

## **Recreation**

### **Introduction**

Nearly all forest visitors, regardless of the purpose for their visit, use the motorized transportation system to reach their destination. Making changes to the NFTS (e.g. adding facilities, prohibiting or allowing motor vehicle use by vehicle type or season of use) changes the diversity of motorized and non-motorized opportunities on the forest. These visitors may be participating in motorized recreation, or utilizing motorized vehicles to access trailheads, facilities, destinations, or geographic areas that are utilized for non-motorized recreational activities. This section of the Motorized Travel Management DEIS examines the extent to which alternatives respond to recreation management direction established in the Modoc National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), The Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) the Travel Management (TM) Rule, and the diversity of opportunities and access available on the forest.

The LRMP recreation direction was established under the implementing regulations of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). The NFMA requires the provision of a broad spectrum of forest and rangeland-related outdoor recreation opportunities that respond to current and anticipated user demands. The LRMP satisfies this requirement through its use of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classification system in the LRMP. In addition, specifically for “off-highway vehicle” use, the NFMA requires that these motor vehicle opportunities be planned and implemented to protect land and other resources, promote public safety, and minimize conflicts with other uses of the National Forest System (NFS) lands. The SNFPA amended portions of the MDF to prohibit wheeled vehicle travel off of designated routes, trails, and limited off-highway use areas. Travel Management Rule requires that we examine the compatibility of motor vehicle use with existing conditions in populated areas; the conflict between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of NFS lands or neighboring federal lands; and the provision of recreational opportunities and access needs. It requires the production of a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) that designates the roads, trails and areas available for public motor vehicle use on a national forest or ranger district.

The LRMP provides goals for the recreation resource and requires a broad range of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities in balance with existing and future demand. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is the basic inventory that was used to create recreation-opportunity “zoning” in these plans. The intent is to provide for these recreation opportunities within these zones to meet NFMA requirements for a broad spectrum of forest and rangeland-related outdoor recreation opportunities that respond to current and anticipated user demands.

### **Analysis Framework: Statute, Regulation, Forest Plan, and Other Direction**

Regulatory Direction relevant and specific to the proposed action as it affects recreation resources consists of the following:

#### **National Forest Management Act (NFMA)**

Specifically for Off-Highway Vehicle management, NFMA requires that this use be planned and implemented to protect land and other resources, promote public safety, and minimize conflicts with other uses of the NFS lands. NFMA also requires that a broad spectrum of forest and rangeland-related outdoor recreation opportunities be provided that respond to current and anticipated user demands.

## Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA)

The SNFPA established the direction to prohibit wheeled vehicle travel off of designated routes, trails, and limited off-highway vehicle (OHV) use areas. Unless otherwise restricted by current forest plans or other specific area standards and guidelines, cross-country travel by over-snow vehicles would continue.

## Travel Management Rule, Subpart B (36 CFR 212.50-57)

The responsible official shall consider the effects of designated roads, trails and areas on the provision of recreational opportunities, access needs, and conflicts among uses of National Forest System lands. 36 CFR 212.55 (a)

The responsible official shall consider effects on the following, with the objective of minimizing: Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring federal lands; Conflicts among different classes of motor vehicle uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring federal lands; and the compatibility of motor vehicle uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account sound, emissions, and other factors. 36 CFR 212.55 (b).

## MDF National Forest LRMP

The LRMP provides goals for the recreation resource and requires a broad range of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities in balance with existing and future demand. For management and conceptual convenience possible mixes or combinations of activities, settings, and probable experience opportunities have been arranged along a spectrum, or continuum. This continuum is called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), and planning for recreation opportunities using the ROS is conducted as part of Land and Resource Management Planning. The ROS provides a framework for defining the types of outdoor recreation the public might desire, and identifies that portion of the spectrum a given National Forest might be able to provide. ROS is divided into six classes: Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, Roaded Natural, Rural and Urban. Each class is defined in terms of its combination of activity, setting, and experience opportunities (ROS Users Guide USDA Forest Service). The intent is to use ROS and its associated settings to provide recreation input into LRMP which in turn may be incorporated into LRMP management prescriptions or used in project level planning beyond the programmatic planning used to develop the LRMP. These efforts provide for these recreation opportunities to meet NFMA requirements for a broad spectrum of forest and rangeland-related outdoor recreation opportunities that respond to current and anticipated user demands. As noted above, NFMA requires that “off-highway vehicle” opportunities be planned and implemented to protect land and other resources, promote public safety, and minimize conflicts with other uses of the NFS lands. For the purposes of travel management actions, ‘off-highway vehicles’ is applied to public wheeled motor vehicle use (highway legal and non-highway legal). On the Modoc National Forest, ROS is integrated into the management prescriptions and associated standards and guides in the forest LRMP and guide decisions and resource management activities.

