources, public safety, provision of recreational opportunities, access needs, conflicts among uses on the Forest, the need for maintenance and administration of roads and trails designated by my decision, the criteria for designation of roads and trails as listed in 212.55(b) and (c) of the Final Rule; and the availability of resources for that maintenance and administration. As part of my decision to designate the system of roads and trails as identified in the Selected Alternative I am counting on the help offered by the many volunteers and cooperators in their comment letters to supplement Forest resources for maintenance of the designated travel system. I chose an alternative that proposed a designated system of roads and trails that I believe the Districts can maintain with the available funding allocations (including grants) and human resources (volunteers) to accomplish the work. I may need to consider closing portions of this system in the future if funding is reduced.

Given the quantity of information received and compiled as part of this process, it is likely that there may be minor errors or unforeseen consequences associated with some travel designations. Errors identified through the public and internal review of the FEIS have been captured and documented in Appendix A of this decision, and will continue to be corrected with the annual updates of the MVUMs.

As we proceed with implementation of this decision, I assure you that through monitoring and continued public input we will work collaboratively with the public, Tribes, cooperators, and other agencies to address and work through potential issues in an open and constructive manner. This kind of collaborative and adaptive approach is imperative to build public support and to successfully implement travel management on the PNF now and into the future.

In addition it is important to realize that this decision reflects the best available information for this point in time. The Forest does not expect road and trail management objectives to remain static over time. The Final Rule recognizes that designations to travel routes are not permanent and that unforeseen environmental impacts, changes in public demand or monitoring may lead to responsible officials revising designations, and 36 CFR 212.54 provides for revision of designations as needed to meet changing conditions. I recognize there may be a need for changes and will be open to addressing these needs as they arise. Necessary changes or alterations to travel management will continue across the Forest through site specific project analyses and continued public collaboration and feedback on travel management across the PNF.

Listed below is a more detailed rationale for my modifications to Alternative E, as specified under my decision:

MA 10: I have designated the portion of trail 132 (proposal 10-4) that was previously two-wheel motorized, non-motorized, because of the steep and wet nature of the trail tread that cannot be easily fixed with basic trail maintenance. The trail was not properly designed for motorized use, and severe erosion along the trail has occurred. I will continue to allow non-motorized access on the trail. Alternative motorized routes have been designated open in nearby drainages that access the same general terrain.

In MA 12, trail 290 (proposal 12-7) is being closed and no longer maintained because other near-by trails provide access to the same areas in the South Fork drainage. This seldom used trail had not been maintained or cleared in many years and was not providing motorized recreation opportunities for the public. The portion of the public that doesn't desire motorized use will continue to be able to travel along this route, but it will continue to grow in naturally and be even less visible to the public over time.

In MA 12, trail 98, Cougar Creek (proposal 12-8), and trail 301 (proposal 12-12) will go from two-wheel motorized designation to a non-motorized designation. This change in designation is due to a review the Forest did on the trails in this area to see which trails provided for the best motorized and non-motorized use opportunities, including opportunities for development of loop trails. We looked at the use they received, the

condition of the trail, type and degree of maintenance needed to keep the trail open to motorized use, and if the same general area could be accessed using another open trail. The lower, southwest end of trails #98 and #301 cross meadows and riparian wet areas, the middle sections are located on granitic soils, which are highly susceptible to erosion. Several sections of the trails are within winter avalanche chutes that cause the trails to slide each spring. It is very difficult to maintain an 18 inch trail tread for two-wheel motorized use in this type of topography. These two trails were selected for a non-motorized opportunity. Trail 100, will continue to provide motorized access from the Kennally Creek area over to the South Fork Road.

In MA 12, portions of trail 73 (proposal 12-9), trail 71 (proposal 12-10), trail 70 (proposal 12-21), and all of trail 75 (proposal 12-11) will be designated two-wheel motorized to maintain the trail and loop opportunities along the Rainbow Ridge area, which are used by both locals in the Yellow Pine area, and riders coming in from other areas. The use on these expert riding trails is not high, but trail maintenance is needed to bring portions of this system up to two-wheel motorized trail standard. The district will work with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to secure grant funding for heavy maintenance of these trails. This designation will maintain the existing two-wheel motorized opportunities.

In MA 12, proposal 12-17a and 12-17 b mileages were adjusted to better accommodate a trailhead and turnaround for stock trailers and larger motorcycle trailers. The designation remains as described in Alternative E for these proposals.

Regarding proposals 12-2, 12-15 and 12-16 (12-15 and 12-16 in MA 12, remain as disclosed in the FEIS under Alternative E and have not been modified), private land access issues must be resolved prior to designating long-term recreation routes along the Davis Ranch road portion of trail 76 and both the motorized and non-motorized sections of trail 77. Prior to investing large sums of recreation dollars in the trails, their future use by private owners should be resolved. Consequently, I am deferring any change in these trails current designations, and selecting the existing condition, reflected in both Alternative A and Alternative E, for these trail segments. Trail 77 is designated as two-wheel motorized for 2.9 miles, and designated non-motorized for 2.1 miles from Fritzer Ford to the Lowman Ford on the SFSR. Trail 76 is broken into two distinctive segments, the first segment is currently open to two-wheel motorized use from Hamilton Bar to the Davis Ranch and trail #77 junction, the second segment is from the Davis Ranch to Elk Creek Road – which is designated two-wheel motorized but closed to motorized use and pack and saddle stock use under a Special Order.

In MA 13, near Big Creek, the dispersed campground at Lick Creek that accesses Lick Creek trail must be closed and relocated to another position to prevent any further degradation caused by recreational users crossing Big Creek at this ford to access trail 004, Lick Creek Trail. Crossing the ford at this location destroys existing Chinook salmon redds (Chinook salmoid egg beds). I have instructed the Krassel District Ranger to initiate an analysis of a viable ford crossing in the area in 2009, and complete the crossing by 2010. Access across the ford by private land owners is an issue that also needs immediate

resolution and will be analyzed in 2009. This issue was brought forward by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) during the consultation phase of my decision.

Snow-free Travel Opportunities

I believe the Selected Alternative will improve our ability to meet the demands of current and future recreational use while providing for the protection of important natural and cultural resources across the districts.

Specifically, the Selected Alternative maintains 317 miles of motorized open and seasonally open forest roads on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts. This represents a net reduction of approximately 9 miles of road (FEIS pp. S-22, 23; 2-57). Listed below are the specifics for roads added and subtracted from the designated system:

Approximately 1.2 miles of short spur roads into dispersed recreation sites authorized under previous decisions and formally designated with this decision:

Road FH211300 (unauthorized road) to open road, 0.1 miles (proposal 7-3)
Road 504123000 (unauthorized road) to open road, 0.1 miles (proposal 7-4)
Roads 503640100 and Road 503640101 (unauthorized roads) to open roads, 0.5 miles (proposal 11-7)
Road 502466000 (unauthorized road) to open road, 0.1 miles (proposal 11-18)
Road 502466300 (unauthorized road) to open road, 0.3 miles (proposal 11-19)
Road 502466400 (unauthorized road) to open road, 0.1 miles (proposal 11-20)

Approximately 10 miles of road would be formally designated as trail or closed:

Road 50318 (open road) to trail open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width (*more commonly referred to as ATV trail, and listed below as such*), 6.4 miles (proposal 10-10)
Road 50673 (open road) to two-wheel motorized, 3.0 miles (proposal 12-17b)
Road 50343 (open road) to closed road, 1.4 miles (proposal 13-8)

There is no change to the existing Seasonal road system on the McCall or Krassel Ranger Districts.

The amount of forest roads in the Selected Alternative should provide for efficient access for forest users, and on-going forest management and administration activities across the Districts. Funding of needed road maintenance will remain challenging and the Forest will continue to do strategic prioritization of future maintenance needs and expenditures with the help of partnerships and local interested groups.

I also received comments from publics that believe a greater reduction in forest roads is needed to reduce watershed and wildlife impacts. In making my decision, I considered these impacts and believe that the elimination of motorized cross-country travel, and reduction in motorized use on unauthorized roads will lead to a reduction in watershed and wildlife impacts ultimately benefiting these and other resources over the short and long term. In the Selected Alternative, acres open to motorized cross-country travel go from 139,160 acres (entirely on the McCall RD) to zero acres open to motorized cross-country travel.

The Selected Alternative increases the mileage of designated trails open to vehicles 50" or less in width (ATV) and Off - Highway Vehicles only (OHV) trails by providing for 56 miles of trail open to vehicles 50" or less in width and 1.1 miles of OHV trail. Listed below are the specifics:

Approximately 14 miles of designations for trails open to vehicles 50 inches or less in width (ATV) and OHV trails:

Road 50318 (open road) will be managed and designated as an ATV trail, 6.4 miles (proposal 10-10)
Road 503251000 (unauthorized road) to ATV trail, 0.4 miles (proposal 11-1)
Road 51866 (closed road) to ATV trail, 1.1 miles (proposal 11-2)
Road 518664000 (unauthorized road) to ATV trail, 0.1 miles (proposal 11-3)
Road 51867 (closed road) to ATV trail, 0.6 miles (proposal 11-4)
Road 51868 (closed road) to ATV trail, 0.7 miles (proposal 11-5)
Road 50251 (closed road) to ATV trail, 0.7 miles (proposal 11-6)
Roads 503640800 and 503640801 (unauthorized roads) to ATV trails, 0.9 miles (proposals 11-8a and 11-8b)
Road 503640900 (unauthorized road) to ATV trail, 0.4 miles (proposal 11-9)
Trail 67 (two-wheel motorized) to ATV trail, 1.1 miles (proposal 13-1a)
Trail 67 (two-wheel motorized) to OHV trail, 1.1 miles (proposal 13-1b)

By designating these routes open to ATV and OHV travel I have tried to respond to demands for this type of motorized experience (FEIS pp. S-22, 23; 2-57). In addition, legally permitted ATV's and their licensed riders will also have over 317 miles of riding opportunities on the open and seasonally open road system.

The Selected Alternative designates approximately 274 miles of two-wheel motorized single track trail. While this is a reduction of approximately 30 miles, the reduction is partially offset by ATV and OHV trails that will be available for two-wheel motorized users (FEIS pp. S-21 to 23; 2-57, 3-54). Much of the reduction in two-wheel motorized trails is associated with rarely used, poorly designed trails likely to result in resource damage (FEIS pp. 3-54 to 3-57). Listed below are the specifics on changes to two-wheel motorized routes:

Approximately 3 miles of open road to two-wheel motorized:

Roads 50673 (open road) to two-wheel motorized, 3.0 miles (proposal 12-17b)

Approximately 27 miles of two-wheel motorized trails designated as non-motorized trails:

Trail 128 (two-wheel motorized) to non-motorized, 2.5 miles (proposal 10-2). This results in 5.2 miles of non-motorized trail and 1.5 miles remaining of two-wheel motorized trail to maintain a motorized trail loop.
Trail 137 (two-wheel motorized) to non-motorized, 2.9 miles (proposal 10-3)
Trail 132 (two-wheel motorized) to non-motorized, 2.1 miles (proposal 10-4)

Trail 98 (two-wheel motorized) to non-motorized, 9.0 miles (proposal 12-8)

Trail 301 (two-wheel motorized) to non-motorized, 10.7 miles (proposal 12-12)

Approximately 2 miles of two-wheel motorized to ATV and OHV:

Trail 67 (two-wheel motorized) to ATV trail, 1.1 miles (proposal 13-1a)

Trail 67 (two-wheel motorized) to OHV, 1.1 miles (proposal 13-1b)

The Selected Alternative retains many challenging single-track trails for the more experienced riders seeking a highly technical two-wheel motorized experience (such as trail #73 and #75 in the Rainbow Ridge area, SFSR, Krassel Ranger District).

There are 260 miles of non-motorized trails designated on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts in the Selected Alternative (This does not include non-motorized/mechanized trail within the Frank Church Wilderness of No Return which total over 500 miles maintained trail, and over 130 miles of unmaintained trail).

Nineteen miles of trail are closed under the Selected Alternative, all located in MA 12, on the Krassel Ranger District, South Fork Salmon River drainage. These trails are primarily non-motorized trail closures (15 miles), with 4.3 miles of two-wheel motorized closed. Closing the trails mean they will not appear on any maps, and will no longer be maintained by the Forest Service. Non-motorized use along these old paths will continue to be an allowed use. Listed below are the trails to be closed under the Selected Alternative:

Approximately 19 miles of trail are closed:

Trail 303 (non-motorized) to closed, 10 miles (proposal 12-4)

Trail 304 (non-motorized) to closed, 2.1 miles (proposal 12-5)

Trail 305 (non-motorized) to closed, 2.8 miles (proposal 12-6)

Trail 290 (two-wheel motorized) to closed, 4.3 miles (proposal 12-7)

Several unauthorized routes, both roads and trails, were added to the designated system with my decision because they provided good recreation opportunities and their addition to the system was both cost effective and unlikely to promote unacceptable resource damage. They will not appear on the MVUM until they meet design features, as listed in the FEIS, Project Design Features 2.3.2, pages 2-6 thru 2-7, and Appendix C of the FEIS. Roads and trails that fall into this category are those that are on former unauthorized roads or trails, and closed roads (FEIS page 2-6, Newly Designed Roads and Trails). Listed below are all the routes on the McCall and Krassel Ranger District's that will need some type of review by the district recreation specialists and the district or forest hydrologist and biologist prior to designation on the ground and on the MVUM. Some routes may be identified immediately as meeting PDFs and can appear on the first printing of the MVUM, others will need additional work to meet PDFs, and may not appear as designated open for use on a MVUM for several years. All routes needing some type of prior review are identified below:

MA 7: Proposals 7-3 and 7-4 are short spur roads (0.1 miles each).

MA 11: Proposals 11-1, 11-3, 11-8a, 11-8b, 11-9, are unauthorized roads that will become designated ATV trails. Proposals 11-2, 11-4, 11-5, 11-6, are closed roads that will become

open ATV trails. Proposals 11-7, 11-18, 11-19, 11-20, are unauthorized roads that will be designated as open roads.

MA 13: Proposal 13-1, trail 67 goes from 2-wheel motorized to both ATV trail and OHV trail.

(Proposal 8-12 designating 0.2 miles of unauthorized road open was completed in a decision already made, so has been dropped as a “proposal”, and is now existing condition).

The *Backroads* Map

A revised Payette National Forest Travel Map was issued in 1995 and is know more commonly as the “Forest Visitor Map”. Since that time, travel management has been guided by the 1995 map as updated on a yearly basis (until 2006) by the PNF *Backroads* map. Combined, these maps provided visitors with information on roads, trails, and areas open for travel on the Forest (FEIS page 1-1). The *Backroads* Map was updated yearly to reflect PNF NEPA decisions on road and trail management, as well as any new Special Orders pertaining to roads, trails or area management. The *Backroads* Map also identified areas open and closed to motorized over-snow vehicle use. The *Backroads* Map was used as the starting point for the development of the existing condition of the motorized road and trail system at the beginning of this Travel Management planning process (FEIS page 2-1). Although used as a starting point, I recognize that it was not error free.

After the FEIS was published, several comment letters were received that questioned the presumed “new closure” of some motorized roads and trails, that continued to show up as “open” to motorized use on the 1995 travel map. The Forest recognizes that there was some misunderstanding regarding the purpose and the enforcement of the *Backroads* Map publication. Regardless, it was used to determine the initial existing condition when beginning the travel plan. I also realize that these roads and trails that do not appear on *Backroads* Maps, but do appear on the 1995 Travel Map are important to the recreating public, and will identify ways to possibly designate some of the routes in the near future. This will take additional site-specific NEPA, but these roads and trails will be high on the project priority list for funding the analysis. Most of the routes in question are located in MA 13 the Big Creek area and are old mining access routes.

Forest Plan Consistency

My decision to implement the Selected Alternative is consistent with Forest Plan goals and objectives, and standards and guidelines as documented in each resource section in Chapter 3 of the FEIS and in the Rationale Section of this ROD. In addition, my decision incorporates management requirements from the Forest Plan that are designed for the protection of Forest resources and to ensure consistency with Forest Plan direction. These are discussed and summarized in the FEIS on pages 2-51 to 2-56. No Forest Plan amendments are needed to implement this project.

