

## **Chapter 2 –Description of Alternatives**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter is intended to provide a basis for differentiating between the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. Since the scoping process identified no significant issues driving development of multiple action alternatives, the Interdisciplinary Team analyzed only the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

### **2.2 Alternatives Considered and Eliminated from Study**

#### **1. Issue Special Use Permits, but do not require compliance with state, county, and local laws and regulations.**

Rationale: Illegal. Will cause unreasonable environmental harm. Laws regulating sanitation and potable water are developed and implemented by the state and county to protect water quality and prevent health hazards to the public. Clause IV.A of the recreation residence 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.” The State and Counties have the authority and jurisdiction, through the Clean Water Act, to regulate and enforce individual wastewater disposal.

#### **2. Issue Special Use Permits, but compliance with maintenance and construction standards listed in the permit, FSH 2709.11 and the Wasatch-Cache Recreation Residence Administrative Guide is not required.**

Rationale: Already decided by policy. Fails to meet purpose and need. Forest Service Handbook 2709.11, 41.23a, 3 states, “Ensure the current use is in full compliance with the terms of the permit before issuing the new term permit.” Forest Service regulations and policy require recreation residences to be in compliance for permit issuance.

#### **3. Issue Special Use Permits for less than 20 years.**

Rationale: Already decided by policy. Fails to meet purpose and need. Forest Service policy allows for issuing 20 year special use permits for recreation residence tracts. It is unnecessary to issue a term permit for less than the twenty years allowed by regulation and policy.

### **2.3 Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail**

#### **2.3.1 No Action**

Under this alternative the current Term Special Use Permits will expire and the Forest Service will not issue replacement 20-year permits for the recreation residences. Ten-year permits will be issued instead. At that point, all above ground improvements will have been removed from National Forest System lands at the expense of the permit holders (FSM 2721.13c). It would likely take up to twenty years for all improvements to be removed and the sites restored.

Restoration of some sites may need to be completed at government expense and previous holders billed for restoration costs.

Improvements include structures, roads, utility lines, tanks and containment systems. Permit holders would also fill wells, pump and fill septic tanks, pit toilets and vault toilets with dirt; and reshape the landscape to fill in structure foundations. Pipelines, underground wiring, sewage distribution boxes and drain fields will be left in place. The permit holder, with Forest Service guidance, will scarify soil and plant native vegetation in compacted areas (e.g. driveways) following residence removals.

Due to direction found in the Forest Service Manual and the Wasatch-Cache LRMP (see Chapter 1, page 12-13), an amendment to the Forest Plan would be necessary to initiate the No Action Alternative.

### **2.3.2 Proposed Action**

The Logan Ranger District proposes to issue 84 Recreation Residence 20-year Term Special Use Permits to the same people holding the current 84 permits at the tracts in Logan Canyon. The new permits will be effective January 1, 2009 and will expire December 31, 2028. These new permits will replace the existing Recreation Residence Term Special Use Permits that expire on December 31, 2008. The two in-lieu lots at Chokecherry and the one in-lieu lot in Birch Glen will be analyzed. No additional recreation residences beyond the existing 84 units will be authorized.

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 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 field season, each 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. Some lots were currently found to be in non-compliance. Lots in compliance will be issued a new 20-year special use authorization. In cases where the site is not in compliance with the permit by 12/31/2008, a letter of non-compliance will be sent and a one-year permit will be issued to allow the permit holder up to one year to bring the site into compliance. These one-year permits will expire 12/31/2009. Once in compliance, permit holders will be issued a 20-year special use permit. Lots not in compliance by the expiration of that one-year permit will have their permit revoked and be required to remove all structures and restore their lot to natural conditions.

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.

Permit holders must be in compliance with State, County and local standards for sanitation and water systems prior to the issuance of the new term permit (Clause IV.A).

Some roads, water systems, utility lines and miscellaneous improvements are currently under special use permits. Some are not, or are under permits that have expired. These facilities will be put under updated special use permits with a 20-year expiration date and current operations and maintenance plans.

Operations and Maintenance plans for residences will be updated and include requirements for permit administration and resource issue mitigation. 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 Operation and Maintenance Plan requires that:

- Permit holders must follow all requirements in their renewed special use permit.
- Permit holders must follow all requirements listed in Wasatch-Cache Recreation Administrative Guide (February, 2006).
- Each lot's O&M Plan will consist of 3 sections: 1) Forestwide requirements for all lots, 2) Tract specific requirements and 3) Lot specific requirements. These O&M Plans will include resource mitigation requirements. O&M Plans will be completed, reviewed and signed by permittees by 12/31/2008.

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

## **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 mitigations will be accomplished through permit administration.

### Mitigations

- 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 Table 2-2 (see table at end of chapter). These actions will improve 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**

1. Some Forest Service resources may be required for site restoration. Most of these costs will be to the owners of the improvements, but Forest Service may have to absorb some initial costs for removals and may not be able to recover costs for all removals. In addition, there will be an increased cost to the government for the administration and contracting during removal.
2. There would be a reduction in recreation opportunities for recreation residence use.
3. Termination of land use rent will result in a loss of revenue to US Treasury and 25% contribution to county funds.
4. Value of improvements to private owners may be lost if they cannot be relocated off National Forest System lands.
5. Short-term impact to soil and potential for impact to water resources may occur as a result of disturbance associated with cabin removal. Sedimentation and erosion from existing lots, roads and trails would continue over the short-term and require restoration, but would decrease over the long-term as use is reduced and vegetative cover improves over time. Quality of water may decrease during the removal timeframe.
6. There may be an increase in opportunity for public use in the areas currently occupied by recreation tracts. Some roads currently used by the public for hiking access may need to be converted to trails. Use patterns by the public may require some additional monitoring, management and regulations.
7. Riparian vegetation would be restored over time, as recreation residence use is eliminated.
8. Improvement in the amount, quality, and connectivity of habitat for wildlife species may occur if these areas are abandoned, and may result in the reduction of disturbance effects.

