

Chapter 2 –Description of Alternatives

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information about alternatives that were considered but eliminated from detailed study in this EA, details those alternatives which are carried forward into Chapter 3 for in-depth review, and summarizes the effects of implementing each of the alternatives.

2.2 Alternatives Considered and Eliminated from Study

During the public input process, a number of alternatives were suggested which are not examined in detail. These potential alternatives and the rationale for setting them aside from detailed review are included below.

1. Issue special use permits for continued recreation residence use, but do not require compliance with State, County, or City laws, regulations, or ordinances.

Through various Federal laws, States and Counties have the authority and jurisdiction, to regulate and enforce requirements pertaining to drinking water and wastewater disposal systems on National Forest System lands. The requirement to comply with these conditions is specified in Forest Service regulations and is a part of each summer homeowner's permit. Specifically, clause IV.A of each current recreation residence special use permit states, "The holder, in exercising the privileges granted by this permit, shall comply with all present and future regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture and all present and future federal, state, county, and municipal laws, ordinances, or regulations which are applicable to the area or operations covered by this permit." While the Forest Service does not enforce State and local government requirements, noncompliance can be cause for not renewing a permit.

2. Issue special use permits for continued recreation residence use, but do not require compliance with maintenance and construction standards listed in the permit, FSH 2709.11 and the Administrative Guide.

These requirements were developed to help assure that summer home use would be in compliance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and other applicable Forest Service policies, laws, and regulations. As noted above, consistency with Federal regulations is not discretionary and homeowner's use must be in compliance with their current permit before a new special use permit can be issued (FSH 2709.11, sec. 41.23(a)3).

3. Issue special use permits for continued recreation residence use for terms less than 20 years.

This alternative would not be consistent with agency policy (FSM 2347.1; FSM 2721.23e and FSH 2709.11, Sec. 41.23), which directs that summer home permits be issued with 20-year terms in most instances. In some circumstances, a one-year permit may be available for those permit holders who are making progress towards compliance, but who need additional time.

2.3 Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

2.3.1 No Action

Under this alternative, the term for all recreation residence permits in Logan Canyon will expire on December 31, 2008 and the Forest Service would not issue replacement 20-year permits for any of the recreation residences. If the No Action Alternative were implemented, the land occupied by the recreation residence tracts would be managed for alternate public uses, primarily non-motorized recreation. Those homeowners who desire them would be issued 10-year permits at the end of which time all improvements would have to be removed from NFS lands at the expense of the owner (FSM 2721.13c). Restoration of some sites may need to be completed at government expense and permit holders billed for restoration costs.

Improvements that would be removed include structures, roads, utility lines, and buried tanks and containment systems. Permit holders would also pump and fill septic tanks and toilets with earth, and reshape the landscape to fill in structure foundations. The permit holder, with Forest Service guidance, would loosen and break up compacted soils in heavily used areas such as driveways and re-vegetate with native vegetation following residence removals.

2.3.2 Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to authorize continued recreation residence use of 84 summer homes in the Gus Lind, Beirdneau, Valhalla, Birch Glen, Brown's Rolloff, Lower Card, Upper Card, Pine Bluffs, Chokeycherry, Juniper, Brachiopod, and Hailstone recreation residence tracts. Lots found in compliance with terms and conditions of current permits would be issued new special use permits for a 20-year term beginning January 1, 2009 and expiring December 31, 2028.

The desired future condition for recreation residences on the Wasatch-Cache is to continue all tracts as stated in the Forest Plan. The desired future condition is to continue the use of all individual lots that are in full compliance with the terms of their permit, their Operations and Maintenance Plan, and the Wasatch-Cache Recreation Residence Administrative Guide.

