

Summary

Introduction

This summary presents an overview of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) prepared for the Millville Peak/Logan Peak Road Relocation project. The information includes the issues brought forward in the analysis and a summary of the effects of the three alternatives (including one sub-alternative).

Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to relocate a total of 5.4 miles of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak Roads (Forest Road 20168 and 20042, respectively) to avoid areas where excessively steep road grades and substantial erosion are causing a high voltage power cable buried beneath the road to become increasingly exposed. The high voltage cable provides power to the State-owned communication site on Logan Peak. The new roadway would be relocated away from the cable and designed to maintain a road grade primarily of 8% or less, with a few short segments of steeper grades where necessary for layout of the route. The new alignment would be less than one quarter mile from the existing roadway (at the greatest extent) and would have a maintenance level of 2 (designed for high clearance vehicles) the same as the existing roads. The old roadways would be physically closed with barrier rock and logs and would be revegetated using native seed.

The 20,000-acre analysis area is located approximately 5 miles east and south of Logan, Utah in Cache County (see Project Area Map in Appendix A). It is generally situated between Logan Canyon to the north, Cache Valley on the west, Millville Canyon on the south, and “Red Ridge” (just east of Millville Peak road) on the east.

The management prescriptions within which a portion of the roads would be relocated, Management Prescriptions 3.1w (Watershed Emphasis) and 2.7 (Special Interest Areas), allow no road construction. Re-alignment of the road within the 3.1w or 2.7 management prescriptions would necessitate a non-significant amendment of the Forest Plan allowing a one-time exemption (waiver) for reconstructing the road.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Millville Peak/Logan Peak road relocation project is for public safety through resource improvement to provide a safe, reliable, ground access route for maintenance of the vital, State-owned communications facility on Logan Peak.

The first two-thirds of the 16-mile roadway accessing the communications site has been repaired and maintained where the cable could be buried deeper and where the road would hold gravel and proper drainage could be installed. However, along the later section where the roadway gets excessively steep (road grades in excess of 20%) and rocky, road damage has resulted in the cable becoming increasingly exposed. Travel on

this section of the road is unsafe and limits access to the communications facility on Logan Peak. According to engineering reports and letters from the State of Utah (available in the project file), the cable can no longer be safely covered and the road damage cannot be corrected by maintenance.

The potential for death and serious injury is substantial around those locations where the cable has become exposed. The potential for long power outages at this critical public safety communications facility also places law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, homeland security, and public transportation operations at risk.

Severe damage to the roadway also impacts the State technicians' accessibility to the communications facility at Logan Peak. While ground access to the site is a priority, the primary concern is with the rapidly deteriorating condition of the power line and the potential for death and serious injury. Liability with respect to power line safety is shared by the State and Forest Service as the power line is owned by the State of Utah, but utilizes an "open to the public" accessible right-of-way managed by the Forest Service.

This action is needed to eliminate the public safety hazard posed by the exposed electrical power cable and to improve ground access to this vital communications facility located on Logan Peak. This action responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Revised Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan and helps move the project area towards desired conditions described in the plan. Forest Plan Guideline G86 provides for the continuation of the Logan Peak communications site for non-commercial use (page 4-55).

Decisions to be Made

Given the purpose and need, the deciding official in reviewing the proposed action, other alternatives, and the environmental consequences will make the following decision(s):

The decision to be made is whether or not to relocate this section of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads and if so, specifically where and to what degree.

The decision will be made by the WCNF Forest Supervisor and will be documented in a Record of Decision, subject to public review and appeal.

Issues

The ID Team identified relevant issues to be addressed in the EIS based on input from the public, other agencies, and internal comments. These issues guided the formulation of alternatives and provided a framework for the effects analysis documented in this EIS.

Aquatic Resources

- Roads may deliver sediment and impact aquatic resources

There are natural and manmade water features within the analysis area which provide habitat for tiger salamanders and aquatic invertebrates. Road construction associated with

the relocation of portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads may affect aquatic habitat and these species. Relocation of roads away from water sources and restoration of existing roads may reduce sediment delivery and improve aquatic habitats.

The proximity of roads to streams can be an indicator of the roads' impact on stream habitat quality. Likewise, this indicator can be an effective means of comparing the impacts of the various alternatives on stream habitat quality.