Public Involvement and Alternatives Considered

Public Involvement

Public involvement in this project officially began in October of 2004 when the proposed action was issued to 616 members of the public. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on October 4, 2004. Public comment was taken through January 7th, 2005. Many comments were received including: 130 comment forms, 165 emails, 34 faxes, 254 letters, and 964 postcards. All comments received were reviewed and categorized by issue. Major issues were incorporated into the design of two new alternatives. Documents detailing the review of public comments and how the agency incorporated the substantive comments into new alternative design are available in the Project Record.

Five public meetings were held in September and October of 2004, in McCall, Riggins, Council, New Meadows, and Weiser, Idaho. Informational meetings were held at the request of many stakeholders during the scoping phase of the project.

The project (including the Proposed Action, press releases, and additional information) was featured on the PNF website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/payette>. The Proposed Action maps, narratives, and summaries were available for review at the Weiser, Council, New Meadows, and McCall Ranger Districts of the Payette National Forest, the Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area in Riggins, and the Payette National Forest Supervisor's Office in McCall.

Scoping letters were sent to three Tribal Nations: Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley, and Nez Perce Tribe. Formal government-to-government consultation has occurred with the Nez Perce, Shoshone-Bannock, and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes including briefings to the tribal councils and their technical staff.

The DEIS was published in early February of 2006. The comment period on the DEIS officially began on February 17, 2006 when the Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register. The Forest initially established a 46-day comment period. The comment period was extended an additional 46 days at the request of members of the public.

Five public meetings were held in February and March of 2006, in Boise, Weiser, Council, New Meadows, and McCall. The DEIS and accompanying maps were featured on the PNF website. Copies of the DEIS and the maps were available at all Forest offices.

Copies of the DEIS were also sent to the three Tribal Nations: the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley, and the Nez Perce Tribe. Formal government-to-government consultation on the project continued with the Nez Perce Tribe, Shoshone-Bannock and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe.

During the 92-day comment period on the DEIS, the Forest received approximately 450 comments including letters, emails, and faxes. All comments received were reviewed and categorized by issue. The Forest then developed a new action alternative, Alternative E, to respond to these comments and to address Ranger District specific needs and preferences.

The FEIS was published in April 2007 and a final 30-day comment period officially started on May 25, 2007 with publication of the notice of availability in the Federal Register. The comment period was extended from June 25 to July 10, 2007 based on public request for additional time to comment. While there is no requirement to allow a comment period on a FEIS, I felt it was important to gain feedback from the public on the newly developed Alternative E before making a final decision.

Since the end of the comment period the Forest has continued to engage with various publics including formal information sharing meetings with Travel Plan cooperators including members of the winter recreation forum, Adams, Idaho and Valley County commissioners, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Aside from these formal meetings travel plan team specialists have been responsive to numerous public requests for additional information or clarification on the Travel Plan. The comment periods generated over 2000 letters, e-mails, and faxes from a range of individuals, groups and other agencies. These comments were reviewed and evaluated by myself and travel plan team members, and my decision reflects responsiveness to many comments and concerns received on the FEIS. I also personally went out to the Yellow Pine and Big Creek Communities with the Krassel District Ranger in October of 2007 to meet with local residents on the ground about their concerns regarding the Travel Plan.

Besides formal public involvement numerous newspaper articles and press releases regarding the travel planning effort have been published in the local and regional papers since spring of 2004, including *The Star News* (McCall), *Long Valley Advocate* (Cascade), *Adams County Record* (Council), *Weiser Signal American* (Weiser), and *Idaho Statesman* (Boise). Legal Notices of comment and availability were published in *The Star News*, *Idaho Statesman*, *Adams County Record*, *Idaho County Free Press*, and *Weiser Signal American*. In addition, the Forest has maintained a website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/payette>) providing public access to the current information, environmental documents, maps, and other items pertaining to travel management.

Response to Primary Comments Received in the FEIS that pertain to the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts

The following sections document my consideration and responsiveness to the main issues and concerns brought forth during the FEIS comment period both general and specific to the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts. A summary of public comments and agency responses is provided in Appendix B of this document.

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA)

The Payette National Forest is committed to protecting and managing roadless areas as an important component of the National Forest System. The comments on roadless areas expressed a wide range of views. Some individuals and groups felt that these areas should be made available for additional motorized use, while others felt that motorized uses should be eliminated to protect values associated with roadless character. Most comments were

winter recreation related and pertained to IRAs located in part, in MPC 1.2, Recommended Wilderness.

Comments received during the scoping period drove the development of the “Roadless Character and Wilderness Issue 1” in the DEIS and FEIS. Indicators were developed that could be used to evaluate potential effects to IRAs. The two indicators developed were 1) Effects to wilderness potential, and 2) Effects to wilderness attributes, which included natural appearance, natural integrity, opportunities for solitude, opportunities for primitive recreation, and special features.

There are 13 IRAs within the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts, including, Smith Creek, Placer Creek, Sugar Mountain, Meadow Creek, Horse Heaven, Big Creek Fringe, French Creek, Secesh, Needles, Cottontail Point Pilot Peak, Crystal Mountain, Chimney Rock and Caton Lake IRAs (FEIS page 3-67 to 3-69). Large portions of the Secesh and Needles IRAs are within the Recommended Wilderness Management Prescription Category. This prescription’s primary management objective is to maintain wilderness attributes until Congress decides to designate the areas as wilderness or release them to some other form of management. These areas are managed to maintain wilderness attributes where feasible, and to generally allow ecological process to remain the pre-eminent agent of management (PNF Forest Plan page III-82). The Roadless Area Re-Evaluation (Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Land and Resource Management Plans FEIS, July 2003, Appendix C, Volume 3; pages C-222-226 and C-241-245) recommended 115,432 acres of the Secesh IRA for wilderness and 95,173 acres of the Needles IRA for wilderness. When making my decision on the designation of roads and trails in the recommended wilderness portions of these two IRAs, I followed standards and guidelines listed in the PNF Forest Plan on pages III-82.

Under the Selected Alternative for the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts I found no measurable effects to wilderness potential and beneficial effects to wilderness attributes (FEIS p. 2-63) resulting from the road and trail designations. Elimination of motorized cross-country travel may have a slight benefit to the IRAs wilderness attributes where motorized use was previously allowed (FEIS p. 3-74).

Firewood Gathering

Many individuals commented about the effects of the travel plan on firewood gathering opportunities and expressed concern with considering firewood gathering as a non-significant issue. I understand that firewood gathering is important to many of our forest users and I recognize the importance of firewood for providing a source of home heating fuel. The decision to categorize firewood gathering as a non-significant issue is not because I believe it is not significant to the public, but rather because the collection of firewood is already regulated through the firewood permitting process.

The Final Rule provides for off-road motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized pursuant to a written authorization issued under Federal regulation (36 CFR 261.13). The firewood permit will specify the areas for fuel wood collection.

Unauthorized Roads

There were many comments received on the closure of unauthorized roads across the forest and how this would impact the public's ability to gather firewood, recreate and enjoy the Forest. An "unauthorized road or trail" is "A road or trail that is not a forest road or trail or a temporary road or trail and that is not included in a forest transportation atlas" (36 CFR 212.1). This includes, for example, user created trails or roads, and some temporary roads created for past forest management practices. The difficulty with unauthorized roads lies in the fact that the Forest does not have complete information on their level or type of use, condition, or location. Many felt the Forest should implement a complete inventory of these roads before making any travel management decisions. While this was considered, it was not feasible to complete such a task with our existing funding and personnel levels. Furthermore, such an inventory may never be complete, as new routes will continue to be created during the inventory process.

In the past, user-created routes were developed without agency authorization, environmental analysis, or public involvement and do not have the same status as National Forest System roads and trails included in the Forest transportation system. The Final Rule recognizes this and indicates complete inventories are not necessary in order to complete the designation process. The Final Rule does allow for designating unauthorized roads as part of the transportation system through the public involvement process for travel planning. The Forest followed this direction and provided the opportunity for the public to bring forward unauthorized roads suitable for travel or recreational opportunities. This desire and intention was communicated from the beginning through public meetings, press releases, and continued throughout the planning process.

Several unauthorized routes, both roads and trails, were added to the designated motorized system with this decision because they provided favorable recreation opportunities and their addition to the system was both cost effective and unlikely to promote unacceptable resource damage. These routes are listed in the "Snow-free Travel Opportunities" section of the ROD.

Continual site-specific project planning efforts on the districts will allow the public future opportunities to look at additional unauthorized routes becoming designated routes. It is my desire that during these small scale, site specific levels of planning, meaningful public input and dialogue on the unauthorized roads can occur.

Access to Private Lands

Several respondents who own land adjacent to or surrounded by National Forest System land expressed concern over changes in travel designations and their ability to access private lands. In instances where road or trail designations change on routes leading to private lands, landowners will still be allowed reasonable access to their properties through the regular special use permit issuance process. Landowners will need to apply for a special use authorization for use and maintenance of a road or trail. No decisions on access to private lands will be made with this travel plan decision (FEIS p. 1-12). This decision pertains to designations for general recreational uses.

Section 1323(a) of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) provides property owners within the boundaries of the NFS certain rights of access across NFS lands. While ANILCA provides certain rights to property owners, those rights are subject to such reasonable terms and conditions as the Forest Service may prescribe in a written authorization. This decision affects all roads on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts, including those leading to private lands. Private roads needed only for the purpose of accessing private property will not show up on the MVUM (36 CFR 261.54). Private land owners will need to submit an application for a special use authorization issued under Federal Regulations (36 CFR 251.110 and 36 CFR 251.54) to access their property, if the road accessing their land is not shown as open to general public use on the map.

Access for Mining Activities

With my decision, motor vehicle access not covered by exceptions in the Travel Management Rule, inconsistent with designations shown on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) and without written authorization is prohibited. Where the use of motor vehicles is reasonable and necessary to conduct mining operations pursuant to the Mining Laws (including exploration), exceptions to this prohibition will be applied to provide motor vehicle access as needed.

Undesignated roads and trails are not public roads or maintained for National Forest purposes under 36CFR228.4(a)(1)(i), and the use of motorized vehicles that is not in accordance with the designations causes substantially different surface disturbance than that caused by other users of the National Forest 36 CFR 228.45 (a)(1)(v). The remaining exemptions are also inapplicable.

The use of motor vehicles inconsistent with road, trail, or area designations shown on a MVUM might cause significant disturbance of surface resources. Under 36 CFR 228.4(a), persons proposing to use motor vehicles for mineral exploration or operations to be conducted under the Mining Laws in areas inconsistent with designations shown on a MVUM will be required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to operate to the District Ranger having jurisdiction over the area in which operations will be conducted.

Upon receipt of a NOI, if the District Ranger determines the proposed motor vehicle use is reasonably incident to mining, exploration or operations under the Mining Laws and the motor vehicle use will not, or is not likely to, cause significant surface disturbance, the determination will be acknowledged as such in response to the proponent. This acknowledgement will serve in lieu of an authorization under the travel management rule for the case by case exceptions. If the District Ranger determines the activity will potentially result in significant disturbance of surface resources, they have the responsibility under 36 CFR 228.4(a)(4) to request the proponent submit a Plan of Operations.

I understand that reasonable access is a right under the Mining Laws. The prohibitions in 36 CFR 261.13 and the designations for motor vehicle use shown on the MVUM therefore do not preclude use of motorized vehicles where reasonable and necessary to conduct

mineral exploration or operations pursuant to the Mining Laws. If the proposed motorized use is likely to cause significant disturbance of surface resources, the operator will be required to file a Plan of Operations with the District Ranger.

Economic Analysis

Some individuals and user groups disagreed with the comparisons to the Gallatin economic study, and stated the need for additional economic analysis. I reviewed and considered other economic studies and took into account public comments, and feel I had enough information to make a reasoned decision on the potential economic impacts of this travel management decision.

The FEIS clearly discloses the rationale for citing the Gallatin economic study. Given the scale and diversity of the total economy in the counties, the fact that a variety of recreational uses are maintained under all alternatives and that economic effects related to travel on National Forest System lands are more driven by national trends than by the supply of recreation areas, reliance on this study as an indicator of the economic relationship of travel management on the PNF was appropriate.

Under this decision, changes in use opportunities vary little from existing condition and do not represent an elimination or massive reduction of any one particular recreational use. This decision maintains a variety of recreational uses and as such is not expected to have a measurable effect on local businesses reliant on recreational users and uses on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts.

The addition of several new ATV routes and associated loop opportunities provides an opportunity for local counties and businesses to capitalize on this newly expanded form of recreational opportunity.

In summary, when compared with the force of national trends, regional and local demographics and larger economic factors influencing the economies of Adams, Valley and Idaho Counties, the relatively small changes in different recreational travel designations on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts are unlikely to have measurable economic impacts.

Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

My decision to implement the Selected Alternative would not result in any changes to ROS classes/summer on the McCall or Krassel Ranger Districts (Table 1). See Appendix D for district ROS maps.

Table 1. McCall and Krassel Ranger District ROS Acreage

ROS	Alternative A – Current Condition	Alternative E - Modified
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	538,850	538,850
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	70,880	70,880
Roaded Natural (RN)	187,650	187,650

Roaded Motorized (RM)	23,990	23,990
Total acres	821,370	821,370

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the Selected Alternative, I considered 5 other alternatives (FEIS page 2-2 thru 2-75) including 4 that were analyzed in detail. Those 4 are listed below. One alternative considered was dismissed from detailed consideration (FEIS page 2-2 (2.2)).

Alternative A – No Action

This alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and serves as a baseline for analyzing effects. The No Action Alternative represents “no immediate change” from current summer travel management. As the FEIS discloses, this alternative would have the greatest environmental impacts and would be inconsistent with national direction related to travel management, because it continues to allow for large areas to be open to indiscriminant motorized cross-country travel. In addition, the No Action Alternative would not address one of the past four main threats identified by the agency (unmanaged recreation), and continuing current travel management would make achievement of many important Forest Plan standards related to watershed, fisheries and wildlife difficult to achieve.

Alternative B – Proposed Action

This alternative was proposed by the Forest Service to meet the purpose and need for a revised Travel Management Plan and to address important significant issues related to travel management. It responds to direction to limit cross-country motor vehicle use, protect Forest resources, minimize maintenance costs, and reduce conflicts between uses. Alternative B served as a starting point to address the stated purpose and need and was the catalyst for public input that led to the development of additional alternatives.

Alternative C – Additional Motorized Opportunities

Alternative C responds to issues raised by user groups to whom summer motorized access is important. This alternative would maintain opportunities for motorized uses in summer by retaining most of the current motorized trails, and adding ATV and OHV trails. This alternative would meet national direction to limit cross-country motor vehicle travel, but does less to minimize maintenance costs and protect Forest resources than Alternative B, D, or E.

Alternative D – Additional Non-motorized Opportunities

Alternative D responds to issues raised by non-motorized user groups relating to a need for more non-motorized opportunities. It also addresses associated concerns with noise and safety related to motorized and non-motorized uses in the same area. This alternative would create more opportunities for summer non-motorized uses. It also responds to direction to limit cross-country motor vehicle use, protect Forest resources, minimize maintenance costs, and reduce conflicts between uses.

Compliance with Environmental Laws and Regulations

Clean Air Act of 1970, as amended

The purpose of the Clean Air Act is to protect and enhance the quality of the nation's air resources. This is addressed under Issues Not Analyzed in Detail (FEIS Section 1.10.2 on page 1-17). The Travel Management Plan is not expected to have discernible effects on air quality and therefore I have determined that my decision is consistent with the Clean Air Act.

Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended

The objective of this Act is to restore and maintain the integrity of the nation's waters. This objective translates into two fundamental goals: (1) eliminate the discharge of pollutants into the nation's waters; and (2) achieve water quality levels that are fishable and swimmable. This act establishes a non-degradation policy for all federally proposed projects. The non-degradation goals would be accomplished through implementation and monitoring of Best Management Practices (BMPs) as described in Appendix C of the FEIS. The Clean Water Act is also addressed through Table 2-27 Management Requirements, Section 2.3.2 Project Design Features and in the Soil and Water (Section 3.4) effects discussions in the FEIS. Based on my review of the FEIS including required project design features, BMPs and water related effects analysis, I have determined that my decision is compliant with the Clean Water Act.