During the 2006 and 2007 field seasons, each recreation residence lot was reviewed for compliance with the terms and conditions of the current term permit, operations and maintenance plan, and Wasatch-Cache Recreation Residence Administrative Guide. During that time, some lots were found to be in non-compliance. In cases where the site is not in compliance with the permit by 12/31/2008, a letter of non-compliance would be sent and a one-year permit issued to allow the permit holder up to one year to bring the site into compliance. These one-year permits would expire 12/31/2009. Once in compliance, permit holders would be issued a 20-year special use permit. Lots not in compliance by the expiration of that one-year permit would have their permit revoked and be required to remove all structures and restore their lot to natural conditions. Permit holders must also be in compliance with State, County and local standards for sanitation and water systems prior to the issuance of the new term permit.

Terms of the special use permits will comply with national direction effective at the time the new permits are issued. This analysis assumes that the current standard terms will remain in effect. If these terms change prior to issuance of the permits, any changed effects will be addressed before new permits are issued. The determination of standard permit terms and individual lot compliance is beyond the scope of this analysis.

Each permit holder will have an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan outlining specific actions necessary to maintain compliance. The plan is required in Clause II A of the Term Special Use Permit for Recreation Residences. It will be reviewed annually and updated as deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer.

The proposed action includes three of the five in-lieu lots as potential re-location sites for residents who may be displaced due to riparian/floodplain issues. Two of the in-lieu lots (both located in the Birch Glen tract) would not be available as in-lieu lots under the proposed action. They are located in areas that are wet through much of the spring and summer and would not be acceptable as recreation residence lots.

No ground-disturbing activities are proposed in this permit renewal process. Any ground disturbing actions on tracts and lots would require additional NEPA analysis.

Associations have been formed for all tracts. The proposed action would authorize new special use permits issued in the name of the applicable association that would cover the improvements assigned to associations as listed below in Table 2.1. These permits would cover authorizations for use of tract roads, bridges, gates, and water systems and would be signed by each association president. The maintenance plan outlines annual responsibilities of the tract association in maintaining each of these facilities. Tract association presidents would be responsible for ensuring that roads, bridges, gates and shared water systems are in compliance with terms and conditions outlined by the Forest Service before issuance of tract association permits.

The proposed action would authorize individual improvements (such as lot driveways) and the improvements listed below held in individual permits (the water system at Brachiopod). These improvements would be included in individual permits when they are re-issued.

Table 2.1 Improvements to recreation residence tracts proposed to be included in association permits

TRACT	ROADS, WATER SYSTEMS, UTILITY LINES, OTHER IMPROVEMENTS
Gus Lind	0.3 miles of road with bridge and gate
Beirdneau	0.53 miles of road with gate
Valhalla	0.15 miles of road with bridge and gate

Birch Glen	<p>0.63 miles of road with bridge and gate in upper and east tract, and 0.2 miles of road in lower tract</p> <p>Water pipeline from spring source to individual lots (this supplements the main Logan City-supplied water system)</p>
Brown's Rolloff	<p>0.24 miles of road with bridge and gate</p> <p>Water system from local spring source</p>
Lower Card	<p>0.14 miles to end of Lower Card Canyon with gate</p> <p>Water pipeline connecting to Forest Service water system</p>
Upper Card	<p>0.25 miles to end of Upper Card Canyon tract road. (The Upper Card road which includes a bridge but no gate and goes to the archery range is a Forest Service system road, so no association permit is required)</p> <p>Water pipeline connecting to Forest Service water system</p>
Pine Bluffs	<p>0.1 miles of road with bridge and gate</p> <p>Water pipeline connecting to Forest Service water system</p>
Chokecherry	<p>0.4 miles of road with bridge and gate</p> <p>Water pipeline connecting to Forest Service water system</p>
Juniper	<p>Water pipeline connecting to Forest Service water system</p> <p>(0.13 miles of road, shared with Preston Valley Campground, is a Forest Service system road; no special use permit is required)</p>
Brachiopod	<p>0.1 mile of road with bridge and gate</p> <p>Water pipeline connecting to Forest Service water system</p>
Hailstone	<p>0.1 mile of road with bridge and gate</p> <p>(Water system is currently under permit to the 1 recreation residence permit holder in this tract)</p>

2.4 Mitigation and Management Requirements

In addition to the standard permit terms, modifications from the current special use permits will consist of mitigation requirements that will be listed in the residence's operation and maintenance plan. Mitigation measures are actions needed to prevent or diminish adverse effects of a management action on the human environment. Mitigation measures are designed to meet the intent of Forest Plan standards and guidelines and address additional resource concerns specific to the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The monitoring of these measures will be accomplished through permit administration.