Indicator used to compare alternatives:

- a. Miles of roads within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs)

Recreation

- Relocating a portion of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads may affect the recreation experience for visitors to the area.

Experiences may be affected by changes or loss of opportunities due to road closures or changes in allowed uses. Improvements to the road may change traffic patterns or increase use. There were also concerns for winter recreation in that creating a new road cut in the steep slopes of the project area might affect their experience.

Indicators used to compare alternatives:

- a. Changes in recreation and access opportunities and the relative effect on the recreation experience
- b. Changes in Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) in the project area

Roadless Areas

- Relocation of portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads may affect roadless area values of the Mount Logan North, Mount Logan South, and Mount Logan West roadless areas

Road construction and related activities (such as logging and vegetation removal, cut banks, fill slopes, and the closure of the old road with rocks and logs) associated with relocating portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads may affect roadless area values as described in the Revised Forest Plan. These values include soils and water; sources for drinking water; diversity of plants and animals communities; recreation opportunities spectrum; landscape character and scenic integrity; traditional cultural properties; and locally identified unique characteristics.

Indicator used to compare alternatives:

- a. Acres affected in each roadless area and the qualitative effect on roadless values

Scenery

- Road construction and road closure activities may affect the scenery of the area

Road construction and related activities (such as logging and vegetation removal, cut banks, fill slopes, and the closure of the old road with rocks and logs) associated with relocating new portions and closing old portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads may affect the scenic integrity of the viewshed.

Indicator used to compare alternatives:

- a. Miles of road construction (and acre equivalent) and the qualitative extent to which scenery of the landscape may be affected

Soil and Water

- Road construction may affect soil productivity; road construction on steep slopes may cause erosion and sediment delivery, affecting water resources. Some degraded areas within the analysis area need to be improved.

Road construction and related activities (such as logging and vegetation removal, cut banks, and fill slopes) associated with relocating portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads may affect soil and water resources in the watershed. Relocation and restoration of current degraded portions of the roads may reduce sediment delivery and improve watershed conditions.

Indicators used to compare alternatives:

- a. The indicator for measuring improvement in soil quality is the degree to which alternatives stabilize and restore soils on existing roads made obsolete (decommissioned) by the proposed action or alternatives.
- b. The indicator for water quality is the relative potential for sediment delivery from roads into stream channels and lakes (based on the width and ground cover quality of the vegetation buffer strip separating the roads and waterways).

Vegetation

- Clearing trees for the new road sections may affect the age-class distribution of forested cover types across the ecological section

Cutting and removal of trees associated with relocating portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads may affect the relative mix of age classes in forested cover types across the ecological section within which the project area lies (refer to S13 in the Revised Forest Plan, page 4-39).

Indicators used to compare alternatives:

- a. Percentage of stand acres affected

- b. Percentage (by age class) of forested cover type affected within the ecological section

Wildlife

- The proposed road relocation project may affect wildlife species or their habitats. Potentially affected species include USFWS-listed Threatened, Endangered, Proposed and Candidate species, Forest Service Intermountain Region-listed Sensitive species, WCNF Management Indicator Species (MIS), migratory birds, and general species of local concern.

The project area supports a variety of wildlife species and habitats and is within a larger corridor that serves as linkage habitat for forest carnivores such as the Canada lynx. The road relocation project may have varying effects on wildlife species and their habitats, depending on the location and type of road and timing of road construction activities.

Indicators used to compare alternatives:

- a. Miles of road construction (and/or acres modified) within specific vegetation types (habitats) for select species
- b. Changes in open road density by 6th order watershed

Issues Dismissed

Issues dismissed were those identified as: 1) outside the scope of the proposed action; 2) already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations explain this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review..." The dismissed issues and reasons regarding their categorization are discussed below.

- Unauthorized use of the old road will occur if it is not effectively closed

This issue will be addressed through mitigation included in all action alternatives. Barriers (such as rock) will be used at the intersections with the new road. Logs will be placed within the old road prism to deter motorized use. The surface will be revegetated with native seed. The effectiveness of the closure will be routinely monitored.

- Concern with vandalism of the communications site

The concern regarding the safety of the communications site and the potential for vandalism is beyond the scope of this analysis. The State of Utah owns the facility and is responsible for its protection.