Compliance with American Indian Treaty Provisions

The Forest Service is acting as a representative of the United States with regard to treaty rights reserved by the Nez Perce Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. The Forest Service is required to preserve the rights reserved by the Tribes, and the agency is not attempting to balance this proposal against the rights the Tribes have reserved unto themselves. The Forest understands and respects the trust responsibility to the Tribes to manage lands in a manner that protects and preserves Indian trust assets and treaty resources. This travel management decision will not conflict with American Indian treaty provisions or federal trust responsibilities, and will preserve the rights of the Tribes.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended

The purpose of this act is to provide for the conservation of endangered fish, wildlife, and plants, as well as their habitats. Biological Assessments and/or Evaluations were prepared to document possible effects of Selected Alternative for the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts on endangered and threatened species. Appropriate coordination, conferencing, and consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is in progress. Through this process, the Forest Service has received informal agreement on the following determinations.

My Selected Alternative received a determination of "*May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect*" (LAA) for three fishes listed as "Threatened" that occur in the project area. These species are Snake River spring, summer and fall Chinook salmon (*Orcorhynchus tshawytscha*, 57 FR 14653), Snake River steelhead (*O.mykiss*, 62 FR 43937), and Columbia River bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*, 63 FR 31647). No designated critical habitat for

bull trout occurs in the project area (69 FR 59996), but there is designated critical habitat for Chinook (58 FR 68543) and steelhead (70 FR 52629) in the project area, for which the determination was also LAA.

The Canada lynx and gray wolf are the only listed wildlife species that occur in the project area encompassed by the McCall and Krassel Ranger District's travel plan action. Modeled potential habitat for northern Idaho ground squirrel (NIDGS) occurs in very limited areas and no NIDGS have been found, so a determination of "*No Effect*" was made for this species. In Idaho, populations of the gray wolf south of Interstate 90 are currently considered experimental/non-essential (USDI FWS 1004), hence these populations are evaluated similar to a proposed species. The BA made the determination the travel plan action "*May Affect, but would not jeopardize the continued existence of the gray wolf.*" The BA made a determination of "*May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect*" (NLAA) for the Canada lynx.

The project botanist concluded that the action would have no effect on threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate plant species. No populations or habitat of any threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate plants are currently known to occur on the McCall or Krassel Ranger Districts.

At the time of signing this ROD, formal consultation has not been completed with the FWS or the NMFS, although a final biological opinion (BO) will be received from the NMFS shortly. In an email dated March 29th, 2007, USFWS agreed with the determinations, noting they believed the Forest Service action would not reach a jeopardy threshold for bull trout. During the consultation process, we have been apprised of the terms and conditions that will be levied by these agencies, and these are summarized elsewhere. Because we are so far along in the consultation process, which is well documented in meeting notes and emails among Level 1 Team members, I am confident that this decision is in compliance with Section 7(d) of ESA and will not make irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would foreclose development of additional reasonable and prudent alternative measures to protect ESA-listed species by the regulatory agencies.

Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974

This Act provides for the control and management of non-indigenous weeds that injure or have the potential to injure the interests of agriculture and commerce, wildlife resources, or the public health. The FEIS addresses noxious weeds and provides for management requirements and project design features aimed at reducing levels of noxious weeds across the Forest consistent with this Act (FEIS pp. 1-14, 2-7, 2-51).

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended and Executive Order 13186

The purpose of this Act is to establish an international framework for the protection and conservation of migratory birds. Executive Order 13186 directs executive departments and agencies to take certain actions to further implement the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Federal agencies that undertake actions that may affect migratory birds must develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFWS that would promote the

conservation of migratory birds. Federal agencies must also “ensure that environmental analysis of federal actions required by NEPA ...evaluate the effects of actions and agency plans on migratory birds, with emphasis on species of concern.” Migratory Birds are addressed in the EIS and effects determination made that migratory bird habitat would not be measurably impacted and no significant effects are anticipated from this action (FEIS pp. 3-189 to 190; 3-236 to 237).

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended

The NEPA establishes the format and content requirements of environmental analysis and documentation. The process of preparing this environmental analysis was undertaken to comply with NEPA and its implementing regulations. Information on the process of preparing this analysis can be found within this document and the Project Record. This ROD and the Payette National Forest Travel Management Plan FEIS comply with NEPA and its implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508).

National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA)

This Act guides development and revision of National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans. The NFMA also has several specific provisions including maintenance of biodiversity. Project and activity decisions need to be consistent with a number of provisions of NFMA. The Payette Forest Plan was developed to implement NFMA. All action alternatives in this project’s EIS were developed to meet the Payette Forest Plan and comply with NFMA (FEIS p. 1-20).

Environmental Justice (E.O.12898)

As required by Executive Order, all Federal actions will consider potentially disproportionate effects on minority or low-income communities. Potential impacts or changes to low-income or minority communities within the project area due to the proposed action must be considered. Where possible, measures should be taken to avoid negative impacts to these communities or mitigate adverse affects. This decision is not anticipated to disproportionately impact minority or low income communities who use the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts (FEIS p. 1-22).

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as Amended (NHPA)

This Act requires federal agencies to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and American Indian Tribes when nonrenewable cultural resources, such as archaeological sites and historic structures, may be affected by a federal action. Section 106 of this Act requires federal agencies to review the effects project proposals may have on cultural resources in the project area. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer has been consulted concerning proposed activities in the project area. Nine separate Section 106 reports were prepared and sent to the SHPO on new roads and/or trails that would be added to the designated open to motorized use system on the McCall Ranger District. All reports had a “no effect to historic properties” or a “no adverse effect to historic properties”, or a “no historic properties” determination. Since there are no new road or trail designations on the Krassel Ranger District, no reports were submitted for the Krassel Ranger District. In a letter dated February 2008, SHPO suggested the Forest implement a monitoring plan to assess the 300 foot dispersed camping corridor for impacts to cultural

resources. The Forest archeologist has prepared a monitoring plan for this activity and it is included in the project record. Additional information can be found in the FEIS (1-19, 1-20 and 1-22).

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Regulations implementing the NEPA require agencies to specify the alternative(s) considered to be environmentally preferable (40 CFR 1505.2(b)). Forest Service policy further defines this as the Alternative that best meets the goals of Section 101 of NEPA. In determining the environmentally preferred alternative, I referred to the goals of Section 101 and determined that Alternative D is the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

Alternative D is considered the environmentally preferred alternative since it will cause “the least damage to the biological and physical environment”. However, the Selected Alternative, over the long-term, will “attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment while minimizing, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences”. The Selected Alternative provides a mix of recreation opportunities and settings; while moving forest resource conditions towards the desired future conditions identified in the plan. The emphasis of the Selected Alternative is to maintain many of the existing recreation opportunities that exist today, while decreasing site-specific travel impacts to forest resources.

Alternative D would result in the greatest improvement to overall riparian conditions and salmonid fish habitat, but would not provide the desired motorized access for recreational users. Improvements to resource conditions are expected to occur under the Selected Alternative, but at a slower rate than Alternative D.

The goals of Section 101 of NEPA require consideration of, among other things, a “variety of individual choice” and “balance between populations and resource use.” Given those parameters, the Selected Alternative maintains forest resources while providing for a variety of recreational choices, both now and into the future.

Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Impacts

The Selected Alternative likely will produce adverse effects on some components of the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated. Actions that benefit one component can have at least temporary adverse effects on another. The Selected Alternative includes management requirements and mitigation measures designed to avoid or reduce adverse environmental effects. Monitoring and evaluation was incorporated to measure how effective the management requirements and mitigation measures are in reducing adverse environmental impacts.

Monitoring and Mitigation

My decision incorporated monitoring plans as described in the FEIS. Monitoring plans are listed in the FEIS – Appendix E, pages E-1 through E-10. Monitoring is also discussed in the FEIS on pages 2-8.

In addition, my decision incorporates mitigation measures and project design features aimed at avoiding or reducing environmental impacts associated with implementation of travel management designations.

These project design features are listed in the FEIS on pages 2-6 and 2-7 and will be implemented before new road or trails are designated for motorized use as described in the FEIS.

Implementation

Implementation includes the publishing of the official McCall and Krassel Ranger District MVUM. As stated at the beginning of my decision, the McCall and Krassel Ranger District's MVUM, which implements my decision, will be issued when I have completed my decisions on the entire Forest for the snow-free seasons, which should be by December 2008.

The final rule places a responsibility on users to get MVUMs from Forest Service offices or websites and to remain on routes and in areas designated for motor vehicle use. Travel routes will be "closed unless designated open" to motorized use as shown on the MVUM. These maps will be available at all district offices, and also on the Forest web page. They will be free of charge and meet Forest Service-wide MVUM standards. Although new travel restrictions were designed to be less complex and easier to define on the ground, any change will require a period of adjustment for Forest visitors. During the first field season after this decision, Forest staff will emphasize travel plan education with forest users. It is reasonable to assume there will be increased potential for violations during the initial stages of implementation. During the first field season, Forest staff will strive for travel plan education, however, Forest travelers will be cited if they are causing resource damage.

Enforcement of new travel restrictions will require additional emphasis by the PNF, with assistance from other public agencies and the public. Implementation of the Travel Plan will take several seasons of concentrated education efforts with the public via on-the-ground discussions, posting of travel information at high use trailheads and campgrounds, articles in the local newspapers, dispersing of MVUMs, and continued signing of the designated system of roads and trails on the ground. Many of the trails lack adequate signing, and one of the keys to successful implementation and enforcement is a well signed system of roads and trails. Signing will indicate the allowed types of vehicle travel, although the MVUM is the enforcement tool for travel management, whether there are signs or not. The MVUM produced for each ranger district will also display the vehicle class and time of year designation on the motorized trails and roads. A different map for winter motorized travel will be published under a separate decision at a later date.

Dispersed camping along open roads and motorized trails in the Forest will be closely monitored to identify the impacts of motor vehicle use. Those campsites that do not have an acceptable access route will be analyzed under appropriate NEPA in the future, and potentially closed and restored as appropriate based on resource concerns. The Districts will prioritize the removal of dispersed campsites and installation of physical barriers to

eliminate crossing live streams and where motor vehicle use is resulting in damage to vegetation, wet meadows, riparian areas or other sensitive resource concerns.

On the Krassel Ranger District, where dispersed camping along designated roads using a motorized vehicle will be allowed only in designated areas, signing will need to be purchased and installed across the district to identify suitable dispersed camping areas. Additional Forest Service patrol will also be needed to enforce the new camping restrictions. This additional cost will need to be added to the annual recreation budget.

I want to emphasize implementation of my decision will require not only education of users but also enforcement of restrictions. It has been correctly pointed out by the public in their comment letters on travel planning, that not all of our closures have been effective and that our maps and regulatory signing is in need of improvement. The Forest will annually print new MVUMs if needed because of new project decisions. Districts will continue the process of signing, maintaining and installing gates to implement seasonal closures and begin to organize volunteers to embark on a program of public information. The Forest is committed to work with local motorized trail clubs, environmental groups, and other interested organizations to form volunteer patrols to assist with signing and public awareness campaigns regarding the new travel regulations.

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day appeal period, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Administrative Appeal

My decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. Any notice of appeal must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 215.14 and include at a minimum:

- A statement that the document is a Notice of Appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215.
- The name, address, and telephone number of the appellant.
- Identification of the decision to which the objection is being made.
- Identification of the document in which the decision is contained, by title and subject, date of the decision, and name and title of the Deciding Officer.
- Identification of the specific portion of the decision to which objection is made.
- The reasons for appeal, including issues of fact, law, regulation, or policy and, if applicable, specifically how the decision violates law, regulation, or policy.
- Identification of the specific changes(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks.

Only individuals or organization that submitted comments or otherwise expressed interest in the project during the comment periods may appeal. Appeals must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of the legal notice of decision in the *Idaho Statesman* newspaper. This date is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Timeframe information from other sources should not be relied on. Incorporation of documents by reference in an appeal is not allowed.

Appeals must be sent to the Appeal Deciding Officer, Harv Forsgren, Regional Forester of the Intermountain Region. Appeals can be mailed, faxed, e-mailed or hand delivered to:

Regional Forester of the Intermountain Region
USDA-Forest Service
324 25th Street
Ogden, UT 84401
Fax: 801-625-5277
E-mail: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us

E-mailed appeals must be submitted in rich text (rtf), Word (doc) or portable document format (pdf) and must include the project name in the subject line. Appeals that are hand delivered can be made to the address above during the regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Contacts

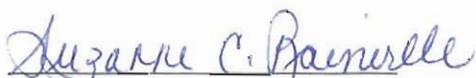
More information on the FEIS and the ROD for the McCall and Krassel Travel Management Plan for Snow-free travel can be obtained by contacting one of the following people:

Jane Cropp
Travel Plan Revision Team Leader
800 W. Lakeside Ave.
McCall, ID 83638
Telephone: (208) 634-0757
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Or

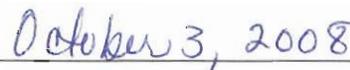
Laura Pramuk
Public Affairs Officer
800 W. Lakeside Ave.
McCall, ID 83638
Telephone: (208) 634-0784

For the past four years, Payette National Forest personnel have worked with Tribal staff, cooperators, other agency personnel, and members of the public to complete the Draft and Final EIS for the Payette National Forest Travel Plan. With this Record of Decision for the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts, the public can see the result of this work. I look forward to moving on with implementation of the Travel Plan in cooperation and collaboration with all who use and enjoy the Payette National Forest.



SUZANNE C. RAINVILLE

Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest



Date

Appendix A – Errata Information for the PNF Travel Plan FEIS Document and FEIS Maps

Errors Identified in Body of FEIS Document specific to the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts-Snow-free season:

1. FEIS Page 2-45: Narrative Bullet describing Proposal 12-7, 12-8, 12-12 does not match the corresponding table below on the same page. The table was incorrect. The narrative was the correct description of Alternative E, all 3 proposals in the tables for Alternative E should have read “two-wheel motorized”.
2. FEIS page 3-4, 3.2.2 Changes between Draft and Final EIS, the second bullet states that “recreation opportunities available in the Frank Church Wilderness adjacent to the project area were addressed”. The added new section was inadvertently missing, and should be added to the FEIS, page 3-6 paragraph 3: “Although not within the boundaries of the “project area” analysis for this travel planning project, the non-mechanized trail network available in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (FCRONRW) should be considered as “opportunities and experiences” available to the non-motorized trail user on the PNF. The PNF portion of the FCRONRW has approximately 550 miles of non-motorized, non-mechanized trails (Reference INFRA Trail Data Base). All 550 miles are not maintained annually, and some of the trails are difficult or impossible to find on the ground. The trails are available for pack and saddle use, hiking, backpacking and skiing and snowshoeing in the winter months. The trails in the area provide a very primitive experience to the users.

FCRONRW use data was collected in 2002 during the NVUM survey and showed that the Payette received approximately 9,250 wilderness use visits throughout the year.

The wilderness is also available in the winter months, although it gets very little use because access into the area is difficult. Some backcountry skiing and snowshoeing takes place in the backcountry. Some people fly into the airstrips that remain open in the winter using ski planes at higher elevations, and wheeled planes at lower elevations. Users then head out from these portals on snowshoes, skis or hike. Users can also snowmobile into the Big Creek area and then travel into wilderness by non-mechanized means.”

3. FEIS 2-36, Proposal 8-12 lists 0.2 miles of new road added to the travel system under Alternatives B – E. This proposal was a part of the Paddy Flat decision, already made, and should have been withdrawn from the proposal list as was 8-6 through 8-11. This open road is the existing condition.
4. Add to FEIS, page 2-5, bullet #3, after “Areas with sensitive resources proposed for closure to motorized off-route travel include:” add: “known areas with potential to impact cultural resources, topography limiting terrain, riparian areas,...”.