Mitigation

- Permit holders are required to follow requirements listed on the permit, their operations and maintenance plan, and in the Wasatch-Cache Recreation Residence Administrative Guide.
- Permit holders will comply with actions itemized in Appendix D. These actions will protect riparian conditions, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

2.5 Alternative Summary and Impact Comparison

This section provides an overview of the varying impacts of the two alternatives. Chapter 3 contains a complete analysis of the alternatives with regard to the significant issues.

2.5.1 No Action

Fish and Wildlife

Since the area would continue to experience relatively heavy recreation use, there would be little noticeable difference in effect on wildlife as compared to the Proposed Action. Fish and other aquatic life may benefit over the long term as structures and various developments in streamside areas are removed and the sites restored.

Soil and Water

As areas disturbed by recreation use are rehabilitated, areas of bare and compacted soil would be re-vegetated. In addition, roads and other disturbed areas which currently contribute sediment to streams would be reduced and water quality would improve. Though relatively small in overall terms, stream flow would increase somewhat without homeowner diversion and use.

Vegetation

Over time, more natural vegetation would dominate lands currently occupied by summer homes and associated activities. The potential for introduction of invasive and non-native plant species would be reduced, though not eliminated, since public recreation would still occur and seed sources are nearby.

Recreation, Wilderness, Scenery, and Historic Resources

The opportunity for family-oriented recreation at 84 summer homes would be foregone. In some cases, these homes have been in the same family for several generations and were the place

where important family memories were created. Their removal would be seen as a great loss by many. General public recreation would occur much as it does today. The removal of recreation residences would allow hikers and campers to utilize a more natural appearing area. Cabins in some of the tracts are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. If the No Action Alternative was implemented, these structures would likely be removed. Prior to dismantling, consultation with State Historic Preservation Officer would be conducted and important information about the structures recorded.

2.5.2 Proposed Action

Fish and Wildlife

As homeowners remove in-stream structures and refrain from cutting riparian area vegetation to comply with their current permit, conditions for fish and aquatic life would improve, though not to same degree as under the No Action Alternative. Impacts to wildlife from recreation residence use would continue to occur, but it would be mostly overshadowed by other recreation use in the canyon. If any existing cabins were transferred to in-lieu lots from streamside areas at some point in the future, impacts to aquatic resources could be further reduced.

Soil and Water

Recreation residence use would continue to create some small areas of bare or compacted soils that are susceptible to erosion and sedimentation.

Vegetation

Recreation residence use and altered vegetation would continue to occur on portions of the 50 acres occupied by the twelve tracts. Outside of riparian areas, understory vegetation would sometimes be cut to reduce the wildfire hazard, and recreation use around the homes would trample natural vegetation. As homeowners bring their use into compliance with their current permits, several lawns would revert to more natural conditions and the introduction of non-native plantings would cease. However, homeowner use would still provide an unintended transport vector for noxious weeds to enter the area. The designation and possible future utilization of in-lieu-lots would create additional disturbance to vegetation, but this would be mostly offset by restoration of lots elsewhere in the tracts.

Recreation, Wilderness, Scenery, and Historic Resources

Family recreation for the current permittees would continue as it has in the past at the 84 homes, providing an important connection to past generations. Public recreation in these areas would occur much as it does today, or under the No Action Alternative. The presence of the summer homes, their associated structures, and the power lines and roads serving the homes would continue to be a visual impact for visitors. Homes currently eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places would continue to be managed to preserve their historic character. As time passes, other structures within the tracts would also become eligible and managed accordingly.