Alternatives Considered but not Studied in Detail

As a result of comments made during the initial scoping period, the following alternatives were considered but then dismissed from detailed analysis for the following reasons:

- Original Proposed Action (as described in the April 7, 2006 Scoping Letter)

A portion of the Logan Peak road would have been relocated across the mid-section of the steep slope to the east of Logan Peak. Upon further field reconnaissance by forest engineers in the summer of 2006, it was determined the road could not be located there, due to excessively steep, rocky, and undulating terrain. The engineering crew found a more plausible location for the road which became the new proposed action.

- Repair and maintain the current Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads

This alternative was considered but dismissed because it is not fully possible and it does not meet the purpose and need. Portions of the road have been maintained and repaired where it was physically possible and safe. Regularly scheduled road maintenance protected the integrity of the power cable on the portion of the road between Cowley Canyon and White Bedground for 10 years following the installation of the cable. However, Forest engineers determined that portions of the road beyond this point are too steep to hold enough gravel to safely cover the power cable for any length of time. Other portions of the roadway are too rocky and near bedrock so that the cable can not be buried any deeper.

- Consider an alternative source of power

This alternative was considered but dismissed because it is outside the scope of the decision. The communications facility is owned by the State of Utah and its administration is under their jurisdiction. However, the State of Utah has given consideration to other forms of power such as solar, wind, diesel, and propane. These forms of power were considered unreliable and presented safety and visual concerns and were dropped from further consideration.

- Consider an alternate location for the cable; consider other access routes

Other access routes such as Providence Canyon, Dry Canyon, and Mill Hollow were considered in the early 1980's during the initial environmental review and again given preliminary review in this analysis. Due to the steep, rocky terrain, greater distance, higher costs, and visual impacts, these routes were eliminated from further study.

- Relocate the road to the SSE of Logan Peak

The area to the south-southeast of Logan Peak was thoroughly examined in the field for all possible new road locations; it was determined to be too steep and rocky, with too many cliff areas to construct a new road for access to Logan Peak.

Summary of Alternatives Studied in Detail

The EIS analyzes, in detail, the following three alternatives:

Alternative A (Proposed Action) – the Proposed Action relocates portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads to remove them from a high voltage power cable buried beneath. The proposed action has two sub-alternatives as follows.

- **A.** Construction of a .25 mile, 50-inch-wide, ATV connector trail to access Inspiration Point via Top of Spring Hollow Road which would be converted to an ATV trail.
- **A.1** Construction of a .25 mile, 12-foot wide connector road to maintain high clearance vehicle access to Inspiration Point via Top of Spring Hollow Road. This alternative is described in detail as my decision.

Alternative B (Close Road - Administrative Use Only) – Portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads would be closed to all but administrative use. The State of Utah personnel would be allowed to travel the road to service the communication site at Logan Peak.

Alternative C (No Action) – Under continuation of current management there would be no road relocation or closing of roads. The cable would remain in place beneath portions of the Millville Peak and Logan Peak roads.

Table S.1 Comparison of differences among Alternatives A and A.1 (Proposed Action), B (Close Road), and C (No Action)

Indicators	Alternative A and A.1 (Proposed Action)	Alternative B (Close Road-Admin Use Only)	Alternative C (No Action)
Aquatics Miles of road within RHCA's	0.96 miles of open road within 50' of an ephemeral stream; .05 miles open road within 150' of a pond	1.61 miles of road within 50' of an ephemeral stream; .14 miles of road within 150' of a pond	Same as Alt B