The following are standards (S) and guidelines (G) as stated in the LRMP that are relevant to Travel Management. Pages 4-19 to 4-20 state the following:

3. (G) Manage a full spectrum of trail opportunities.
- C. Use the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum system to guide decisions.
- D. Provide loop trails whenever appropriate, allowing return to the point of departure without covering the same ground twice.

4. (G) Design resource management activities to complement the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes delineated on the ROS map and referred to in each prescription.

B. Semi-Primitive Motorized:

Provide opportunities for such recreation activities as off-highway vehicle touring, hunting, and camping in areas characterized by predominantly natural or natural-appearing environments with low concentrations of users.

Limit site development to resource protection.

Minimize construction or reconstruction of system roads.

C. Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized:

Provide opportunities for such recreation activities as hiking, fishing, and tent camping in predominantly natural environments with low incidence of interactions between users.

Prohibit motorized recreation; eliminate and prevent OHV use.

Limit site development to resource protection.

Apply the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Dispersed Recreation Prescription to specified areas (generally at least 2,500 acre units).

5. (G) Allow dispersed recreation activities in undeveloped areas of the forest unless otherwise prohibited for resource protection. Adjust land management activities at popular locations to maintain or enhance the natural setting and functional use of the site.

6. (G) Provide off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation where OHV activities will not cause resource damage or conflict with other uses. Reference the OHV map for use areas.

7. (G) The following concerns will be addressed and may require corrective action to OHV opportunities identified in the Plan:

A. excessive soil erosion or compaction resulting in reduced productivity;

B. degradation of water quality;

C. unnecessary disturbance to deer and pronghorn on fall and winter range, and during fawning and kidding periods;

D. adverse impact to threatened, endangered, and sensitive species not fully accommodated in the Plan; and

E. New technological changes in OHVs and their uses.

Corrective actions may include, but are not limited to, improved trail maintenance, adjusting seasons of use, reducing OHV use, signing barriers to redistribute use, partially closing areas, rotating use, prohibiting specific vehicle types causing damage, or totally closing an area.

As noted above, NFMA requires that off-road vehicle opportunities be planned and implemented to protect land and other resources, promote public safety, and minimize conflicts with other uses of the NFS lands. For the purposes of travel management actions, the term off-road vehicles is applied to public motor vehicle use (highway-legal and non-highway-legal). The ROS inventory provides for a spectrum of classes from urban to primitive. There is a distinction between

motorized and non-motorized spectrum classes (or ‘zones’). Motorized use falls in the motorized ROS classes (urban, rural, roaded-modified, roaded-natural, and semi-primitive-motorized). Non-motorized classes include semi-primitive non-motorized and primitive.

## **Impacts Relevant to Recreation**

1. The compatibility of proposed changes to the NFTS with LRMP recreation and OHV management prescriptions and ROS.
2. The impact of proposed changes to the NFTS on non-motorized recreation (dust, noise, use conflicts).
3. The amount of motorized recreation opportunity by alternative.
4. The diversity of motorized access to dispersed recreation by alternative.

## **Assumptions Specific to Recreation Analysis**

1. The prohibition of cross-country travel is not a change to ROS (semi-primitive motorized for example), it is simply a prohibition within that ROS ‘zone’ to travel off of designated routes.
2. The change from an open to cross-country travel condition to a cross-country travel prohibited condition would reduce the availability of acreage for both motorized recreation as well as motorized access to dispersed recreation activities.
3. The change from an open to cross-country travel condition to a cross-country travel prohibited condition would increase the availability of acreage for non-motorized recreation as well as non-motorized access to dispersed recreation activities.
4. Proposed additions to the NFTS would have a beneficial effect on motorized recreation opportunities by providing a variety of trail riding experiences and increasing the amount of motorized recreation opportunities (loops, connectors).
5. Proposed changes and additions to the NFTS would have a beneficial effect on the amount of motorized access to dispersed recreation opportunities available.
6. The Forest’s NVUM report accurately expresses the most popular motorized and non-motorized recreation activities for use in this analysis.
7. The area of influence (dust, noise) of motorized use on populated areas or ‘quiet recreation’ opportunities is  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from associated boundaries (e.g. wilderness, RNA, property line, urban limit line).
8. There has never been any use analysis of the unauthorized routes and no data exists (traffic counts, etc). As a result it would be highly speculative to make assumptions of use levels on the unauthorized routes.
9. The majority of the motorized public use occurring on NFS land is occurring within the existing NFTS based on observation and NVUM data.
10. For each unauthorized route added to the NFTS as a road or trail for the purpose of accessing dispersed recreation, a minimum of one site is accessed. In many instances, multiple sites may be accessed through the addition of these routes to the system, but this number acts as a surrogate to determine how many dispersed areas are accessed under each alternative.