Also, in the same bullet, change the word “all dispersed camping would be restricted to designated sites” to “Motorized travel off designated motorized trails up to 100 feet on the Krassel Ranger District (approximately 25 miles in the SFSR watershed, and 10 miles in upper Big Creek), is allowed for accessing dispersed campsites only. Dispersed camping areas with resource degradation will be evaluated and managed through administrative actions and larger scale analysis, and may be closed or relocated to allow for restoration (see Monitoring item E-8 in the FEIS). Dispersed camping along motorized trails is not restricted to designated sites. Dispersed camping off all roads and trails, when accessed by foot, horse, or other non-motorized travel is not restricted or designated.

The net result of this modification to the FEIS would decrease the reduction in acres open to motorized use (FEIS Table F-7) on the Krassel Ranger District by approximately 600 acres (or 50%) in the SFSR watershed, and approximately 240 acres in the upper Big Creek watershed (actual decrease from Alternative A was not quantified in the FEIS for the upper Big Creek watershed).”

5. Add errata to FEIS page 1-23 section “Payette National Forest Responsibilities to Federally Recognized Tribes, paragraph 2: “...and Executive Orders 13175,”. Paragraph 3: delete the first word of the paragraph “portions”. Replace the word “conferred” with “reserved”. Paragraph three, delete “(of Idaho)”. Paragraph five: delete the first work “portions of”, and state “The Payette National Forest is located within the Area...”.
6. Proposal 12-2, the existing condition in Alternative A was listed as non-motorized. This does represent the present allowed use on this portion of trail #76, as it has been closed under a Special Order since 1997 due to poor trail conditions as a result of major land-slide events. But, the designated use has always been two-wheel motorized. The way the Forest should have listed the existing condition in Alternative A for this portion of trail #76 is , ***two-wheel motorized – closed to motorized use and pack and saddle stock under Special Order***. All tables in the FEIS that list Alternative A for 12-2 should read “two-wheel motorized-closed to motorized use and pack and saddle stock under Special Order”. The trail could open to two-wheel motorized use again in the future if trail repairs are feasible.
7. FEIS page 3-101, first paragraph, first sentence under “SWI 1:”, delete the word “parking and”; and in the last sentence change “limited to designated parking areas along short road segments” and replace with “limited to designated dispersed camping areas within 300 feet of an open designated road.”
8. FEIS page 2-46 Table 2-24, Proposals 12-17a and 12-17b mileages are incorrect and should read 0.3 miles for 12-17a and 3.0 miles for 12-17b. The same changes will be made to page F-20, Table F-11 in FEIS Volume II.

The following errata were printed in the Weiser ROD Appendix A, and is published here to provide continuity to the public.

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1. Reference FEIS Page 3-57 – First sentence in “Miles of ATV trail” section. Sentence should state “Designated ATV trails increase by approximately 33 miles under Alternative E.” Sentence incorrectly states 18 miles.
 2. The following is an addendum to the FEIS – Chapter 6 - Public Comments and Responses, #97, page 6-71, and is to correct inconsistencies regarding public water systems within MA3:

The City of Weiser drinking water system consists of two surface water intake structures, one in the Weiser River, and one in the Snake River, both southeast of town. The Weiser River intake system is ranked moderate in susceptibility to contamination, with the land use being predominately being represented by irrigated agriculture, commercial and industrial. To protect water systems from such potential pathways, the EPA required that the entire drainage be delineated upstream from the intake to the hydrologic boundary of the drainage basin (MA 3). Recognizing that an intake could have an extensive drainage basin the EPA recommends the basin be segmented in to smaller areas. The delineation process for the Weiser River extends from the intake upstream 25 miles or the 4-hour streamflow time-of-travel boundary (IDEQ 2000)

This extends the boundary onto the Payette National Forest north into the Middle Mann Creek and Upper Monroe Creek 6th level HUC subwatersheds. The subwatershed areas on the Payette NF for these two subwatersheds are only 319 acres and 629 acres, respectively. These acres are at the edge of the 25 mile delineation boundary. There are 0.3 miles of road within the Middle Mann Creek subwatershed and 4.1 miles of road on the acquired State section in the Upper Monroe Creek subwatershed.

Contaminants of concern are primarily related to volatile and synthetic organic contaminants, inorganic contaminants and microbial bacteria which may be related to the potential contaminant sources associated to the varied land use within the delineated source water area of the City of Weiser include businesses such as fuel stations, dairy, automotive, taxidermy, medical, contracting, storage, food processing, a cemetery, quarry/mines, waste water treatment, and water treatment discharge (IDEQ 2000).

In summary, out of the 47,818 acres delineated as the Weiser River intake surface water source, 948 acres are located on the Payette NF. None of the contaminants of concern or potential contaminate sources identified are located on Payette NF lands.

3. Reference Chapter 2, page 2-4: Under the heading at the top of the page, “Roads fall into one of two categories”, the verbage “Classified roads” will be changed to read “Authorized roads”. Roads are either Authorized or unauthorized. The definition in the Final Rule did not change as to what an unauthorized road is, but the wording “unclassified” was removed, and the definition is now for “Unauthorized road or trail” only. (36CFR 212.1 definitions.)
4. Reference Chapter 3, page 3-24: Some information was contained in that paragraph that was not correct. The paragraph should read as follows: “All action alternatives would

provide a consistent Forest-wide policy for cross-country travel in the non-snow months. In all alternatives, cross-country motor vehicle use would not be allowed. Limited motorized access for dispersed camping would continue to be allowed within 300 feet of designated roads and 100 feet of designed motorized trails, if that use would not result in resource impacts. This off-route exception would provide motorized access for dispersed camping. Non-motorized cross-country travel would be allowed to continue in all areas across the Forest.”

5. Reference FEIS page 3-11 (3rd paragraph under Issue 5). This paragraph states: “Although a ROS for both summer and winter is identified in the Forest Plan, the Travel Plan analysis can modify the ROS without an amendment to the Plan (Forest Plan 2003).” This statement should be modified to read “Potential changes to ROS, outside of a “setting inconsistency” could result in a Forest Plan amendment.”((PNF Forest Plan (pg III-62) Objectives REOB02, REOB03, REOB04, and Appendix F for ROS, Figure F-1)).

6. Add to the existing condition information in the FEIS, under MA 2, Chapter 3: “Trail #259 and Trail #287 are open to two-wheel motorized use on a seasonal basis, from July 1 – September 15. This is the existing condition of these two trails due to a previous decision. Trail #259 ties into seasonal road 50044. A 5.1 mile portion of road #50044 is open seasonally from July 1 through September 15. This 5.1 mile section of road #50044 will be designated open to seasonal motorized use.”

Appendix B – Summary of Public Comments and Agency Response

This document summarizes comments and associated responses to specific snow-free season comments received on McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts. Also added to the end of the Krassel and McCall specific comments are the comments printed in the Weiser Ranger District Travel Plan ROD. These are provided to give the public the full range of “Response to Comments” to date. Upcoming Travel Plan RODs for the Forest will reproduce all previous Travel Plan ROD comments received for this travel planning process. District specific comments have been summarized. Comments listed in this document are ones that were not addressed in the DEIS, suggest a new alternative or action, or questioned the analysis. Comments received that “voted” for an alternative have not been listed.

Comments on Specific Proposals

Proposal 7-5, 7-6

1. *The Forest Service should keep trail #110 (7-5) and trail #117 (7-6) open to ATV travel. The Forest should also keep 11-22 open to ATV travel as it continues on from 7-6.*

Agency Response: Trail 110 and trail 117 are open to two-wheel motorized travel from Box Lake west to the Crestline trail #109 in the Selected Alternative. ATV use was not considered on either trail, in any Alternative, because it was not proposed in scoping or during the DEIS comment period. Trail 117 is unsuitable for ATV use due to resource concerns.

Proposal 8-3

2. *Proposal 8-3 (unauthorized road to ATV) should remain an ATV road without reducing width, this road will be needed in the future.*

Agency Response: The Forest will not be reducing the width of this road, but several bridges along the route are designed for ATV, not full vehicle use.

Proposal 9-4

3. *The Forest Service should resolve the private land/easement access issue at the trailhead to this proposal to allow full public access to the trail system.*

Agency Response: The Forest has worked for many years to get an easement across private land so the popular two-wheel motorized trail 116 would not dead-end at the private property adjacent to the Salmon River. All efforts to date have been unsuccessful, including locating a re-route around the private land on Forest System lands due to steep terrain. The Forest will continue to pursue easement options in the future, but until the time an easement is secured, will continue to post the trail as a one-way in and back trail, not a through trail.

Proposal 10-2

4. *The southern portion of trail #128 (Steamboat Ridge) is currently open to two-wheel motorized travel, and should remain open, instead of closing as proposed. The northern half should be open to motorized use to provide a loop with road FH 21.*

Agency Response: The Selected Alternative has 5.2 miles designated non-motorized and 1.5 miles designated two-wheel motorized. Proposal 10-2 should have started at the intersection of Trails 128 and 129 to preserve the motorized loop opportunity on Trail 129. This was corrected as stated on page 2-41 of the FEIS. The section of Trail 128 from the junction with Trail 129 north is non-motorized in all alternatives, to coincide with the rest of the trail, which is non-motorized.

Proposal 10-10

5. *These trail proposals should be closed to motorized use due to poor condition of road/trail and impacts on big game.*

Agency Response: Alternative D proposed to close the portions of road 50318 Carey Creek Road that became impassable in several locations during late summer of 2004 rain events, but the Selected Alternative has it designated as an ATV route (Trails open to vehicles 50" or less in width). This route is a portion of the "Idaho Centennial Trail" which the Forest Plan states should remain open to provide quality recreation opportunities (PNF Plan page III-219 and Objective 1038 page 225).

Proposals and 11-5, 11-6, 11-10, 11-11

6. *MA 11 – Nether Creek: Will the use of an ATV and 2 wheel motorized vehicle be allowed up the unnumbered trail from the shipping corral continue to be authorized to the public, or only to the permittee?*

Agency Response: Proposal 11-5 and 11-6, near Nether Creek are designated ATV in the Selected Alternative. Road 50248 along Nether Creek is designated open to all vehicles, and trail 143 is designated 2-wheel motorized. The unnumbered route from the shipping corral was not designated open to recreational motorized use. If the grazing permittee requests use of this access route, it will be analyzed for consideration under his range operating and/or allotment plan.

7. *The trails in the Ruby Meadows area should be closed to motorized use due to location of trails near wetlands that drain into the Secesh River and salmon spawning areas.*

Agency Response: Proposal 11-10a, 11-10b, 11-11 are all designated closed in the Selected Alternative because of riparian concerns. Other trails in the area are on higher ground, and when trail design features are constructed, will be designated open for ATV use. Implementing design features should alleviate any resource concerns.

Proposal 12-2 and 12-15

8. *Proposal 12-2 and 12-15 provide the primary ground access to private lands (Willey Ranch aka Davis Ranch) and the existing designation should be retained in case funds become available to fix the road in the future. Changing to 2-wheel motorized (12-2) or non-motorized (12-15) designations would make future full size access more difficult and reduce private land access options.*

Agency Response: This travel planning process designates motorized recreation use opportunities for public use. Private land access issues would be dealt with on a separate request by the private landowner to the Forest Service. See ROD, "Access to Private Lands", page 15. The decision for this proposal was to retain the area as described under the No Action Alternative (FEIS pages 2-45 and 2-46).

9. *The Davis/Willey Ranch road (Proposal 12-2 is a public right of way and should remain open or relocated in cooperation with Valley County.*

Agency Response: A site-specific analysis will be conducted in the area to identify alternative routes better suited for use as recreational trails while avoiding potential impacts to the private lands in the area. The route will remain designated two-wheel motorized but will be closed under a special order to motorized and saddle and pack stock until a new trail reroute can be analyzed. The timing on the completion of the potential reroute will be funding dependant.

Proposal 12-17a and 12-17b

10. *The Hamilton Bar road (Proposal 12-17a and 12-17b) is a public right of way and should remain open.*

Agency Response: The Hamilton Bar road does remain open to all vehicles to the dispersed camping site, which is located 0.3 miles from the main SFSR road in the Selected Alternative. At this point a trailhead would be established. The remaining 3.0 miles of road would be designated open for two-wheel motorized use for the recreating public.

11. *Big Creek/ Smith Creek road is a public right of way and should be maintained and managed as a road rather than an ATV trail as proposed.*

Agency Response: Smith Creek Road 371 is open to full-sized vehicles from the junction with the County's Elk Creek road to Big Creek airstrip, then onto the Big Creek trailhead. Road 373 is open to full size vehicles and goes up to Pueblo Summit. Proposal 13-2 did designate a portion of this route as an ATV trail, and that designation is in the Selected Alternative because it provided the most feasible route at this time for the recreating public. If funds ever become available to perform major reconstruction on this route, other vehicle access may be considered at that time.

Comments on Trails or Roads not Included as Proposals

12. Trail # 141 leaving Ruby Meadows Trailhead to Loon Lake should accommodate ATVs for its entire length.

Agency Response: Trail #141 is a designated ATV trail for 7 miles, then it becomes two-wheel motorized as it goes into more sensitive, wet areas (Victor Creek Trail). There is a lot of water and riparian habitat concerns along this trail route, and expanding use and widening the trail to accommodate ATVs was not considered at this time, it would take a site-specific analysis and decision to consider this type of trail conversion.

13. Chinook Campground to Loon Lake should be an ATV trail.

Agency Response: This trail would need to be redesigned, widened, and have multiple new bridges constructed and widened prior to any conversion to ATV use. This would be expensive. It would also take site-specific NEPA. It is a very busy trail and this type of motorized use in addition to current use may be a safety hazard to multiple users.

14. Keep Flat Creek Road open, it leaves FS325 in T22N R5E Sec 3 and continues out to several mining claims.

Agency Response: Access to mining claims can be granted to the owner of the claim through an approved operating plan and are not addressed in this travel plan. See ROD "Access to Mining Activities", page 15. This road was identified for closure in the recent Burgdorf Road Management and Abandoned/Inactive Mine Site Reclamation Project.

15. The road to the historic Humbolt mine should be included on the map and open to the public as a public right-of-way road that can be driven in a vehicle.

Agency Response: The recent decision on the Burgdorf Road Management and Abandoned/Inactive Mine Site Reclamation closed this road. The Forest made a conscious decision not to revisit the road closures identified in the Burgdorf Road Management decision during the travel planning process because it was such a recent decision.

16. Trail 132 provides access to Republican Flats, it was asserted by Idaho County and should remain open to ATV travel.

Agency Response: The Selected Alternative designates a former two-wheel motorized section of trail 132 as an ATV trail, giving the entire trail a new number, trail #232. Trail 132 from its junction with the new ATV trail, to where it intersects trail 137 is now designated non-motorized because of resource concerns. The trail crosses Houston Creek and is very steep with many erosion problems. The alternative ATV route, trail #232, with proper design features in place, has been designated in the area and accesses the same general terrain. Any assertions by counties, once validated, will be reflected on the annual MVUM update.

17. Trail 137 (MA 10) should be open to ATV travel.

Agency Response: Trail 137 (Proposal 10-3) was not considered for ATV trail under any alternative due to resource concerns along the existing trail tread that could not be mitigated with basic trail maintenance. Also see Response to # 16 above.

18. The trail behind Secesh Meadows #4 that leads up Chimney Rock should be kept open as a two-wheel trail, and, the road that leaves Warren Wagon Road in T22N R6E Sec 11 and follows Smith Creek into Sec 15 should be left open, and the road that leaves FS 355 in T22N R7E Sec 4 and travels to the west should remain open, and the road through the dredge ponds of NW Warren that starts in T23N R6E should be shown on the map designated open.

Agency Response: Many unauthorized roads exist in this area, but were not brought into the proposed designated motorized system because of private land issues and lack of Forest Service easements through these private land areas. The Forest cannot designate motorized routes when we do not have a signed easement with the private landowner to allow for public access from at least one end of the road or trail. This does not preclude future consideration for trail development if easement issues are resolved.

19. The trail that leaves Warren Wagon Road in T22N R6E Sec 11 and goes through the Little Giant Mine is part of the historic Tailholt Trail. It is suitable for ATV travel.

Agency Response: See response to #18.

20. Designate open the road above Warren Creek as it is used regularly and has been in existence since before 1863. It should be at least an ATV trail. (Road begins above Warren Transfer Station-which should also be on the designated open system, and follows Houston Creek), it's an Idaho County assertion.