### **2.5.2 Proposed Action**

1. Forest Service resources would continue to be used to manage and administer the recreation residence permits.
2. Cabin owners would continue to use and enjoy their recreation residences
3. Land use rent would continue with funds going to the US Treasury and 25% to county funds.
4. Cabin owners would continue to own cabins in their current locations.
5. There would be no ground disturbing activities. Tract areas with bare or impacted soils would need to be improved before issuing a new permit.
6. Public access and recreation, primarily use of the Card Canyon archery range and trailhead and the Preston Valley campground, would continue.
7. Riparian vegetation may continue to be disturbed by recreation residences. Chapter 3 will fully analyze impacts to vegetation and riparian areas.

8. Current impacts to wildlife would continue. Chapter 3 will fully analyze impacts to wildlife species.

The following table (Table 2-1) lists the impact comparisons between the Proposed Action Alternative (renewal of recreation residence special use permits), and the No Action Alternative (non-renewal of recreation residence special use permits).

**Table 2-1 Alternative Summary and Impact Comparison**

Purpose	Proposed Action	No Action Alternative
Continue recreation residences at tracts in Logan Canyon	84 recreation residences continue	Recreation residences are removed at the end of 10 years
<b>Needs</b>		
84 recreation residences in Logan Canyon	84 residences	0 residences after 10 years
Reissue SUPs to cover all recreation residences	Reissues 84 20-year Special Use Authorizations	Issues 84 ten-year permits Recreation residences are removed before the end of that permit
Recreation residences consistent with NFP and Wasatch-Cache LRMP	Consistent or can be made consistent	Does not meet this need without an amendment to the Wasatch-Cache LRMP
Operations and maintenance plans are updated and include forestwide, tract specific, lot specific, and resource mitigation requirements	O&M plans are updated	Not needed after 10 years when recreation residences are removed
Updated SUPs to cover roads, water systems, utility lines, and misc. tract improvements	Issue needed up-to-date SUPs for these facilities	Facilities are removed at the end of 10 years

Table 2-2. Allowable actions around features/facilities of the recreational residence lots of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Utah.

	Within 25 Feet From the Water's Edge							Beyond 25 Feet From the Water's Edge of the Riparian Habitat Conservation Area									
	<b>Riparian Management Objectives:</b> Keep and/or restore to natural vegetation																
	Recreation Residence	Outbuildings	Bridges	Decks, Patios, Stairs	Roads & Driveways	Parking	Trails	Instream Structures	Miscellaneous Structures and Uses	Recreation Residence	Outbuildings	Bridges	Decks, Patios, Stairs	Roads & Driveways	Parking	Trails	Miscellaneous Structures and Uses
Best management practices to improved riparian habitat within recreational residence tracts. The improved riparian conditions should improve water quality and provide habitat for neotropical birds, aquatic insects, amphibians and fish.																	
<b>Structures</b>																	
Expansion of the footprint size is permitted.																	
<b>Chemicals, Stains, Paints, Fertilizers</b>																	
Chemical washing allowed.																	
Use of fertilizers and herbicides allowed only for restoration work.					X	X	X							X	X	X	X
Staining and painting allowed.	X	X		X (2)						X	X		X (2)				
<b>Vegetation Trimming</b>																	
Clearing of Access Roads up to 14 feet wide and 14 feet high allowed.			X		X							X		X			
Trimming of vegetation within 7 feet of the structures from 2 inches to 25 feet high (1)	X	X		X		X					X						X
Trimming of vegetation within 25 feet of the structures from 2 inches up to 25 feet high(1)										X			X				
Trimming of vegetation in the area greater than 25 feet from the structure 3 to 10 feet above the ground to eliminating ladder fuels										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Removal of hazard trees upon approval	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cutting up of downed trees greater than 5 inches in diameter. Downed trees may be moved to allow access around the resident.																	
Fuel wood storage permitted		X		X	X	X			X		X		X	X	X		X
<b>Other</b>																	
Use of washed or crushed rock or bark may be used for surface protection allowed.	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Weir construction to protect stream banks and private cabins as approved by state engineer's office and District Ranger.								X									
Authorized play equipment and outside fire structures moved to within 25 feet of cabin and away from water or removed where possible.									X								X
Day use and overnight parking permitted					X	X								X	X		
Storage of outdoor maintenance equipment (weed eaters, lawn mowers, chainsaws, etc) and unleaded gas and motor oils from June 15 to Sept. 31 permitted	X	X								X	X						
To protect structures, sandbags can be used within 2 feet of a buildings. Sandbags are permitted on the lot from Nov. 1 to July 15	X	X		X						X	X		X				

(1) Exceptions allowed if the entire recreation residence is within 25 feet of the water per the operation and maintenance plan of the recreation residence. If the cabin is within 49 feet of the water's edge exceptions can be document in the operation and maintenance plan for the residency. No clearing or converting of existing riparian vegetation would be permitted. Clearing distances greater than 25 feet would not be allowed in the RHCA.  
(2) Staining of buildings/decks/patios/stairs requires that containment / absorption tarps be places under the surface to be stained during treatment. No staining over water or dry stream channels. When replacement occurs use material not requiring staining or painting.  
\* As outbuilding are replaced locate them within 25 feet of the recreation residence as far from the river as possible.  
\* Removal of large wood from the river channel is not allowed unless a threat to life or property.

Figure 1. Analysis Area Map