## Data Sources

1. MDF LRMP for distribution of ROS classes.
2. The Forest's NVUM report for most popular non-motorized recreation activities.
3. Recreation, Law enforcement and other Resource staff observations.
4. Engineering Report on Mixed Use Analysis (Appendix N)

## Recreation Indicator Measures

Indicator measures are intended to address how each alternative as the sum total of its proposed actions respond to the LRMP and Subpart B of the Travel Management Rule: whether the motorized recreation opportunity conflicts with other recreation opportunities, specifically non-motorized opportunities; the proximity of motor vehicle use to populated areas or neighboring private and federal lands; the quality of the motorized recreation experience; and the quality of motorized access to dispersed areas for both motorized and non-motorized uses. It also responds to the diversity of motorized access available on the unit. Conflicts with other resources (including air quality) are examined in other resource sections. Public Safety is addressed in the Transportation Section.

For analyzing the effects of changes to the NFTS by vehicle class and season of use as well as the addition of unauthorized routes to the NFTS as roads, indicator measures were used. Mileage available for each class of vehicle is useful in analyzing the ability of Forest users to not only travel around the Forest and enjoy motorized recreation opportunities but also to access non-motorized recreation opportunities, such as trailheads, hunting, and dispersed recreation sites for activities such as fishing and camping, which the forest has determined is important based on both NVUM data and public scoping for this project. Mileage for motorized recreation is an indicator of the number and types of experiences available for motorcycles, ATVs, and 4WDs in each alternative. The changes to motorized mileages can be used to interpret the level of change in opportunities for motorized and non-motorized users. The details of the proposed seasonal closure relate to both the months that motorized recreation would not be allowed to use designated roads, trails or areas and, conversely, the time of year that conflicts between motorized and non-motorized uses would be minimized. Also, the effect on non-motorized recreation activities that are accessed by native surface roads is considered. Number of acres located ½ mile away from roads, trails and boundaries are used to analyze the opportunity for non-motorized and 'quiet' recreation on the Forest along with the ROS acreages available in each class. Finally, to determine the amount of dispersed recreation access provided under each alternative, a method was applied that a minimum of one site is accessed by each route (in many instances multiple sites are accessed, but one site is used as a proxy).

### *Measurement Indicator 1*

#### **Non-motorized recreation opportunity**

##### *Description*

This measurement indicator looks at the impact of proposed changes to the NFTS on non-motorized recreation (dust, noise, use conflicts). It also addresses the "Quiet Recreation" issue.

##### *Method*

Number of Acres outside 1/4 mile of an area where motorized use is allowed (designated roads, trails and areas in the NFTS miles that would result under each alternative).

The table below shows acreage outside ¼ mile of routes proposed for public use under each alternative. This serves as a measurement indicator of acreage available for quiet recreation and non-motorized activities without the potential for use conflicts with motorized vehicles. Alternative 1 continues to allow cross-country travel unabated and would have the highest impact to non-motorized use whereas the other alternatives prohibit cross-country travel. Therefore, the reader must keep in mind the intent is to compare the effect of motorized recreation on quiet recreation. The table below shows the acres remaining with a buffer on all roads. If only levels 3, 4, and 5 are buffered the remaining acres is 1,521,852. This is probably a more accurate representation of what is available for quiet use on the Forest.

**Table 3-20. Acreage Outside ¼ Mile of Routes Proposed for Public Use Under Each Alternative**

	Alternative 1		Alternative 2		Alternative 3		Alternative 4		Alternative 5	
	Acres	%								
Acres outside of ¼ mile NFTS Only	738,344	44%	738,344	44%	738,344	44%	738,344	44%	738,344	44%
Acres outside of ¼ mile Proposed Routes Only	0		167,939	10%	0		143,240	9	167,939	10%
Total Acres Outside of ¼ mile	738,344	44%	570,405	34%	738,344	44%	595,104	35%	570,405	34%

% of Total Forest Service Acres

The Forest is best known for its remote location and uncrowded recreation opportunities. This is due to the small population in Modoc County and tourism is not a primary economic base for the area. The total Forest Service acres available for use are 1,679,771. Of this total 91,714 acres are designated for Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Use and 70,384 acres are designated for Wilderness.

Of these acres, a fairly large portion is available for quiet recreation as the table above indicates. Additionally, a quiet recreation experience can be found in almost every area of the forest due to how little the forest is used. A count of users on Level 3 roads, which are roads that receive higher use on the Forest because they are connector roads; showed that on any day of the week the average use was 2 cars per hour. Based on that tally, and on observations from Forest Service personnel, use on Level 2 roads (which make up 87% of the Modoc FTS) is much lower. It is not uncommon for recreationists using the NFTS to not encounter another forest user during their visit. The table above displays only 1% difference between alternatives proposing the addition of miles of road to the NFTS.