Agency Response: The Forest cannot designate this road because we do not have legal access to the unauthorized route. If legal access can be obtained in the future, this route may be added to the designated system.

Regarding county assertion on the road, the Forest recognizes that all counties on the Forest have many road and trail assertions listed on maps they have provided to us during the travel planning process. This decision does not preclude R.S. 2477 validation thru the court system. Once any road or trail assertions are validated in court, and the county takes over maintenance of these roads and trails, the Forest MVUMs will display the change in jurisdiction and responsibility for resource protection. Until that time the Forest has the responsibility to manage and maintain a designated road and trail system that it feels can best meet the recreating public needs and be within the ability of the Forest to realistically manage with existing personnel and existing funds. Because county assertions exist does not mean the Forest can abdicate its responsibility to assure resource protection, and a reasonable recreational access system that can be maintained with existing resources.

There are several motorized trails designated open in the Selected Alternative in the Warren area, trail #126 out of Warren is two-wheel motorized up Slaughter Creek, trail #130 over to War Eagle Mountain is motorized, and a new ATV trail shown as trail # 232 on the ROD map, which begins at road 50331 provides motorized opportunities. Trail #139 which follows Warren Creek is non-motorized.

21. The road that leaves FS370 in T22N R 6E Sec 9 should remain open to ATVs it is an access road to the Luck Ben Mine.

Agency Response: Lucky Ben is a private inholding. Access into this inholding is documented in the Lucky Ben Access Project Decision Memo signed in November of 2005. Private landowners access is not analyzed in the travel plan, which authorizes recreational public access. See ROD page 18, which discuss access to private lands, and access for mining activities.

22. The road that goes north from Warren Wagon Road in T22 R7E Sec 20 should remain open to the public. It was asserted by Idaho County.

Agency Response: It appears the road you are referring to is open, Burgdorf Road 355, located northeast of Warren Summit.

23. The road that continues south from Pony Meadows road FS359 to Deer should be left open to ATV travel.

Agency Response: The first 2 miles of this road are open in the Selected Alternative. The last five miles are closed.

24. The FS must put the road that begins in T22N R6E Sec 14 on the map and keep it open to the public, I've driven that road in a car it goes past the Bear Track Mine and several other mining claims.

Agency Response: This route was located in a previously open to motorized cross country travel "C" area. The district agrees that this route may be a viable recreational trail opportunity in the future. Since it was not placed into any alternative during scoping or draft EIS, when funding allows the district will do a site-specific analysis on this potential trail opportunity. Access to mining claims would be addressed under another process.

25. I request documents that show that proper Forest Service procedure was followed in closing trails #074, #070, and #069 to motorized use, including a public comment period.

Agency Response: On March 16th of 2000 both *The Star News* and *Adams County Record* newspapers published the proposed changes and solicited public comment on those changes to those specific trails. An article soliciting public input was also published in the *Idaho Statesman* on March 23, 2000.

26. *It is unfair to close two-wheel motorized trails and designate them for non-motorized use because of trailhead registration sign-in boxes use data. Where in Forest Service policy does it say that trails will be managed based on the data?*

Agency Response: Trail registration box data provides an indicator of use was only one factor in the proposed designation of these trails in the South Fork as non-motorized. Nowhere in Forest Service policy does it say trails will be managed based on use figures. The primary reasons for non-motorized designation on several trails in the South Fork was because of erosion control problems associated with the steep nature and poor trail design of these trails, as mentioned on page 3-23 (Environmental Consequences) of the FEIS. There are numerous two-wheel motorized routes designated open in the Selected Alternative in the South Fork area.

27. *Trail 110 from Box Lake to the Lick Creek road should become a two-wheel motorized route to allow motorized access from the lake down to Lick Creek road.*

Agency Response: This proposal was not brought up during the scoping or DEIS period, and therefore was not analyzed in any alternative. The route is both steep and rocky and not suitable for motorized access as designed. Motorized access to Box Lake is available from Crestline Trail.

28. *Trail #093 (Fourmile Creek-MA12) should be reestablished as two-wheel motorized use.*

Agency Response: This trail is non-motorized for its entire length where it leaves trail 090 to its terminus at the South Fork road on the Boise National Forest. No proposal to change this specific trail to two-wheel motorized use was brought up during scoping or the DEIS comment period therefore it was not analyzed in any alternative.

29. *Trail #101 out of Kennally Creek Campground should be opened to motorized use all the way to the junction of trail #114.*

Agency Response: Trail # 101 is two-wheel motorized from its junction with trail 102, which starts at the Kennally Creek Campground for 0.9 miles to the junction with trail #99. At that point it becomes a non-motorized trail. This non-motorized portion of the trail was not engineered for motorized use and was not analyzed for motorized use in any alternative. Trail #99, originating at its junction with trail 101, is two-wheel motorized and provides motorized access as it connects with trail #100, over to the SFSR road.

30. *Trails 79 and 80 should be designated for non-motorized use to protect the quiet and solitude of the Secesh Recommended Wilderness.*

Agency Response: No proposals were identified through the travel planning process to change the use designation of either of these trails. Use on these trails is low, with the exception of use along the portion of trail 080 within the Loon Lake Loop trail, and few conflicts between user groups have been identified. Current motorized use is limited due to

difficult terrain. They will remain as their current designation of two-wheel motorized. Existing motorized use in recommended wilderness is allowed to continue if it is not degrading wilderness values, causing resource damage or user conflicts result. None of these items have been identified to date along these trail segments to a degree that cannot be mitigated with trail maintenance.

Mining and other Unauthorized Roads in the Yellow Pine and Big Creek Area – Cleveland Mine Road, Golden Cup Mine Road, Golden Gate Road, Ludwig Mine Road, McCrea Mine Road, Moscow Mine Road, Red Metal Mine Road, Sugar Creek to Cinnabar Road, Riordan Lake Road, Horse Heaven Road, Headwaters of Big Creek Road, Jacob Ladder Flat Road, Logan Creek Road, Smith Creek Road

31. These roads are heavily used by local residents and visitors for recreational purposes and important for the local business and economy of the area. Closing these roads will adversely affect local residents and the small business and economy of the area.

Agency Response: The trails leading to the Golden Cup Mine, McCrae Mine, Red Metal Mine, Sugar Creek to Cinnabar Mine, Profile Gap-Wilson-Glasco Mines and Independence Mines, have not been shown open to motorized use since the publishing of the 2000 “Backroads” maps – the official travel errata map to the 1995 visitor use map. The Forest has done little to manage these roads, and lack of maintenance has, in the past, often closed roads naturally. But, with the influx of ATV use, these roads have not grown in and on-the-ground, continue to appear available for motorized use. No change to this management was proposed during scoping or the DEIS so it was not analyzed under any alternative, but the Forest realizes that there was a lack of understanding by many locals in the Big Creek and Yellow Pine area about the “Backroads” map and its validity. As funding allows, site-specific analysis may be conducted in the area to identify routes suited for use as recreational trails while avoiding potential environmental impacts. Smith Creek road 371, past the 373 junction, remains open to ATVs in the Selected Alternative. The road to Pueblo Summit, 373, remains open to full size vehicles. Golden Gate Hill and the road to Riordan Lake are on the Boise National Forest.

General Comments on FEIS

Cross-country motorized travel

32. The National Directive allows specific areas to be designated for off-road travel. This plan fails to consider a suggestion during scoping to keep the area just north of the Secesh Meadows Subdivision #4 open so kids could safely ride their motorcycles and ATV's off the roads. This should be considered.

Agency Response: Alternative A, page 3-28 in the FEIS analyzed large scale open areas, as did the corresponding resource specialists in their evaluation of Alternative A (wildlife, fisheries, soils), but the lands outside of Secesh were not encompassed in those open areas. The National Forest System lands outside the town of Secesh have been closed to off-road travel for years due to fisheries habitat concerns. Legal easements to access many of these

area have not been secured with private landowners, thus designating these unauthorized road segments open is not possible at this time.

33. The Forest Plan needs to be amended to show the changes in mileages and maps. The mileages and maps are incorrect in the current Forest Plan.

Agency Response: If any changes are needed to the Payette Forest Plan with the decision published in the ROD for Travel Planning, they will be made with an errata update to the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan guided the Forest to complete Travel Planning.

Dispersed Camping and Game Retrieval

34. The proposals in the FEIS are too impactful on dispersed camping opportunities especially on the Krassel Ranger District. Restrictions will be difficult to enforce with little benefit.

Agency Response: The Krassel and McCall Ranger Districts will strive to identify multiple dispersed camping opportunities for motorized users. Non-motorized users are not required to camp in designated sites. Although this will be a change to the public from existing condition, other Forest's have been successful implementing "dispersed camping in designated areas only" and the recreating public seems to be accepting of the opportunities. A prime example is along Highway 21 on the Lowman Ranger District, Boise National Forest, where "dispersed camping in designated areas" has been in effect for many years.

Economics, Visitor Use, and Enforcement

35. The remote backcountry location of Warren will need to have many unauthorized roads remain open for fire protection and access, search and rescue operations, and access to Forest products.

Agency Response: The Forest will continue to work with the Counties and local residents during Search & Rescue operations, and if needed will give permission to travel on the needed road system to assist the operations. The Forest is not decommissioning roads with this decision, so if needed, roads will be available during fire suppression efforts.

36. The FEIS fails to address the economic consequences to small businesses and property owners in the Big Creek and Yellow Pine communities, and fails to address the economic consequences to small businesses and requirements of Executive Order 13272.

Agency Response: Comments from these small communities (generated from several meetings with members of the Yellow Pine and Big Creek communities during the months of September and October 2007) were taken into consideration when selecting the alternative in the ROD. The Selected Alternative allows for motorized access to many areas around Big Creek and Yellow Pine to support motorized recreation, and addressed most economic concerns raised by small businesses in that local area.

37. The economics evaluation is flawed. Reliance on the Gallatin study is not a good match for conditions on the Payette and an economic study should be completed.

Agency Response: See the ROD, "Economic Analysis" page 19, which responds to this comment. Under this decision, changes in use opportunities vary little from existing condition and do not represent an elimination or massive reduction of any one particular use. This decision maintains a variety of uses and as such is not expected to have a measurable effect on local businesses reliant on recreational users and uses on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts.

The addition of several new ATV routes and associated loop opportunities provides an opportunity for local counties and businesses to capitalize on this newly expanded form of recreational opportunity. In summary, when compared with the force of national trends, regional and local demographics and larger economic factors influencing the economies of Adams and Valley and Idaho Counties, the relatively small changes in different recreational travel designations in the snow-free seasons on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts are unlikely to have measurable economic impacts.

Federal Road and Trail Act (FRTA)

38. There are 360 miles of roads that have recently been transferred to Valley County by FRTA easements. Indicate those roads on the Travel Plan maps, and the FEIS fails to address roads within the forest that are not under USFS jurisdiction including historic rights of way and rights of ways with a FRTA easement.

Agency Response: The MVUM will adhere to agency-wide mapping standards which include designating only roads and trails that will be open to motorized travel on National Forest System lands. Roads under non-Federal jurisdiction have no assigned designated use. The Motor Vehicle Use map cannot designate roads or trails that are not within our Forest Service jurisdiction. These roads and trails will be marked in gray on the map to show connections, but will not be designated with type of use allowed, nor who owns or has jurisdiction of those roads.

Motorized Road and Trail Access

39. We know Bear Basin is to be closed to off-trail use. Why then was the Forest Service conducting ATV training off road on June 6th, 2007? Forest employees were leaving old secondary roads in the West Face parking lot area and making new trails.

Agency Response: The area was open to motorized use at the time.

40. It appears the Forest Service has closed the Big Creek road past the airstrip, can you still get to the Big Creek Trailhead with a truck?

Agency Response: The road to the Big Creek Trailhead is open to all vehicle types in all alternatives, including the Selected Alternative.

Public Involvement

41. The Forest Service has not discussed travel management proposals with Yellow Pine and Big Creek residents and does not fully understand the concerns or potential impacts on the communities. Proposed road closures and area designations may adversely impact the businesses and local economy of the area. Current efforts appear to be top down and have not included necessary local involvement

Agency Response: During the past three years, since the travel plan update was initially proposed, the Forest has made an effort to engage the public throughout the process. The Forest held public meetings during the initial stages of scoping, and after the release of the DEIS, that were advertised in the local McCall, Council and Weiser newspapers, and in the Boise paper, the *Idaho Statesman*. Meetings have been held in Weiser, Riggins, Council, McCall and Boise. Hundreds of individuals responded to the project's initial scoping document, and following DEIS and FEIS documents. The scope of public involvement is listed on page 1-7 and 1-8, Chapter 1, in the FEIS.

The Forest understands the need to better communicate with Yellow Pine and Big Creek residents, and the decision maker for this document, the Forest Supervisor, and the Krassel District Ranger attended several meetings with residents of these communities in September and October of 2007. The community's comments were taken into consideration when making the final decision on motorized route designation in this Krassel/McCall ROD.

R.S. 2477 (also see specific proposals for R.S. 2477 comments)

42. The trend in granting Valley County control of roads on the PNF is a concern. Unless an R.S. 2477 assertion has been validated, these roads and trails still fall under the jurisdiction of the PNF.

Agency Response: On roads where Counties have been given a Forest Roads and Trails Act (FRTA) Easement, jurisdiction for maintenance and operations of the roads fall to the County, and the road will not be designated for type of motorized use by the PNF. These roads will show up on the MVUM as "other" roads, outside our jurisdiction.

Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness

43. Closing recommended wilderness to motorized and mechanized uses is consistent with the management goal for recommended wilderness as identified in the Payette Land and Resource Management Plan, which directs the Payette to "manage recommended wilderness to protect wilderness values as defined in the Wilderness Act".

Agency Response: The Forest does not feel that current existing motorized use within the recommended wilderness areas in the Needles and the Secesh is detrimental to future wilderness values. Motorized and mechanical transport in recommended wilderness areas, where it currently exists may be allowed to continue if it does not degrade wilderness

values, cause resource damage or result in user conflicts (WRGU05 in the PNF Forest Plan).

44. Despite the LRMP goal of not compromising or reducing the potential designation of the Secesh Recommended Wilderness, the preferred alternative proposes to open one of the few non-motorized reaches of the South Fork of the Salmon River to 2-wheel motorized vehicles. (Proposal 12-2, 12-15, 12-16, 12-17b). Designation of these trails for motorized use will clearly reduce the potential for future wilderness designation of the area, and the proposed trails along the South Fork River within the Secesh Recommended Wilderness are contrary to direction in the OHV Rule. The responsible official is required to minimize "damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources" and conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands."

Agency Response: Trail 77 (proposal 12-16) is currently (Alternative A) two-wheel motorized and open for two-wheel motorized use. The Selected Alternative retains that two-wheel motorized use, so there was no change to this trails current designation. Trail 76 (proposal 12-15 and 12-2) from the Elk Creek road down to its junction with trail 77 is designated as two-wheel motorized (existing condition), but would remain closed to motorized use and pack and saddle stock, as specified in the existing Special Order Closure Order. Since it has been closed under a special order for over 10 years, it was shown on Alternative A as "non-motorized" to reflect existing use. This probably should have been listed as two-wheel motorized designation, but closed under special order to motorized use and pack and saddle stock. This clarification has been added to the errata in the FEIS. So, we would not be "adding" two-wheel motorized use to a recommended wilderness area, we would just be authorizing continued existing designations to remain via this decision. Major sections of trail 76 washed out during a rain event in 1997, and the trail has been closed to above mentioned uses under a special order since 1997 for safety reasons, and to minimize impacts to soil and watershed resources, but it has remained a two-wheel motorized trail.

The Hamilton Bar Road (Proposal 12-17) is currently open to all vehicles for 3 miles, so a designation to two-wheel motorized use for a majority of the road would reduce previously full size vehicle traffic along this 2.7 mile river corridor section.

Current Forest Plan standards allow existing motorized use to continue in recommended wilderness if these uses do not lead to long-term adverse changes in wilderness values. Before the special order would be lifted on trail 76 to designate it back open to motorized use again, it would need to meet design features laid out in the FEIS to bring the trail back to standard, which if built correctly, would minimize any resource damage.