Indicators	Alternative A and A.1 (Proposed Action)	Alternative B (Close Road-Admin Use Only)	Alternative C (No Action)
<p>Recreation</p> <p>Changes in recreation and access opportunities</p>	<p>Alt A would change Road 20126 from “high clearance vehicle” to ATV trail; some loss of “challenging terrain” for 4x4s with realignment of the steep, rocky pitches of roads 20168 and 20042. Alt A.1 would maintain road 20126 as a “high clearance vehicle” road.</p>	<p>Portions of 20168 and 20042 would be gated closed to the public motorized use; public motorized access to Logan Peak would be eliminated</p>	<p>Public access along roads 20168 and 20042 would continue; cable beneath the road would become increasingly exposed</p>
<p>Roadless Areas</p> <p>Miles of road constructed or decommissioned in each roadless area</p>	<p>Miles of road constructed: 5.2 miles in Mount Logan North and .2 miles in Mount Logan South; Miles of road decommissioned: 3.6 miles in Mount Logan North, 2.6 miles in Mount Logan South, and .2 miles in Mount Logan West. Alt A.1 would add .25 miles of high clearance road.</p>	<p>No roads constructed or decommissioned; roads gated closed to public motorized use</p>	<p>No roads constructed or decommissioned</p>
<p>Scenery</p> <p>Miles of road constructed within the viewsheds</p>	<p>Alt A would construct 5.4 miles and decommission 6.3 miles of road; Alt A.1 would add .25 miles of high clearance road.</p>	<p>No roads constructed or decommissioned</p>	<p>Same as Alt B</p>
<p>Soils</p> <p>Miles of road constructed and decommissioned and affected acres</p>	<p>5.4 miles of road construction (12-foot width); 6.3 miles of road decommissioned (12-foot width); and, .25 miles 50-inch motorized trail. Alt A.1 would add .25 miles of high clearance road (12-foot width).</p>	<p>No roads constructed or decommissioned; gates installed for road closure</p>	<p>No roads constructed or decommissioned</p>

Indicators	Alternative A and A.1 (Proposed Action)	Alternative B (Close Road-Admin Use Only)	Alternative C (No Action)
<p>Water</p> <p>Proximity of roads to water resources (related to potential sediment delivery)</p>	<p>Relocated roads would range from 270 feet to 4300 feet from water resources</p>	<p>Existing roads range from 30 feet to 535 feet from water resources</p>	<p>Same as Alt B</p>
<p>Vegetation</p> <p>Conifer acres cleared for road construction</p>	<p>Cutting/removal of 7 acres of conifer trees for road construction (2% of 374-acre stand); Alt A.1 would not cut any conifer acres (just 1-2 trees).</p>	<p>No cutting or removal of trees</p>	<p>Same as Alt B</p>
<p>Wildlife</p> <p>Miles of road construction within habitat types and changes in road density</p>	<p>4.5 miles (21 acres) within shrub/grass type; 1.48 miles (7.15 acres) within conifer type; road density of 1.86 miles per square mile and 1.01 for Little Logan River and Card Canyon watersheds, respectively</p>	<p>4.6 miles (22 acres) within shrub/grass type; 1.5 miles (8 acres) within conifer type; road density of 1.15 miles per square mile and 0.80 for Little Logan River and Card Canyon watersheds, respectively (because roads would be gated closed)</p>	<p>Vegetation changes same as Alt B; road density is 1.90 miles per square mile and 1.02 for Little Logan River and Card Canyon watersheds, respectively</p>

Summary of Effects of Alternatives

Table S-2 Comparison of the effects of Alternatives A and A.1 (Proposed Action), B (Close Road), and C (No Action)

Issue	Alternative A and A.1 (Proposed Action)	Alternative B (Close Road- Admin Use Only)	Alternative C (No Action)
<p>Issue #1 – Aquatic Resources</p> <p>a. Effect on aquatic resources</p>	<p>Least amount of roads open within RHCAs; old roads would continue to contribute some sediment in the short-term until they are revegetated; relocating roads away from ponds would reduce sediment and reduce existing impact to amphibians at these sites</p>	<p>Same amount and location of roads open within RHCAs as Alt C (although less traffic); roads would continue to contribute sediment; in the long-term, Providence Lake would no longer be able to support amphibians</p>	<p>Same as Alt B</p>
<p>Issue #2 – Recreation</p> <p>a. Effect on recreation experience and access</p>	<p>Short-term loss of recreation opportunities during road construction; no loss of 4x4 high clearance vehicle experience in Alt A.1</p>	<p>Greatest short-term and long-term loss of recreation opportunities</p>	<p>Safety concerns would be greatest and road would eventually become impassible; eventual loss of recreation opportunities</p>
<p>Issue #3 – Roadless areas</p> <p>a. Effect on roadless area values</p>	<p>Road relocation would result in a net loss of 12 acres within the 19,200-acre Mount Logan North roadless area (less than 1 percent); a net gain of 17 acres within the 17,000-acre Mount Logan South roadless area; and a net gain of 2 acres in the 5,300-acre Mount Logan West roadless area. These negligible changes would have “no effect” on roadless area values</p>	<p>There would be no change to acres in any of the roadless areas; recreation opportunity (one of the roadless values) would be impacted by closure of the roads to motorized public use</p>	<p>There would be no change to roadless areas or roadless values from current</p>