The National Recreation Use Monitoring results display visitors rated their perception of how crowded the general forest area they were recreating in felt to them. General forest areas or “dispersed areas” are defined as areas that are not developed for intense recreation use. More than 80 percent of the recreation use on the Forest occurs in dispersed areas. This information is useful in that it displays a direct relationship to the Forest’s low visitor use and the vast opportunities for quiet recreation despite the number of miles of NFTS existing on the Forest. Table 3-21 summaries mean perception of crowding on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means hardly anyone was there, and a 10 means the area was perceived as overcrowded.

**Table 3-21. Perception of Crowding by Forest Visitors**

Perception of Crowding (Rated 1 to10)	Percent of People Rating General Forest Areas
10 overcrowded	0%
9	0%
8	0%
7	0%
6	0%
5	7%
4	11%
3	36%
2	0%
1 hardly anyone there	46%

*Measurement Indicator 2*

**Motorized recreation opportunity**

*Description*

This measurement indicator looks at the impact of proposed changes to the NFTS to motorized recreation opportunities by alternative.

**Method**

*Number of miles available by vehicle class and season of use*

Data was not available for miles available by vehicle class at the time to this report. The miles available in each Road Maintenance Level (RML) for each alternative were used to display the miles potentially available per vehicle class for comparison purposes. RMLs are defined by the USDA Forest Service Handbook as the level of service provided by, and maintenance required for, a specific road. The levels range from Level 1 to Level 5, lowest service to highest service respectfully. Level 1 is defined as intermittent service roads and closed to vehicle traffic. For comparative purposes in this report, Level 2 roads are open to use by motorcycles, ATV's, and some four wheel drive vehicles and level 3, 4 and 5 roads are open to use by passenger vehicles. Mixed use (OHVs and passenger vehicles) roads include Level 2 roads and some specific Level 3 roads.

**Table 3-22. Total Mileage Available for each Vehicle Type**

Vehicle Class	Alternative 1		Alternative 2		Alternative 3		Alternative 4		Alternative 5	
	Mileage	%*								
Total NFTS Miles	4339	100%	4339	100%	4339	100%	4339	100%	4339	100%
Proposed Additions Miles	0		336		0		286		336	
Total NFTS and Proposed Addition Miles	4339		4675	108%	4339	100%	4625	107%	4675	108%
	Mileage	%**								
Highway Vehicle Only (Level 3, 4, 5)	575	13%	437	9%	575	13%	575	12%	44	1%
Open to All Vehicles	3764	87%	4238	90%	3764	87%	4050	88%	4631	99%

(Level 2)										
Change in Vehicle Class (Mixed Use)	0		138	3%	0		0		531	11%
Seasonal Closure Miles	0		312	7%	0		425	9%	312	7%

%\* Percent of Total NFTS Miles

%\*\* Percent of Total NFTS and Proposed Addition Miles

### Measurement Indicator 3

#### Miles available to access dispersed campsites

##### Description

This measurement indicator looks at the impact of proposed changes to the NFTS to motorized access to dispersed recreation opportunities by alternative.

##### Method

##### Miles of proposed routes accessing dispersed sites, by alternative

Quality of Road or Dispersed Experience: Number of facilities provided as surrogate for number of dispersed sites accessed. One site per route addition for the purposes of access to dispersed recreation will be used as a proxy (in some instances multiple sites are accessed via a single route addition).

Visitors selecting dispersed recreation areas, rather than developed areas, report they viewed highly developed areas as overcrowded, noisy, expensive, and too developed. These visitors preferred the characteristics of roaded, dispersed areas, including the lack of development, fees, regimentation, control, and greater privacy. They prefer the freedom to engage in activities not appropriate in developed locations, such as OHV use, bringing along a noisy dog, and altering the site to meet their needs. In addition, dispersed sites provide large group members better opportunity to camp in close proximity to each other, and away from others, than do most developed group campgrounds.

The table below shows, by alternative, the additional access to dispersed camping that becomes available by adding routes. These short spur roads can be used for a camping experience that is away from the concentrated use areas and provide a quiet use opportunity for those seeking this type of experience.

**Table 3-23. Miles and Routes Available for Dispersed Camping Opportunity**

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5
Number of proposed routes	0	744	0	666	744
Miles of proposed routes	0	80	0	70	80

The table above shows the number of additional routes that will provide access to dispersed camping opportunities.

*Measurement Indicator 4*

**Impact of proposed changes to the NFTS on neighboring private and federal lands (dust, noise, use conflicts).**

*Description*

This measurement indicator looks at the impact of proposed changes to the NFTS on neighboring private and federal lands (dust, noise, use conflicts) by alternative.