45. Your claim that no new motorized uses can occur in recommended wilderness areas (RWA) is incorrect.

Agency Response: To introduce new motorized uses into the Recommended Wilderness areas on the Payette National Forest would require a significant Forest Plan amendment,

and would be counter to the management strategy of these areas as laid out in the recently completed Payette National Forest Land Management Plan. Current Payette National Forest Plan Standards prohibit new motorized use in recommended wilderness (PNF Land and Resource Management Plan pages III-200 and III-249).

46. It is misleading not to include the acreage currently designated Wilderness as part of the Payette National Forest currently closed to motorized recreation.

Agency Response: The FCRONRW was not included within the project area because the primary focus of the travel plan was the designation of motorized routes. Therefore, the FCRONRW was not discussed in any detail. The Wilderness was recognized as containing and providing recreational opportunities and as noted on in the FEIS on page 3-4 “Changes between Draft and Final EIS” Recreation opportunities available in the FCRONRW adjacent to the project area” were to be addressed and placed within the Existing conditions Recreation Section of the FEIS. This section was mistakenly not added, and is included in the errata to the FEIS in Appendix A. The FCRONRW will also show up on the ROD map and the MVUM as a part of the Krassel and McCall Ranger Districts, although trails within the Wilderness are non-motorized and will not show up on the MVUM, which displays only motorized routes.

47. The Payette contains one of the largest wilderness areas and numerous other roadless areas that meet the needs of the non-motorized public generously.

Agency Response: See response to # 246 in the DEIS. The Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness was not within the Project Area of this Travel Plan, but is recognized as providing non-motorized, non-mechanized opportunities for the public. Many of the Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) on the Payette National Forest provide both motorized and non-motorized trails, and are not exclusively for non-motorized use.

Comments on Specific Proposals reproduced from the Weiser Travel Plan ROD

Proposal ID 3-58

48. This proposal is shown as an ATV trail in Alternative E, but can only be accessed from two-wheel or non-motorized trail segments. How do ATV's access this trail?

Agency Response: This proposal is associated with trail #352 that accesses the overlook at Rush Peak and can be accessed from road 51155 – the Buck Park road. The OHV trail was missing from the FEIS map, and that error has been corrected. It added 1.7 miles of OHV trail to the motorized designated open trail system.

Comments on Trails or Roads not Included as Proposals

49. *To close a trail to one user group, because of lack of use, seems like an oxymoron in terms of management. Does this mean only moderate use is acceptable? What happens if there is too much use, does that warrant a closure as well?*

Agency Response: Not designating some trails for two-wheel motorized use was not determined solely by amount of use the trail received. It was based primarily on resource issues and trail design features. Lack of use was however used to describe the affects to certain user groups if they were to loose their opportunities on a trail; to describe the scope of the effect to the specific user group in numbers of users potentially affected.

50. *Low volume use on non-motorized trails should go through an on-the-ground investigation to determine if they are suitable to convert to motorized trails.*

Agency Response: Non-motorized trails providing a quiet, low volume of use provide a desired experience for many non-motorized users, and the Forest did not want to propose across-the board conversion of these types of trails to potential two-wheel motorized use. The Forest did propose some trail designations that differed from current condition, and in those cases did do an analysis to determine the affect of the change in designation (trail conversion from either non-motorized use to motorized use, or motorized use to non-motorized use). Low volume use on non-motorized trails was not used as an indicator to trigger a conversion to motorized use. Future on the ground investigations of individual trails are likely to occur as part of future specific trail projects.

51. *I request the Forest Service do a scientific study to convert all two-wheel motorized trails to ATV trails.*

Agency Response: This large-scale conversion of two-wheel motorized trails to ATV use was not a part of the project purpose and need and is outside the scope of this project. Conversion of all two-wheel trails to ATV trails would not maintain two-wheel motorized opportunities including a single track trail experience identified as an important opportunity to two-wheel motorized user groups. Two-wheel motorized trails offer a unique experience to those riders. To convert single track trails designed for two-wheel motorized to larger, wider ATV width would take a large-scale on the ground site specific study, and also, large amounts of trail reconstruction. Major site-specific analyses of over 500 miles of trails would be required for the whole scale conversion to ATV trails. Several individual two-wheel motorized trails were analyzed for conversion to ATV trails, and are shown as ATV trails in Alternative E.

General Comments on FEIS

All terrain Vehicles (ATV's)

52. *There has been no greater degeneration of public lands in the last 15 years than the out of control growth of motorized recreation abuse, especially ATVs. This document does not seriously address this problem on a per trail basis, instead it only insures that the destruction continues and becomes more widespread.*

Agency Response: With the selection of the Selected Alternative the Forest will implement the elimination of motorized cross-country travel Forest-wide, which will improve the condition of those areas currently open to motorized cross-country travel. The elimination of motorized cross-country travel by ATV's and other motorized vehicles is a major improvement over the current condition (Alternative A). The Forest team did look at the existing trail network, and put forward in different alternatives, changes to current motorized trail designations where resource problems were severe and irreparable with future maintenance, or where opportunities existed to reduce use conflicts.

53. *In my time in the wilderness I have met very few responsible ATV travelers. This holds less true for the bikers. There are no regulations, no fines, no teaching of respect for the lands. This is very troublesome.*

Agency Response: The Payette National Forest backcountry offers both motorized and non-motorized trails to give the public a choice on their recreation trail experience. The true "Wilderness" trails are restricted to non-motorized and non-mechanized travel. The national "Tread Lightly" campaign has been successful nation-wide in getting the message out to motorized users to pursue proper trail etiquette, with the least impacts to the land. The Forest will continue to work with the motorized community and the non-motorized community to teach respect for the land through education via signing and on-the-ground ranger patrols.

54. *ATV's are loud, noisy, and pollute the environment - - to say nothing of frightening the wildlife. They also can negatively impact habitat for fish and wildlife. Please leave the roads designated as non-motorized as they are so that those of us who want to enjoy nature - naturally (i.e., hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, even mountain bikes) - - can do so.*

Agency Response: The Forest has tried to provide recreational opportunities for multiple uses, both motorized and non-motorized. To ensure a non-motorized opportunity, the Selected Alternative designates 68 miles of non-motorized trails on the Weiser Ranger District.

55. *This plan would reduce opportunities and lessen the quality of experiences for hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders since ATVs are extremely loud and their use would affect habitat for fish and wildlife.*

Agency Response: This plan actually increases opportunities for non-motorized users by eliminating previous (authorized in the old - C, D and E areas) motorized cross-country travel off trail areas, and restricts users of motorized vehicles to remain on the designated motorized route system.

56. *Within the FEIS, ATV use is not given necessary consideration especially given the increased demand for this type of use. Two-wheel and non-motorized trail miles outnumber ATV trails by a ratio 5-1.*

Agency Response: The Selected Alternative provides 21.5 miles of ATV trail, an increase of 5.7 miles from existing condition on the Weiser Ranger District. There are also many miles of back country gravel roads open to ATV use if the licensed driver wants to ride on the road system where they may encounter passenger car vehicles. The Forest feels this is a very pro-active measure to provide for ATV riding opportunities. More opportunities can be explored in the future as funding becomes available, taking into account resource conditions on the ground and ability to adequately fund trail maintenance.

57. *To deny use of a closed or unauthorized road for an ATV route until the road is narrowed and reclaimed, and meets design features, seems to be an unreasonable overkill, because funding to accomplish it may be delayed for a long time.*

Agency Response: Many existing system roads and trails were able to be designated “as is”, but new roads or trails (which include any unauthorized routes or previously closed roads) need to meet design standards prior to designations. These design features were put in place to assure the Forest would not be condoning use on trails with unacceptable resource impacts. Since the Forest did not design many of these routes to address resource issues, safety issues, or hazard to stock because of trail clearance, they will not be formally designated as open to motorized use until design features can be met. With the help of the many volunteers and partners that offered their trails maintenance services and trail construction funding, the district should be able to designate many of the routes in the near future. If the partnerships and volunteer support is not there, it will take longer using only allocated funds.

58. *The time period the agency forecasts for actually implementing allowed use on the newly designated (previously unauthorized) routes needs to be clarified.*

Agency Response: See the response to number 11 above. Some of the unauthorized routes converted to roads or trails already meet design feature requirements, and will be designated with the first MVUM. Other routes needing more work will not be designated (so use will not be allowed once the MVUM is published) until design features are met, which in some cases could take many years, as described in the FEIS under Chapter 3, the Recreation section titled “Cost Management” for each alternative. In the FEIS, Chapter 2, Alternatives, each table in the individual MA descriptions includes an * below the table, which denotes trails in the table that will need to have design features met prior to designation. See FEIS table 2-5 on page 2-19 for an example.

59. *The current travel plan addresses ATV's but it is unclear whether utility vehicles are included in this designation.*

Agency Response: Utility vehicles are not allowed on the ATV trail system, because the trails were not designed to accommodate their wider frames, but UTVs may use the OHV

trails (7.4 miles included for designation in Alternative E) and as State of Idaho law allows, they can use the public road system. The MVUM will display the roads and/or trails the UTVs can use.

Cooperating Agencies/Cooperators

60. The cooperating agencies working with the Forest Service were not in agreement with Alternative E as presented in the FEIS and cooperators were not allowed to attend the final meeting comments of the IDT or make substantive comments before the DEIS was released.

Agency Response: Cooperating agencies have been involved with the Travel Plan throughout the planning process and were afforded the opportunity to assist with the development of alternatives prior to release of the DEIS. Cooperators were also provided a 2 week review of the FEIS before it was released to the public. Comments received from cooperators were considered and incorporated into the FEIS as appropriate. No alternative received complete consensus from each team member, they were developed to display a wide range of opportunities and better display a range of opportunities to the decision maker and public. The range of alternatives is meant to display responsiveness to various concerns from the public, and team members including cooperators.

Cross-country motorized travel

61. As the FEIS is currently written, the public is not being informed about the loss of access associated with closing all non-system roads.

Agency Response: The FEIS mentions in several key places within the document that unauthorized roads not identified to remain open with one of the alternatives would be closed. See pages S-10 (roads definition), page 1-4 Proposed Action, and most definitively on page 1-11, Access Opportunities where it states: "Allowance of indiscriminant access to unauthorized (also known as user-created, unclassified, or non-system) roads, trails, and/or areas would not meet the purpose and need for the project or Forest Plan and national direction. In many cases, these routes were developed without agency authorization, environmental analysis, or public involvement, hence they do not have the same status as NFS roads and trails included in the PNF Travel Management Plan. Through the public involvement process, the Forest Service was made aware of specific unauthorized routes that members of the public proposed be added to the Travel Plan system. All of these proposals were reviewed and several of the routes were placed into Alternative C, and the selected Alternative E - modified."

62. The Off Road Vehicle Rule is just now providing directives for Forest Service personnel to use. It is premature to reach a decision on the travel plan at this time for ORV usage.

Agency Response: The agency's mission to protect resources is sufficient justification to implement the Rule now. The Chief of the Forest Service gave everyone, including congress and the public, a promise that we would implement the Rule within 4 years and the need for improved travel management on National Forests is too great to wait. While the directives will provide more detailed guidance on the Rule, the Rule itself is clear about

travel management requirements for Forests to consider during travel management planning.

Cumulative Effects

63. You must address the cumulative effects of the damages the counties have suffered from the Federal Governments failure under the 25% Act of 1908 and PILT.

Agency Response: This request is outside the scope of this project analysis.

64. The effects of previous road and trail closures must be incorporated into the analysis and a connection between the facts on the ground and in the travel plan should be clearly visible.

Agency Response: The project incorporated the existing system of roads and trails into Alternative A analysis. The existing system of open system roads and trails was used as the baseline. The cumulative effects section (page 3-63 through 3-66) for recreation discussed certain past and foreseeable future actions that could affect the recreation resource.

65. The Payette must consider cumulative effects associated with the travel management plan.

Agency Response: The FEIS includes consideration and disclosure of cumulative effects as required by federal laws and regulations. Cumulative impact is defined by CEQ regulation as the impact on the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the action, when added to other past, present and reasonable foreseeable future actions (40 CFR 1508.7). Additional guidance on analyzing cumulative effects was provided by CEQ in a memorandum. “Based on scoping, agencies have the discretion to determine whether, and to what extent, information about the specific nature, design, or present effects of a past action is useful for the agency’s analysis of the effects of a proposal for agency action and its reasonable alternatives. Agencies are not required to list or analyze the effects of individual past actions unless such information is necessary to describe the cumulative effects of all past actions combined” (CEQ Memorandum, June 24, 2005). Unmanaged recreation, specifically motorized or OHV use, is identified as one of the main threats to public lands and is a primary issue analyzed throughout the Payette National Forest Travel Management Plan.

Designation of Roads

66. The designation of roads as closed unless identified as open should be reversed where a road is considered open unless marked as closed on the ground.

Agency Response: The new national policy for managing OHV use on National Forest System lands established the same signing and mapping policy for all Forests across the nation, in an effort to provide consistency and reduce confusion. Once all Forests have completed their travel planning process, mapping for roads and trails will follow the

national policy to display only open motorized routes. The Forest does not have the ability to change this designation process, it is outside the scope of our decision making ability.

Differences between the DEIS and FEIS

67. *What is being purported as the FEIS is not even close to the reviewed DEIS.*

Agency Response: The Forest developed Alternative E, the preferred alternative for the FEIS using the hundreds of comments received on the DEIS. The other four alternatives are very similar to what was presented in the DEIS and any changes between draft and final EIS were highlighted on page 2-1, 2-2, and 3-4, of the FEIS.

Dispersed Camping and Game Retrieval

68. *The same limits to off road travel should apply for game retrieval as for dispersed camping. The PNF Travel Plan should be consistent with the National Directive. The Forest Service should allow hunters motorized access to retrieve game as outlined in the National Travel Planning directive. Special accommodations may need to be made for handicapped hunters, and comments were made during scoping to include game retrieval areas during hunting season after 2 p.m. in IDFG units 22 and 23. Those requests were not placed into an alternative.*

Agency Response: The National Directive states that game retrieval will be decided at the local level, not by National Direction. The Selected Alternative prohibits game retrieval using motorized vehicles off designated routes. Idaho State Fish and Game Department has stated they do not support motorized access for game retrieval. Reasonable restrictions on motor vehicle use, applied consistently to everyone, are not discriminatory.

69. *Having narrowed the allowed use in designated motorized corridors along designated motorized routes to only allow dispersed camping appears to be an arbitrary and capricious and pre-decisional decision.*

Agency Response: Under 36CFR (212.51 (b)) *Motor vehicle use for dispersed camping or big game retrieval*. States: "In designating routes, the responsible official may include in the designation the limited use of motor vehicles within a specified distance of certain designated routes, and if appropriate within specified time periods, solely for the purposes of dispersed camping or retrieval of a downed big game animal by an individual who has legally taken that animal". In my Selected Alternative I allow limited use of motor vehicles within 300 feet of designated roads and 100 feet of designated motorized trails. This carries over the prior/past Payette National Forest Travel Plan which allowed for motorized off-road travel within 300 feet of a designated road or 100 feet of a designated trail to access undeveloped campsites. Based on information contained in by FEIS regarding potential damage to resources, and to try and be consistent with other Forest's in Region 4, I am prohibiting retrieval of a downed big game animal using a motorized vehicle.

70. *Developed campgrounds often discourage horses in campgrounds due to conflicts with other campers. Therefore a horse camper will look for a dispersed camp site to comply and avoid a conflict.*

Agency Response: Several of the Payette's campgrounds allow for horses, including Kennally, Secesh Horse Camp, Chinook, Hard Creek Dispersed campground, Cabin Flats dispersed campground, Hitt Mountain dispersed campground, Ponderosa Horse Camp, and Poverty Flats CG (horse hitching rails). Also, there are numerous dispersed camping areas within the 300 foot corridor which allow for overnight camping (including camping with livestock) throughout the majority of the Forest.

Economics, Visitor Use, and Enforcement

71. *The Forest Service did not analyze the economic contribution that active non-motorized has on the economy of the area.*

Agency Response: The Forest has provided for both motorized and non-motorized use opportunities throughout the Forest in both summer and winter months. The purpose of this travel plan was to designate a system of roads and trails open to use. Economic impacts of travel management including non-motorized uses are discussed in the FEIS on pages 1-15 to 1-16.