Issue	Alternative A and A.1 (Proposed Action)	Alternative B (Close Road- Admin Use Only)	Alternative C (No Action)
Issue #4 – Scenery a. Effect on the scenery of the area	Would maintain a “natural appearing landscape”; scenic integrity of “high” maintained on 1/3 of the proposed realignment; scenic integrity of “moderate” would result from construction on steeper slopes with sparse vegetation	Would maintain a “natural-appearing landscape” and a “high” scenic integrity	Same as Alt B
Issue #5 – Soil and Water a. Effect on soil productivity	Long-term loss in soil productivity on 8 acres due to road construction; long-term restoration of soil productivity on 9 acres due to road decommissioning; Alt A.1 would add .94 acres to area disturbed.	No improvement of any existing soil erosion and sediment delivery conditions; potential of people trying to drive around gates, causing isolated vegetation and soil damage	No loss of soil productivity; no improvement of any existing soil erosion and sediment delivery conditions;
b. Effect on water resources	Negligible erosion and sedimentation of water sources due vegetation buffers (greater that 200 feet) and mitigation measures; large improvement to water quality in Providence Lake and Providence Creek due to decommission of degraded roads; Alt A.1 same as Alt A.	No improvement of any existing erosion or sediment delivery conditions	No improvement of any existing erosion or sediment delivery conditions
Issue #6 - Vegetation a. Effect on relative mix of age classes across the ecological section	Negligible effect (1/100 th of 1 percent) on the mix of age classes within the Overthrust Mountains Ecological Section; Alt A.1 same as Alt A.	No effect	No effect

Issue	Alternative A and A.1 (Proposed Action)	Alternative B (Close Road- Admin Use Only)	Alternative C (No Action)
Issue #7 – Wildlife a. Effect on threatened and endangered wildlife species and their habitat	No T,E wildlife habitat except lynx, as follows: project located within linkage habitat (not LAU); insignificant amount of habitat affected; lynx have successfully moved through District; road density would not increase; therefore, no effect on Canada lynx or any T,E wildlife species. Alt A.1 same as Alt A.	Would reduce road density slightly; no effect on Canada lynx or any other T,E wildlife species	No changes in location or miles or roads and trails from current; no effect on Canada lynx or any other T,E wildlife species
b. Effect on sensitive wildlife species and their habitat	Because the amount of conifer habitat is insignificant (7.15 acres) and road density would slightly reduce, there would be no effect on any sensitive species habitat or populations. Alt A.1 same as Alt A.	No conifer habitat affected and roads would be gated closed; there would be no effect on any sensitive species habitat or populations	No conifer habitat affected; roads would remain open; there would be no effect on any sensitive species habitat or populations
c. Effect on Management Indicator Species (MIS)	Because the amount of conifer habitat is insignificant (7.15 acres) there would be no effect on the northern goshawk, beaver, or snowshoe hare, and thus no effect on population trends. Alt A.1 same as Alt A.	There would be no effect on the northern goshawk, beaver, or snowshoe hare, and consequently no effect on population trends	There would be no effect on the northern goshawk, beaver, or snowshoe hare, and consequently no effect on population trends
d. Effect on migratory birds	Total acres of habitat affected insignificant (30 acres) relative to total habitat and construction activities mitigated; therefore negligible effect on migratory birds. Alt A.1 same as Alt A.	No effect on migratory birds	No effect on migratory birds

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Alternative A.1 is the environmentally preferred alternative because it provides for public safety, maintains ground based access to the vital, State-owned communications site on Logan Peak while improving degraded road conditions that are causing impacts to watershed health. It continues to provide access to traditional public access points of interest without causing resource degradation. Concerns regarding impacts to aquatics, soils, water, wildlife, and scenery have been minimized through effective mitigation measures and monitoring.