*Method*

Number of miles of new routes proposed within ½ miles of populated areas, neighboring federal land boundaries, wilderness boundaries, and private land boundaries.

(Acts as surrogate indicates how much conflict off NFTS may occur by alternative)

The Forest is a very rural and sparsely populated area. Visitors could expect that the potential impacts to populated areas may differ among the alternatives, with those alternatives with fewer roads having a lower impact of noise, dust and physical presence in populated areas. The area of influence (dust, noise) of motorized use on populated areas is considered to be ½ mile of neighboring private and federal lands boundaries.

**Table 3-24. Number of Miles of Routes Proposed for Addition to the NFTS, by Alternative, Within ½ Mile of Neighboring Private and Federal Lands (Included is NFTS Mileage for Comparison)**

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5
Miles of Proposed	0	48	0	44	48
Miles of NFTS	1038	1038	1038	1038	1038
Total NFTS and Proposed	1038	1086	1038	1084	1086
Percent Change	0%	4%	0%	4%	4%

**Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences**

**Affected Environment**

The Modoc National Forest is best known for its remote location and low use recreation opportunities. Most visitors enjoy hunting, fishing, and camping, while others delight in touring, hiking, horseback riding, swimming, picnicking, and gathering firewood. These activities are enhanced by the abundance of wildlife, variety of landscape settings, and sparsely populated conditions.

The Forest currently hosts a wide range of motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences that occur year round. Motorized recreation involves the use of highway-licensed cars, sedans, sport utility vehicles (SUVs), dual-sport motorcycles, off-highway vehicles (OHVs), motorcycles, all terrain vehicles (ATVs), snowmobiles, and four-wheel-drive vehicles (4WDs). Non-motorized recreational activities include hiking, camping, mountain bike riding, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, picnicking, rock climbing, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snow camping, and snow play (National Visitor Use Monitoring Results For Modoc National Forest, August 2001, USDA Forest Service Region 5).

The MDF is mostly flat to gently sloping topography allowing easy access. In addition to cross-country travel, more than 1,000 miles of level 2 roads provide challenging routes. Gathering firewood and hunting are the primary activities associated with OHV use. People are creating

additional trails to access firewood areas. Although past use has not been significant, some resource damage is occurring (LRMP pp. 3-21, 22).

*Recreation Visitor Use*

Visitor use estimates for the Forest were generated based on the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) survey that was conducted from January 1 through December 31, 2000. Recreation use on the Modoc National Forest for calendar year 2000 was 146,155 national forest visits and 175,206 site visits. The survey was designed to assess existing recreation demand on the forest by asking visitors what they did during their visit and visitors could check multiple activities. This resulted in two categories of visitor use; activities that users participated in and main activity. It highlighted the fact that the two may or may not be related. For example, 67 percent of forest visitors reported participating in the viewing of natural features, but only 23 percent reported that as their main activity. During their visit to the Modoc National Forest, the top five recreation activities of the visitors were viewing scenery, general relaxation, sightseeing, fishing, and driving for pleasure. Each visitor also picked one of these activities as his or her primary activity for the current recreation visit to the forest. The top primary activities were viewing natural features, driving for pleasure on forest roads, fishing, general (relaxing, hanging out, and escaping noise), and sightseeing.

The second-most popular activities were picnicking, hiking and walking, and off-highway vehicle travel, respectively. Of those activities, the primary activities reported were picnicking and hiking and walking, while OHV use was measured less than one percent of the primary activity (Table 3-25).

**Table 3-25. Highest Percent Visits by Participation and Primary Activity**

Activity	Percent Participation	Percent Saying it was Favorite Activity
Viewing natural features such as scenery, flowers, etc. on NFS lands	67.44%	23.09%
General & other: relaxing, hanging out, escaping noise & heat, etc.	57.67%	11.72%
Sightseeing	51.02%	5.6%
Fishing—all types	47.43%	34%
Driving for pleasure on roads	41.45%	17.92%

**Table 3-26. Second-Highest Percent Visits by Participation and Primary Activity**

Activity	Percent Participation	Percent Saying it was Primary Activity
Picnicking and family day gatherings in developed sites (family or group)	24.52%	8.05%
Hiking or walking	20.29%	2.03%
Off-highway vehicle travel (4-wheelers, dirt bikes, etc.)	16.9%	.79%

Environmental Consequences

*Alternative 1: No Action*

**1. Direct and Indirect Effects of the Prohibition of Cross-Country Wheeled**

## **Motorized Vehicle Travel**

No cross-country prohibition would be put into place. No net change of current opportunities to motorized recreation would occur resulting in no direct or indirect effects to motorized recreation. Non-motorized recreation could have direct and indirect effects due to dust, noise or the presence of motor vehicles but these effects are currently very low because of the low use on the Forest. There would be no change to the access of dispersed recreation activities or impacts to adjacent lands.