72. *To base a decision on educating the public through public meetings and brochures, knowing that industry wide standards prove that this means of marketing is not effective is irresponsible.*

Agency Response: The Forest plans to use many methods to inform the public on the new travel regulations including maps, internet information, newspaper articles, and signs, along with on-the-ground Forest Service Law Enforcement. It will take several years of intense work to familiarize the public with the new travel regulations for both winter and summer. See the "implementation" direction in the ROD.

73. *No real proactive mechanism for volunteer support has been identified to mitigate issues and proposed problems.*

Agency Response: Volunteers were identified in the FEIS as one means of implementing some of the work identified in this travel plan. During the travel planning process numerous individuals and groups have come forward to volunteer for trail maintenance projects. The Forest realizes that use of volunteers will take a great deal of coordination and work. As stated in the "Cost to Program Management" sections for each alternative, the Forest does not propose volunteers as a solution to the lack of trail maintenance. The implementation portion of the ROD states some techniques the Forest will use, including volunteer support, to accomplish future trail maintenance goals.

74. *There have been no visitor studies conducted in the preparation of this Travel Plan. The Forest Service must conduct visitor studies before implementing the Travel Plan.*

Agency Response: There is no requirement in the Travel Management Final Rule that Visitor Use studies be completed or conducted prior to designating a system of motorize roads, trails and areas. Even so, information gathered in the 2002 National Visitor Use Monitoring surveys was used and cited in the document. This survey documented user satisfaction, economic data, and visitor use figures on the Payette National Forest.

75. *Handicap accessible areas need to be identified on maps.*

Agency Response: The map protocol developed nationally for Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) does not indicate areas for the disabled. This is outside the scope of this project. Many existing brochures available at all of the districts on the Payette National Forest display handicap accessible features at our developed campgrounds.

Firewood Gathering

76. *The reduction in open roads will impact local lower income resident's ability to gather firewood and place added impacts on remaining open roads*

Agency Response: The Payette agrees that access for firewood cutting is an important issue. However, this issue is outside the scope of route designation for travel management planning because it is handled by the Forest in a separate permitting process as disclosed in the DEIS and FEIS (see Chapter 1 Section 1.10.2 Non-Significant Issues for a discussion of access for firewood cutting). Please refer to the ROD section "Response to Primary Comments – Firewood Gathering" for a complete description of my decision.

Maps

77. *There has not been consistency in the maps between scoping, the DEIS and the FEIS*

Agency Response: Through each step of the Travel Planning process, scoping, DEIS and FEIS the Forest made a concerted effort to improve the map packages using comments received from the public at each juncture. Every effort was made to provide quality, understandable maps so the public could identify individual site specific proposals. The maps provided in the documents, on the internet web page, on CD upon request, and at each individual office in hard copy format, were of sufficient quality to distinguish and understand each proposal as described in the document. Maps included with the final ROD follow closely the national template for the upcoming Motor Vehicle Use Map that will follow in the implementation stage. The only exception is that the **ROD map** also includes the non-motorized trail system, where the MVUM will not.

78. *There are still some errors on the Alternative A, existing condition maps, missing roads, trails in the wrong location.*

Agency Response: The GIS team worked with the best available information when assembling the maps for this project. Since this project has been going on for over four years, many conditions change, and it has been difficult to track and map all changes.

Several errors or omissions have been identified through the public review and an errata sheet has been compiled including identified corrections to maps. The MVUM to be published after the ROD is signed will show the best information available at that time as far as motorized roads and trails that will be open for motorized use. The maps will be updated on a regular basis, and every attempt will be made to capture information during those updates.

Mixed Use Traffic Study

79. *The USFS must complete a mixed use traffic study.*

Agency Response: The Forest is required to do a mixed use study for our road system only when a road is designated for dual use as a trail by other types of motorized vehicles, such as UTVs, ATVs, two-wheel motorized cycles. The Forest chose not to dual designate any roads as trails within our jurisdiction, and instead is deferring to Idaho State Law which allows for licensed drivers, with up to date registrations for their vehicles, to travel on graveled Forest System roads.

Motorized Road and Trail Access

80. *Evaluate the impact of fewer access routes to the higher level of use on the remaining routes.*

Agency Response: The impact of fewer access routes to the higher level of use on the remaining routes was analyzed in Chapter 3, pages 3-23 through 3-62. Monitoring will continue after the signing of the ROD to assess any change in level of use, and associated need for alterations to the travel plan.

81. *The FEIS does not offer adequate justification as to why the Forest Service feels it needs to offer expert riding trails on the PNF.*

Agency Response: The Payette National Forest is known for the diversity of motorized and non-motorized trail opportunities provided to the public. When feasible, the Forest tries to offer a diversity of trail experiences from expert to beginner terrain, similar to what a ski area does by providing skiers a range of skiing experience from expert black diamond slopes to easy, green circle slopes. This range of opportunities offers individuals a chance to experience the particular recreation opportunity they are searching for on the Forest.

82. *The analysis fails to include or discuss the "best available science" on recreation and its impacts. The analysis of vehicle use should be compared and contrasted to baseline data.*

Agency Response: The Forest incorporated the best available science related to recreation and its impacts in the discussion of the affected environment and potential environmental consequences on recreation for all five alternatives on pages 3-1 through 3-66. Summary tables on FEIS pages S-22 to S-26 and pages 2-57 to 2-59 provide a comparison of

different types of vehicle use between the current condition (i.e. the baseline) and the various alternatives.

83. There is no alternative that considers looking at increasing the number of road and trail miles open to the public although public use is increasing both in the summer and winter.

Agency Response: There are alternatives that increase various road and trail miles for different uses. For example, ATV trail and OHV miles increase on the Forest in Alternatives B, C, and E. Additionally, non-motorized trail miles increase in Alternatives B, D and E. The decision maker is charged with designating a system of roads and trails that can be managed using existing resources and proposing large increases in any use would be irresponsible if the trails cannot be maintained or use effectively enforced.

84. No additional motorized vehicle access or roads should be permitted within the Payette National Forest.

Agency Response: Overall the travel plan strives to balance different uses while protecting natural and cultural resource values. In addressing the demand for all uses on the Payette, providing opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation is necessary and the travel plan does include additional opportunities for both uses in Alternative E.

85. You have not adequately defined OHVs. There is a new class of OHV that is larger than an ATV and seats two passengers.

Agency Response: The MVUM will not display trails by "OHV", "UTV" or "ATV", but restricts designations to:

1. Roads Open to Highway Legal Vehicles Only
2. Roads Open to All Vehicles
3. Trails Open to Vehicles 50" of Less in Width (This is where ATV trails fit in)
4. Trails Open to All Vehicles (This is where OHV and UTVs fit in)
5. Trails open to motorcycles only.

Non-motorized trails will not appear on the MVUM, but are displayed on the ROD map included with this decision. Designation on the MVUM will be made by class of vehicle and, where appropriate, by time of year (Seasonal roads and trails).

86. Existing access roads should be left alone to facilitate dispersed recreation. Leave more miles open than you close.

Agency Response: Continued allowance of indiscriminant access to unauthorized roads, trails, and/or areas would not meet the purpose and need for the project or Forest Plan and national direction (Federal Register 2005: 70FR68264) for travel management.

Public Impacts/Local versus National

87. *The proposed travel plan has stronger effects on the local public than public from outside the area.*

Agency Response: The forest understands that the impacts on the public will be different. The agency must consider input from and effects on all the public when making decisions.

Public Involvement

88. *The travel plan lacks collaboration with users*

Agency Response: The ID team has worked over a four year period engaging the public through public meetings, newspaper articles, letters and formal comment periods. The Forest also involved cooperating agencies including Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation, Idaho State Fish & Game, and county commissioners or their appointed representatives from Valley, Washington, and Adams Counties. Idaho County declined to take part in the cooperating agency status for the project, but remained engaged through the comment periods. The Forest ID team also worked with the Winter Recreation Coalitions, which contains members from both the back country ski and snowmobile community. The ID team developed the original DEIS alternatives and Alternative E in the FEIS based on communication and collaboration with the public, and other state and federal agencies. Public involvement and collaboration has been on-going throughout the past several years of travel management planning.

Roadless Rule/Roadless Petition

89. *There is nothing in the roadless petition that stops or requires the Forest Service to do anything. The Forest Service has total discretion as far as management.*

Agency Response: See response to #253 in the DEIS. The Forest did not use the roadless petition to eliminate or develop any alternative in the Travel Plan document. The Forest used it's recently completed Forest Plan and management prescriptions within the plan to guide current and future motorized and non-motorized road and trail management within the many IRAs across the forest.

R.S. 2477 (also see specific proposals for RS 2477 comments)

90. *The FEIS fails to disclose a historic road analysis and ignores information and authority of cooperating agencies on road jurisdictions and R.S. 2477 designations.*

Agency Response: If or when any future RS 2477 assertions are validated in court, the Forest will update the Weiser Ranger District MVUM to reflect these assertions.

Unauthorized Roads

91. *Unauthorized roads are being closed without specific analysis of the need for closure, the Payette National Forest should complete an on the ground inventory of all routes in the open areas prior to closing them.*

Agency Response: During the scoping period for travel management the Forest asked the public to help the Agency identify unauthorized routes receiving enough use to make their addition to the National Forest travel system worth evaluation. Both roads and trails were brought forward into analysis.

The Travel Management Final Rule implements Executive Order 11644 “Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands” as amended by E.O. 11989. These Executive orders 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 those lands. The growing popularity and capabilities of OHVs demand new regulations. The magnitude and intensity of motor vehicle use has increased to the point the unrestricted cross-country travel cannot continue, because soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat are affected.

User created routes were developed without agency authorization, environmental analysis, or public involvement and do not have the same status as NFS roads and trails included in the forest transportation system. Some user routes are well-sited and provide excellent opportunities, while others are poorly located and cause unacceptable environmental impacts. The Department disagrees that a complete inventory of user-created routes is required in order to complete the designation process. Such an inventory may never be fully complete as new routes will continue to be created during the inventory process. A complete inventory would be very time consuming and expensive, delaying completion of route designation. The Payette National Forest was committed to working with the public to accept and analyze specific user routes brought forward during scoping and the DEIS for designation into the system. Several of these routes made it into the Selected Alternative for the Weiser Ranger District.

92. Not even the Clinton-era roadless regulations closed all IRAs to motorize use or treated them all as potential wilderness, yet “effects to future wilderness potential and wilderness attributes in IRAs” were analyzed as indicators. You have moved to treat every IRA as if it was designed wilderness. It is highly questionable that the indicators noted above are appropriate for recommended wilderness areas, they are absolutely inappropriate for inventoried roadless areas.

Agency Response: No alternatives propose to close IRAs to existing motorized use in either the summer or the winter. IRA’s were not treated as if they were designed wilderness, not even the recommended wilderness IRAs, which currently contain motorized trails, and over-snow motorized use areas. We did however, address potential effects to wilderness character and wilderness potential associated with changes in travel management, because the Payette National Forest is committed to protecting and managing roadless areas as an important component of the National Forest System. Each IRA falls under a “management prescription” in the Payette National Forest Plan. These management prescriptions outline how these areas are to be managed. Some IRAs encompass several management prescriptions. Some prescriptions are more restrictive to change than others. While only two IRAs on the Forest are recommended for potential future wilderness, all IRAs have components of wilderness character and potential. That is

why those elements were analyzed in the FEIS. Even the IRAs not recommended for potential future wilderness have guidelines in place to protect their dispersed, and in some cases more primitive recreation opportunities.

Wildlife Habitat Connectivity – Summer

93. The Forest Service should consider that there is no documentation or data to support closure of any motorized routes in the project area to improve wildlife connectivity.

Agency Response: Wildlife connectivity is discussed in Chapter 3. Forest management requirements for wildlife are listed in Table 2-27. Connectivity is improved when habitat is not fragmented by roads and trails. Fragmentation can lead to isolation of populations, reduced population size, and an increased risk of extinction (page 3-195). Both Alternative D and Alternative E provide winter closures to protect wildlife habitat (Chapter 2, Table 2-42). These closure acres improve wildlife connectivity by preventing habitat fragmentation. ESA direction requires protection for lynx and wolverine and their habitats. Forest Plan management direction states “manage recreational activities to maintain lynx habitat and connectivity” (TEOB30) (FEIS, Chapter 2, Table 2-27). Forest Plan direction (TEOB14) also states “identify and prioritize opportunities for restoration of habitat linkage zones to promote genetic integrity and species distribution” (Forest Plan, page III-9) and “provide well-distributed habitat and connective corridors important to sustaining wildlife species” (WIGO06) (Forest Plan, page III-5).

Wildlife Monitoring

94. The Forest Service should consider collecting sufficient data about existing conditions in relation to wildlife, then, if a motorized closure is enacted, the Forest Service should collect data demonstrating effects of the closure, including significant measurable improvements.

Agency Response: The Forest is committed to implementation and effectiveness monitoring for wildlife. Project design features in Chapter 2 are designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the route and area designation made with the travel management plan decision. Monitoring and evaluation plans for wildlife are located in Appendix E.

Scientific evidence

95. The Forest Service should consider that this EIS seriously lacks proper scientific foundation and evidence necessary to make critical sound wildlife management decisions, and,

The Forest Service should consider that supportive data for this EIS, on which wildlife management decisions were made, is lacking. Research studies conducted in other areas of the country are quoted. There is very little PNF collected data quoted, and,

The Forest Service should consider that wildlife statements have been made regarding Alternative E without a scientific basis.

Agency Response: The literature on the effects of motorized travel on wildlife is extensive as documented in the EIS and project files. The Travel Plan analysis has been conducted over a period of 4 years. During this time, additional scientific literature has become available. The wildlife biologists on the IDT attempted to ensure they used the latest and best scientific information. This information was determined to be sufficient to support travel management decisions. Travel plans are designed to be dynamic. If new information becomes available that would support site-specific changes, this information would be considered in future analyses.

96. The Forest Service should consider that the PNF has failed to adequately recognize that wildlife are affected far more by nature than by motorized visitors, and has failed to evaluate impacts with a relative sense of magnitude.

Agency Response: Forest Service management requirements arise from Forest Plan direction designed for protection of Forest resources (Forest Plan 2003). The Forest can attempt to manage “nature”, but the scope of this analysis was to address the effects of human travel, primarily motorized travel. Hence the evaluation of impacts was appropriate for the project purpose and need.

Summer Recreation Effects to Wildlife

97. The Forest Service should consider leaving roads designated as non-motorized because ATVs and motorcycles affect wildlife habitat.

Agency Response: The effects to wildlife habitat from ATVs and motorcycles are discussed in Chapter 3. Closure of additional roads and trails was analyzed as part of Alternative D in the DEIS and FEIS. Alternative D provides the greatest protection to wildlife from the effects of ATVs and motorcycles.

98. The Forest Service should consider that disturbance to wildlife and wildlife corridors by OHV use has been overstated. Wildlife populations have increased at the same time that OHV use is increasing.

Agency Response: Some wildlife populations may have increased at the same time as OHV use has increased, but populations of many other species (such as federally listed and sensitive species) have declined. Many studies have documented the effects of OHV use on wildlife (FEIS, chapter 3, pages 3-194 through 3-244.) Forest Plan direction requires that we design management actions to avoid or minimize adverse effects to wildlife including the effects of disturbance to listed species and their habitats (FEIS, Chapter 2, Table 2-27; Forest Plan, page III-10) and to other species (Forest Plan, pages III-26 through III-28.)

99. The Forest Service should consider that hikers disturb elk more than motor vehicles and that “disturbance of wildlife” should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures.

Agency Response: Although elk may be disturbed by both motorized and non-motorized recreationists, the impacts of motorized use extend over a larger area due to the greater noise and numbers of people associated with motorized travel (FEIS, Wildlife Analysis, chapter 3; project file). Rocky Mountain elk are a species of special concern on the Payette National Forest and are managed to achieve particular population goals. Long-term productivity of elk is partly based on the quality of summer and transitional ranges. Management of summer range includes consideration of disturbances that might discourage elk use of an area. As documented in the wildlife analysis, motorized use affects elk and other wildlife species by decreasing habitat effectiveness through disturbance, displacement, habitat loss, and human-caused mortality.