### **2. Direct and Indirect Effects of adding facilities to the NFTS**

There would be no new routes added to the existing NFTS under this alternative; therefore, there would be no direct or indirect effects.

### **3. Direct and Indirect Effects of Changes to the Existing NFTS, Including Identifying Seasons of use and Vehicle Class**

There would be no changes to the existing NFTS; therefore there would be no direct or indirect effects.

#### *Cumulative Effects*

Cross-country travel would continue unabated, potentially creating additional resource issues in the future. This alternative has the greatest potential to negatively alter recreation settings and cause resource damage and would have the most impact to populated areas because of the continuation of cross country travel. Dust, noise and vehicle traffic are possible impacts that motorized use may have when carried out within the proximity of non-motorized use. This alternative has the highest potential impact on non-motorized users.

This alternative provides motorized access to all of the dispersed campsites on the Forest. Since no change is proposed to the managed use of existing NFS roads, and cross-country travel would not be prohibited, this alternative results in the lowest impact to motorized recreation.

#### *Alternative 2: Proposed Action*

### **Direct and Indirect Effects of the Prohibition of Cross-Country Wheeled Motorized Vehicle Travel**

#### *Direct Effects*

Motorized cross-country recreation opportunities would be eliminated. Visitors engaging in non-motorized quiet recreation choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized users. Impacts to adjacent land by motorized use would be reduced. Access to dispersed recreation activities would be reduced to authorized routes.

#### *Indirect Effects*

The recreation setting in areas that received significant cross-country use would change from a predominately motorized environment to a predominately non-motorized environment. Dust and noise from motorized vehicles would be restricted to the areas within close proximity to the roads.

### **2. Direct and Indirect Effects of Adding Facilities to the NFTS**

#### *Direct Effects*

Adding facilities would continue to provide a variety of riding opportunities for OHV vehicle classes. Noise and dust from motorized use could slightly affect the use of neighboring private

and federal lands. Adding 336 miles of routes will greatly enhance opportunities for dispersed camping.

*Indirect Effects*

A slight increase in use of OHVs on the NFTS Level 3 roads could increase the frequency in which highway legal vehicles encounter OHVs.

**3. Direct and Indirect Effects of Changes to the Existing NFTS, Including Identifying Seasons of use and Vehicle Class**

*Direct Effects*

This alternative would prohibit OHV use on 44N08 and 44N01 due to safety issues and would close 46B29HB (along Boles Creek between Clear Lake and Steel Swamp) to public use very slightly effecting OHV opportunities on the forest. Additionally, this alternative proposes a change in vehicle class on 138 miles of road to allow for mixed use. This change will contribute to the continuity of the motor-touring experience including access to dispersed campsites and loop trails. There would be a slight decrease in riding opportunities during seasonal closures affecting early and late season use. The impacts to adjacent land could increase slightly, but would be tempered by seasonal closures. Changes of vehicle class from highway vehicle only to all vehicles will expand recreation opportunities on the forest.

*Indirect Effects*

Dispersed recreation activities could be slightly impacted during seasonal closures occurring in early and late seasons of use.

*Cumulative Effects*

Alternative 2 provides the second highest motorized mileage available to all OHV use including motorcycles, ATV's, and four wheel drive vehicles of all the action alternatives. The quality of the motorized recreation use would be enhanced compared to Alternative 3 and 4 due to the designation of 138 miles of mixed use, the second highest of the action alternatives. The Forest would be closed to cross-country travel and would impose seasonal closures on 312 miles of NFTS roads slightly impacting motorized recreation opportunities.

Although primary use of the Forest for recreation would continue to be motorized, the recreation setting in areas primarily used for cross-country travel would change from a predominately motorized setting to a predominately non-motorized setting. Non-motorized recreation experience could be enhanced because users choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized users. Dust and noise from motorized vehicles would be restricted to the areas within close proximity to the roads. A large percent of acreage is available to quiet recreation activities and is equal to alternative 5.

*Alternative 3*

**1. Direct and Indirect Effects of the Prohibition of Cross-Country Wheeled Motorized Vehicle Travel**

*Direct Effects*

Motorized cross-country recreation riding opportunities would be eliminated. Visitors engaging in non-motorized recreation choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized users. Impacts to adjacent land by motorized use would be reduced. Access to dispersed recreation activities would be reduced to authorized routes.

*Indirect Effects*

The recreation setting in areas that received significant cross-country use would change from a predominately motorized environment to a predominately non-motorized environment. Dust and noise from motorized vehicles would be restricted to the areas within close proximity to the roads.

## **2. Direct and Indirect Effects of Adding Facilities to the NFTS, Including Identifying Seasons of use and Vehicle Class**

There would be no new routes added to the existing NFTS under this alternative; therefore, there would be no direct or indirect effects.

## **3. Direct and Indirect Effects of Changes to the Existing NFTS**

There would be no changes to the existing NFTS under this alternative; therefore, there would be no direct or indirect effects.

### *Cumulative Effects*

Alternative 3 is the most restrictive to motorized users because it does not add any unauthorized routes and prohibits cross-country travel restricting use to approved routes. Mixed use would not be allowed on level 3 roads limiting opportunities for motor-touring which includes providing a continuous motor-touring experience for motorized recreationists. This alternative enhances non-motorized quiet recreation by eliminating cross-country travel and by not adding any additional miles to the NFTS. This alternative provides for the highest percentage of acreage available for quiet recreation.

### *Alternative 4*

## **1. Direct and Indirect Effects of the Prohibition of Cross-Country Wheeled Motorized Vehicle Travel**

### *Direct Effects*

Motorized cross-country recreation riding opportunities would be eliminated. Visitors engaging in non-motorized recreation choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized users. Impacts to adjacent land by motorized use would be reduced. Access to dispersed recreation activities would be reduced to authorized routes.

### *Indirect Effects*

The recreation setting in areas that received significant cross-country use would change from a predominately motorized environment to a predominately non-motorized environment. Dust and noise from motorized vehicles would be restricted to the areas within close proximity to the roads.

## **2. Direct and Indirect Effects of Adding Facilities (presently unauthorized roads, trails, or areas) to the NFTS, Including Identifying Seasons of use and Vehicle Class**

### *Direct Effects*

This alternative has the most miles of road subject to seasonal closures (424 miles) that would have a slight negative impact on motorized recreation by limiting motorized activities in the early and late seasons. OHV use would be allowed on Level 2 roads only that are segmented and would not provide a continuous motor-touring experience for motorized recreationists. Noise and dust from motorized use could slightly affect the use of neighboring private and federal lands. Access to dispersed recreation activities would be restricted to approved routes

### *Indirect Effects*

A slight increase in use of OHVs on the NFTS could increase the frequency in which highway legal vehicles encounter OHVs.

### **3. Direct and Indirect effects of changes to the existing NFTS**

(This can include deletions of facilities and changing the vehicle class and season of use.)

#### *Direct Effects*

This alternative would prohibit OHV use on 44N08 and 44N01 due to safety issues and would close 46B29HB (along Boles Creek between Clear Lake and Steel Swamp) to public use very slightly effecting OHV opportunities on the forest. Mixed use would be limited to existing Level 2 roads. Seasonal closures would have a slight negative impact on motorized recreation by limiting motorized activities in the early and late seasons. This alternative has the highest percentage of routes subject to seasonal closures enhancing quiet recreation and tempering negative impacts caused by vehicles.

#### *Indirect Effects*

Access by OHVs to activities such as dispersed camping would be restricted to designated routes.

#### *Cumulative Effects*

Alternative 4 has the second least mileage available to motorcycles, ATV's, and some four wheel drive vehicles of all the action alternatives (286 miles) and the greatest miles (424) of seasonal closure to motor vehicles. In addition, mixed use would be limited to existing Level 2 roads which do not necessarily provide continuity or loop experiences for people seeking a continuous motor-touring experience. Seasonal closures would have a slight negative impact on motorized recreation by limiting motorized activities in the early and late seasons.

This alternative provides slightly lower potential than Alternatives 2 and 5 for negatively altering recreation settings and causing resource damage. Motorized recreation would be limited to designated routes and this could enhance the non-motorized recreation experience. Users choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized users. Dust and noise resulting from motorized use would be restricted to the area surrounding designated routes. This alternative provides 1% more acreage available to quiet recreation compared to alternatives 2 and 5.

This alternative provides access to the second fewest number of dispersed camping opportunities, compared to Alternative 3 which does not add any unauthorized routes to the NFTS. This would directly impact recreationists with campers and trailers, limiting their choices in camping locations to developed campgrounds and dispersed sites along designated routes. However, with the addition of many short spur roads to the system, the impact from prohibiting cross-country travel would be tempered.

### *Alternative 5*

#### **1. Direct and Indirect Effects of the Prohibition of Cross-Country Wheeled Motorized Vehicle Travel**

##### *Direct Effects*

Motorized cross-country recreation riding opportunities would be eliminated. Visitors engaging in non-motorized recreation choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized users. Impacts to adjacent land by motorized use would be reduced. Access to dispersed recreation activities would be reduced to authorized routes.

##### *Indirect Effects*

The recreation setting in areas that received significant cross-country use would change from a predominately motorized environment to a predominately non-motorized environment. Dust and noise from motorized vehicles would be restricted to the areas within close proximity to the roads.