Roads and motorized recreation can disturb elk by discouraging use of an area, by lowering reproductive success, and by causing loss and fragmentation of habitat (page 3-191), Wisdom et. al. (2004) indicates that off-road recreation, including motorized and non-motorized, increases movement rates and flight responses for elk. Effects are more pronounced in response to OHV and mountain bike riding verses horseback and hiking activities.

100. The Forest Service should consider that there are no compelling reasons to justify road closures as a sought-after or necessary wildlife management criterion. Reasonable alternatives to the same outcomes sought by road closures include permit hunting and seasonal travel restrictions.

Agency Response: These concerns are addressed in the wildlife analysis (FEIS, chapter 3). An important aspect of elk management is limiting elk vulnerability during hunting season. This susceptibility is a function of access to elk and the quality of cover for elk. Roads provide access for hunters and poachers, leading to increased elk mortality. On the PNF, seasonal and year-round travel restrictions have been implemented in locations where elk lack secure habitat due to road densities and/or lack of cover. Requirements for special permits to minimize the effects of hunting are outside the control of the Forest Service and administered by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Big Game Retrieval

101. The Forest should consider allowing hunters to retrieve big game with ATVs because horses used for hunting may be injured by wolves or while retrieving game.

Agency Response: Game retrieval is addressed above (comments 22, 23, 24). The relative benefits (i.e., safety considerations) of game retrieval via horses, foot, or other means are outside the scope of this analysis.

102. The Forest Service should consider making special recommendations for handicapped hunters.

Agency Response: Access for people with disabilities is addressed in Chapter 1, page 12

Cooperation with IDFG and Counties

103. *The Forest Service should consider incorporating previous commitments made to the Idaho Fish and Game into Travel Plan.*

Agency Response: The Forest Service worked with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to identify and address previous and current wildlife management commitments. The FEIS (page 3-191) discusses FS direction for elk management; “While the IDFG has the primary role in this management, the PNF strives to compliment these objectives through management of open road densities and other activities that may impact elk populations.” The section: Changes between Draft and Final EIS (FEIS, page 3-175 to 3-177), provides a summary of some of the final changes made due to coordination with IDFG. Many of the comments provided by IDFG were supportive of the FS proposed management. For example, IDFG stated they applaud the Payette National Forest Supervisor’s direction to not allow an exception for motorized travel off of designated routes for game retrieval.

104. *The Forest Service should consider working with IDFG to enact a law mandating a hunting/fishing license revocation for access management violations pertaining to hunting and fishing.*

Agency Response: Enactment of IDFG laws is outside the scope of this analysis, as well as outside the role of the PNF.

Summer Wildlife Closures by Management Areas

Management Area 2 – Snake River

105. *The Forest Service should consider that there is no rationale for two-wheeled motorized closure with respect to elk disturbance/security on Trail 252 (proposal 2-7) on Cuddy Mountain. (Management Area 2)*

Agency Response: Only the portion of trail 252 from the junction at trail 251 to the northeast road junction (6 miles of the 11.1 mile trail) is closed to motorized use. There are a number of reasons to close this portion of Trail 252 (Grouse Creek/Grizzly Creek Trail) to two-wheeled motorized use. The Forest does not have an easement on the private property section of this trail. Under Alternative A, motorcycles are allowed from July 1 – September 15 (this includes all trails in Dukes Creek, Camp Creek, and Grade Creek). As disclosed in the analysis (FEIS, chapter 3), closures benefit elk because motorized recreation can disturb elk by discouraging use of an area, by lowering reproductive success, and by causing loss and fragmentation of habitat. IDFG has continued to express concern about elk security in this area of the PNF.

Appendix C – McCall and Krassel RD Designated Roads and Trails in the Selected Alternative

Table C-1: Designated Trail Status on McCall RD

DISTRICT	TRL ID	Selected Alternative	Miles
McCall	018	non-motorized	0.1
McCall	076	motorized	5.5
McCall	077	non-motorized	1.7
McCall	079	motorized	1.0
McCall	079	non-motorized	2.0
McCall	080	motorized	5.4
McCall	081	motorized	4.0
McCall	081	non-motorized	1.7
McCall	082	non-motorized	1.6
McCall	084	motorized	1.5
McCall	084	non-motorized	9.6
McCall	085	motorized	7.5
McCall	085	non-motorized	0.3
McCall	087	non-motorized	0.1
McCall	096	motorized	1.8
McCall	097	non-motorized	1.2
McCall	099	motorized	3.6
McCall	101	motorized	0.9
McCall	101	non-motorized	3.6
McCall	102	motorized	12.4
McCall	103	motorized	3.8
McCall	103	non-motorized	5.1
McCall	104	non-motorized	9.7
McCall	105	non-motorized	2.4
McCall	107	non-motorized	4.6
McCall	108	motorized-atv	3.1
McCall	108	non-motorized	2.0
McCall	109	motorized	9.5
McCall	109	motorized-atv	1.4
McCall	110	motorized	0.8
McCall	110	non-motorized	3.9
McCall	112	non-motorized	4.4
McCall	114	non-motorized	1.6
McCall	116	motorized	8.1
McCall	117	motorized	9.6
McCall	118	non-motorized	0.3
McCall	120	non-motorized	3.5
McCall	121	non-motorized	2.9
McCall	122	non-motorized	8.8
McCall	123	non-motorized	14.8
McCall	126	motorized	4.0
McCall	126	non-motorized	4.7
McCall	127	non-motorized	1.2

McCall	128	motorized	1.5
McCall	128	non-motorized	5.2
McCall	129	motorized	6.4
McCall	130	motorized	4.5
McCall	130	motorized-atv	0.6
McCall	132	non-motorized	5.9
McCall	134	motorized-atv	2.8
McCall	135	non-motorized	1.9
McCall	136	motorized-atv	3.8
McCall	137	non-motorized	2.9
McCall	139	non-motorized	6.6
McCall	140	motorized	5.1
McCall	140	motorized-atv	1.8
McCall	141	motorized	2.3
McCall	141	motorized-atv	5.0
McCall	142	motorized	16.1
McCall	143	motorized	3.8
McCall	144	motorized	4.6
McCall	145	motorized	3.9
McCall	148	motorized-atv	2.5
McCall	167	motorized-atv	1.1
McCall	167	motorized-atv	0.1
McCall	173	motorized-atv	0.4
McCall	174	motorized-atv	0.8
McCall	175	motorized-atv	0.7
McCall	175	motorized-atv	0.7
McCall	176	motorized-atv	0.6
McCall	192	motorized-atv	0.5
McCall	193	motorized-atv	1.0
McCall	195	motorized-atv	6.4
McCall	206	motorized-atv	1.1
McCall	232	motorized-atv	7.0
McCall	284	non-motorized	4.2
McCall	286	motorized-atv	0.4
McCall	296	non-motorized	0.7
McCall	308	non-motorized	6.1
McCall	310	non-motorized	2.1
McCall	311	non-motorized	0.4
McCall	315	non-motorized	2.9
McCall	336	non-motorized	4.7
McCall	337	non-motorized	2.0
McCall	339	non-motorized	1.6
McCall	504	motorized	5.4

C-2: Designated Trail Status on Krassel RD (Does not include the trails once they enter the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness)

DISTRICT	TRL_ID	Selected Alternative	Miles
Krassel	003	non-motorized	2.1
Krassel	004	non-motorized	0.6
Krassel	005	non-motorized	0.8
Krassel	031	non-motorized	3.3
Krassel	044	non-motorized	0.4
Krassel	061	non-motorized	0.8
Krassel	066	non-motorized	1.1
Krassel	067	motorized	3.8
Krassel	067	motorized-atv	1.1
Krassel	067	motorized-full	1.1
Krassel	069	non-motorized	6.5
Krassel	070	motorized	5.7
Krassel	070	non-motorized	5.5
Krassel	071	motorized	5.5
Krassel	071	non-motorized	5.8
Krassel	072	non-motorized	4.3
Krassel	073	motorized	3.2
Krassel	073	non-motorized	4.0
Krassel	074	non-motorized	1.9
Krassel	075	motorized	4.4
Krassel	076	motorized	6.0
Krassel	076	motorized	3.0
Krassel	077	motorized	2.9
Krassel	077	non-motorized	0.4
Krassel	079	motorized	11.9
Krassel	080	motorized	9.0
Krassel	081	non-motorized	7.8
Krassel	082	non-motorized	9.2
Krassel	083	non-motorized	1.1
Krassel	085	motorized	1.9
Krassel	086	motorized	2.4
Krassel	087	motorized	4.8
Krassel	087	non-motorized	7.1
Krassel	088	motorized	3.5
Krassel	088	non-motorized	4.3
Krassel	089	motorized	6.1
Krassel	090	motorized	17.4
Krassel	091	motorized	3.5
Krassel	092	non-motorized	4.6
Krassel	093	motorized	1.5
Krassel	093	non-motorized	8.9
Krassel	094	motorized	1.4
Krassel	094	non-motorized	5.7
Krassel	095	motorized	4.2
Krassel	096	motorized	10.4

Krassel	097	non-motorized	6.9
Krassel	098	motorized-atv	1.3
Krassel	098	non-motorized	9.0
Krassel	099	motorized	0.3
Krassel	100	motorized	7.2
Krassel	128	motorized	0.9
Krassel	194	motorized-atv	4.9
Krassel	196	non-motorized	0.3
Krassel	277	non-motorized	2.8
Krassel	291	motorized	5.8
Krassel	292	motorized	4.0
Krassel	294	motorized	2.5
Krassel	300	motorized	7.3
Krassel	301	non-motorized	10.7
Krassel	302	non-motorized	5.0
Krassel	382	motorized-atv	6.9

C-3: Designated Road Status on McCall RD (Only roads that are open and at least 0.1 miles in length are displayed).

DISTRICT	ID	Selected Alternative	Miles
McCall	50014	SEASONAL	2.6
McCall	50016	OPEN	1.4
McCall	50052	OPEN	0.5
McCall	50062	OPEN	0.4
McCall	50148	OPEN	0.9
McCall	50174	OPEN	0.2
McCall	50235	OPEN	0.2
McCall	502466000	OPEN	0.1
McCall	502466200	OPEN	0.1
McCall	502466300	OPEN	0.2
McCall	50247	OPEN	2.0
McCall	50248	OPEN	0.7
McCall	50251	OPEN	0.9
McCall	50257	OPEN	5.6
McCall	50260	OPEN	1.1
McCall	50265	SEASONAL	0.1
McCall	50281	OPEN	10.4
McCall	50302	OPEN	0.8
McCall	50316	OPEN	3.2
McCall	50318	OPEN	4.4
McCall	50321	OPEN	2.0
McCall	50325	OPEN	12.2
McCall	503250600	OPEN	0.3
McCall	50329	OPEN	2.1
McCall	50331	OPEN	5.5
McCall	50335	OPEN	8.0
McCall	50337	OPEN	11.1
McCall	50338	OPEN	1.8
McCall	50340	OPEN	4.2
McCall	50341	OPEN	5.1
McCall	50344	OPEN	0.7
McCall	50346	OPEN	1.5
McCall	50355	OPEN	11.4
McCall	50356	OPEN	4.4
McCall	50357	SEASONAL	3.4
McCall	50359	OPEN	7.7
McCall	50364	OPEN	0.3
McCall	503640100	OPEN	0.3
McCall	503640101	OPEN	0.2
McCall	50370	OPEN	3.9
McCall	50378	OPEN	1.3
McCall	50385	OPEN	0.2
McCall	50388	OPEN	1.0
McCall	50390	OPEN	2.3
McCall	50391	OPEN	3.0

McCall	50391	SEASONAL	2.1
McCall	50392	OPEN	0.7
McCall	50394	OPEN	3.5
McCall	50397	OPEN	3.1
McCall	50403	OPEN	0.9
McCall	504123000	OPEN	0.1
McCall	50428	SEASONAL	2.4
McCall	50430	OPEN	0.8
McCall	50431	OPEN	2.0
McCall	50432	OPEN	6.5
McCall	50437	OPEN	1.7
McCall	50446	OPEN	4.0
McCall	50451	OPEN	9.7
McCall	50452	OPEN	2.8
McCall	50456	OPEN	1.1
McCall	50459	SEASONAL	0.4
McCall	50459A	SEASONAL	0.1
McCall	50460	OPEN	0.1
McCall	50465	OPEN	0.4
McCall	50480	OPEN	0.6
McCall	50488	SEASONAL	4.9
McCall	50492	OPEN	2.9
McCall	50494	SEASONAL	1.4
McCall	50495	OPEN	2.4
McCall	50501	SEASONAL	1.9
McCall	50502	OPEN	0.2
McCall	50503	SEASONAL	1.6
McCall	50546	OPEN	0.4
McCall	50546B	OPEN	0.1
McCall	50546C	OPEN	0.1
McCall	50547	OPEN	0.3
McCall	50548	OPEN	0.6
McCall	50592	OPEN	4.9
McCall	50659	OPEN	0.6
McCall	50672	SEASONAL	3.5
McCall	50684	OPEN	1.1
McCall	50685	OPEN	0.5
McCall	50686	SEASONAL	2.0
McCall	50688	SEASONAL	0.4
McCall	50689	SEASONAL	0.6
McCall	50691	OPEN	0.2
McCall	50693	SEASONAL	0.9
McCall	50694	SEASONAL	0.9
McCall	50797	SEASONAL	1.1
McCall	50810	SEASONAL	2.3
McCall	50813	OPEN	0.1
McCall	50813	SEASONAL	2.0
McCall	50836	OPEN	0.3

McCall	50837	OPEN	0.9
McCall	50839	OPEN	1.2
McCall	50841	SEASONAL	0.8
McCall	50842	SEASONAL	1.5
McCall	51085	SEASONAL	1.2
McCall	51090	SEASONAL	3.0
McCall	51207	OPEN	0.0
McCall	51211	OPEN	1.3
McCall	51294	OPEN	3.0
McCall	51333	SEASONAL	7.0
McCall	51335	SEASONAL	1.1
McCall	51337	SEASONAL	2.0
McCall	51339	OPEN	0.6
McCall	51339	SEASONAL	3.1
McCall	51340	SEASONAL	1.3
McCall	51497	OPEN	0.1
McCall	51498	OPEN	0.3
McCall	51502	OPEN	1.3
McCall	51503	OPEN	0.2
McCall	51504	OPEN	0.2
McCall	51520	OPEN	0.3
McCall	51525	SEASONAL	1.6
McCall	51526	SEASONAL	0.5
McCall	51723	OPEN	0.1
McCall	51725	OPEN	0.4
McCall	51871	OPEN	0.1
McCall	51892	OPEN	1.6
McCall	51901	OPEN	0.3
McCall	51902	OPEN	0.0
McCall	51908	OPEN	0.2
McCall	58005	OPEN	0.1
McCall	FH211300	OPEN	0.1

C-4: Designated Road Status on Krassel RD (Only roads that are open are displayed)

DISTRICT	ID	Selected Alternative	Miles
Krassel	50226	OPEN	0.1
Krassel	50227	OPEN	0.1
Krassel	50229	OPEN	0.2
Krassel	50242	OPEN	0.1
Krassel	50344	OPEN	0.1
Krassel	50361	OPEN	7.4
Krassel	50371	OPEN	6.7
Krassel	50373	OPEN	3.9
Krassel	50375	OPEN	18.1
Krassel	50376	OPEN	0.1
Krassel	50387	OPEN	1.6
Krassel	50404	OPEN	0.1
Krassel	50468	OPEN	0.2
Krassel	50469	OPEN	0.2
Krassel	50471	OPEN	0.2
Krassel	50673	OPEN	0.3
Krassel	50674	OPEN	23.7
Krassel	50775	OPEN	0.2
Krassel	51088	SEASONAL	1.1
Krassel	51290	OPEN	4.5
Krassel	51886	OPEN	0.1
Krassel	51887	OPEN	0.9
Krassel	59001	OPEN	0.1

Appendix D – ROS maps for McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts –
snow-free season