**2. Direct and Indirect Effects of Adding Facilities to the NFTS, Including Identifying Seasons of use and Vehicle Class**

*Direct Effects*

This alternative has the same number and miles of added routes as Alternative 2 and includes the highest motorized mileage available to motorcycles, ATV’s, and some four wheel drive vehicles of all the action alternatives. This includes 339 miles added to the NFTS totaling 4,919 miles of roads. Of the 4,919 miles of NFTS, 4,630 miles would be designated for mixed use providing the most diverse riding experience for OHV users, including loop opportunities and would provide the greatest amount of access to dispersed recreation activities.

Adding facilities would continue to provide a variety of riding opportunities for OHV vehicle classes. However, there would be a slight decrease in riding opportunities during seasonal closures effecting early and late season use. Changes of vehicle class from highway vehicle only to all vehicles would expand recreation opportunities on the forest. . Noise and dust from motorized use could slightly affect the use of neighboring private and federal lands. Access to dispersed recreation activities would be restricted to approved routes

*Indirect Effects*

A slight increase in use of OHVs on the NFTS could increase the frequency in which highway legal vehicles encounter OHVs. There would be a slight decrease in riding opportunities during seasonal closures effecting early and late season use.

**3. Direct and Indirect Effects of Changes to the Existing NFTS**

(This can include deletions of facilities and changing the vehicle class and season of use.)

*Direct Effects*

Level 3 connector routes would be available for use by all vehicles providing the most diverse riding experience; however 312 miles of seasonal restrictions would be imposed on NFTS roads slightly impacting riding opportunities during early and late seasons. The impacts to adjacent land could increase slightly, but would be tempered by seasonal closures.

*Indirect Effects*

This alternative provides the highest motorized mileage available to motorcycles, ATV’s, and some four wheel drive vehicles of all the action alternatives. This includes 4,630 miles would be designated for mixed use providing the most diverse riding experience for OHV users, including loop opportunities and would provide the greatest amount of access to dispersed recreation activities. This increase in use of OHVs on the NFTS could increase the frequency in which highway legal vehicles encounter OHVs.

*Cumulative Effects*

With the exception of Alternative 1, Alternative 5 provides the widest range of opportunity for motorized recreation. This alternative has the same number and miles of added routes as Alternative 2 and includes the highest motorized mileage available to motorcycles, ATV’s, and some four wheel drive vehicles of all the action alternatives. Of the 4,919 miles of NFTS, 4,630 miles would be designated for mixed use providing the most diverse riding experience for OHV users, including loop opportunities and would provide the greatest amount of access to dispersed

recreation activities. The motor touring experience would be enhanced because all of the Level 3 connector routes would be available for use by all vehicles. Forest Roads 44N08 and 44N01 would be prohibited to OHV use due to safety issues.

This alternative has the second greatest potential to negatively alter recreation settings, cause resource damage and impact populated areas. Motorized recreation would be limited to designated routes and this could enhance the non-motorized recreation experience. A large percent of acreage is available to quiet recreation activities and is equal to alternative 2. Users choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized users. Dust and noise resulting from motorized vehicles would be restricted to the area surrounding designated routes. With the exception of Alternative 1, this alternative has the highest potential impact on non-motorized users.

## Summary of Effects Analysis Across all Alternatives

### *Motorized Recreation*

Alternative 1 does not propose a change to the managed use of existing NFS roads and cross-country travel would not be prohibited. Alternative 2 provides the second highest motorized mileage available of all the action alternatives followed by Alternative 5 and 4. Alternative 5 provides the widest range of opportunity for motorized recreation of all the action alternatives and provides to most mixed use opportunities. Alternative 1 results in the lowest impact to motorized recreation followed by Alternative 5, 2 and 4 respectively. Alternative 3 is the most restrictive and provides the least amount of opportunity for motorized recreation.

### *Non-motorized Recreation*

Alternative 1 allows cross-country travel to continue unabated and dust and noise from vehicle traffic could impact non-motorized recreation. Alternative 1 has the highest potential impact on non-motorized users. Alternative 3 is the most beneficial to non-motorized recreation of all the alternatives. This alternative does not add any unauthorized routes, eliminates cross-country travel, and provides for the highest percentage of acreage available for quiet recreation therefore, users choosing to recreate away from the road system would no longer be impacted by motorized use. Alternative 3 is the most beneficial to non-motorized recreation followed by Alternatives 4, 2, 5 and 1 respectively.

## Compliance with the Forest Plan and Other Regulatory Direction

Alternative 1 does not comply with the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision because it allows wheeled vehicle travel off designated routes and trails. The action alternatives do not comply with the LRMP because unless amended, it states that 87 percent of the Forest should be left open to cross-country travel.