

# CHAPTER 3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This Chapter summarizes the physical, biological, social and economic environments of the project area and the effects of implementing each alternative on that environment. It also presents the scientific and analytical basis for the comparison of alternatives presented in Chapter 2.

## Consideration of Best Available Science

The scientific integrity of the discussions and analyses presented in this Chapter are based on best available science and this includes: discussion of the methodology used in the analysis; scientific sources that are relied upon and referenced, relevant literature that is reviewed; scientific literature that is cited by the public is considered when shown to be relevant; opposing views are discussed when they are raised by the public or other agencies; and the disclosure of incomplete or unavailable information.

Scientific literature cited in the public comments is addressed in Chapter 5, Responses to Comments. Some of the responses are incorporated in the technical reports and/or included in this FEIS. In addition, some literature cited by the public presents different conclusions reached by researchers. When opposing views have been raised by the public or other agencies they are discussed in either the response to public comments (Chapter 5), the technical report, or in the environmental document. The information is adequately complete for assessing the environmental effects of the proposal. The information that is collected is expected to represent most of the conditions found in the area at the present time.

## 3.1 LIST OF PAST, PRESENT, AND REASONABLY FORESEEABLE FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Table 3.1.1 shows the actions considered in the cumulative effects disclosure. Past and present and ongoing activities have resulted in the resource’s existing condition. Where applicable, and depending on area of analysis, these existing conditions, activities and impacts are described by resource in Chapter 3.

**Table 3.1.1. Past, present and ongoing, and reasonably foreseeable activities in or near the project area.**

Action	Description	Date
<b>PAST ACTIONS</b>		
Livestock Grazing	Permitted livestock grazing on National Forest and adjacent lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Seventeen allotments are currently grazed on the Ogden Ranger District; with four of these allotments in the Big Creek project area. In 1988, the North Randolph Allotment EA was completed.	1800s - present
Timber Harvest	Past timber harvest has occurred within the 21,000 acre project analysis area. Units proposed for treatment with past timber harvest have been identified. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bug Lake Sale, 161 Acres (1976)</li> <li>• Campground Springs Sale, 201Acres (1986)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 67 acres occurred in Unit 23</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Greenfork Sale, 252 Acres (1980)</li> </ul>	1976-1997

Action	Description	Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 12 acres occurred in Unit 58</li> <li>• Old Canyon Sale, 118 Acres (1970)</li> <li>• Pole Canyon Sale, 145 Acres (1997) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 15 acres occurred in Unit 15</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Private Sale, 124 Acres (19??)</li> <li>• Roundup I Sale, 112 Acres (1983)</li> <li>• Six Bit Sale, 179 Acres (1980)</li> <li>• Spencer Basin Sale, 83 Acres (1965) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5 acres occurred in Unit 25</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Total Past Harvest Acres = 1,375</b></p>	
Prescribed Burns	<p>Some of past prescribed fire occurred within the 21,000 acre project analysis area, but not within units proposed for treatment. Approximate acres of past prescribed fire have been identified by units proposed for treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Big Crawford Range (1990)</u> - Reported approximately 100 acres total. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 11 acres occurred in Unit 47</li> <li>▪ 11 acres occurred in Unit 35</li> <li>▪ 5 acres occurred in Unit 52</li> <li>▪ 74 acres occurred on private property</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Pole Canyon Wildlife (1990)</u> - Reported approximately 360 acres total, within project area, but outside of treatment units.</li> <li>• <u>Big Crawford Range (1992)</u> - Reported approximately 303 acres total. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10 acres occurred in Unit 34</li> <li>▪ 140 acres occurred in Unit 35</li> <li>▪ 3 acres occurred in Unit 36</li> <li>▪ 4 acres occurred in Unit 37</li> <li>▪ 3 acres occurred in Unit 38</li> <li>▪ 18 acres occurred in Unit 40</li> <li>▪ 8 acres occurred in Unit 35</li> <li>▪ 12 acres occurred in Unit 39</li> <li>▪ 8 acres occurred in Unit 35</li> <li>▪ 6 acres occurred in Unit 35</li> <li>▪ 3 acres occurred in Unit 39</li> <li>▪ 9 acres occurred in Unit 31</li> <li>▪ Remaining acres within project area, but outside of units proposed for treatment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	1990-1992
Wildfires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Dry Canyon 2 (August 1994)</u> - Reported approximately 10,500 acres, most of which was east of the Forest. Only a small portion is within the analysis area, and none within proposed treatment units.</li> <li>• <u>Green Fork (October 1999)</u> - Reported approximately 93 acres, all within analysis area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 35 acres occurred in Unit 58</li> <li>▪ 5 acres occurred in Unit 3</li> <li>▪ Remaining acres outside of units.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>7 small fires</u> – Less than 10 acres, between</li> </ul>	1964-2005

<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
	1964 and 2005.	
National Forest System Roads and Motorized Trails	Construction and/or management of about 66.2 miles of system road (includes open, closed, administrative and unauthorized roads) within the analysis area.	1900s – present
Motorized Recreation Use	As of September 2007 there were 198 miles of road and 46 miles of motorized trail currently designated open on the Ogden Ranger District.  Unauthorized use of roads and trails and creation of illegal trails by OHVs has occurred on the Ogden Ranger District for many years. In 2005, 57 miles were catalogued as existing across the entire Ranger District.	1991-present
Dispersed Recreation Use	Dispersed camping along the system roads is a common occurrence in certain areas during certain portions of the season. Hunting season in the late fall is the predominant period for dispersed camping. Curtis Creek Analysis Area: 98 sites totaling 4.1 acres, Monte Cristo and Wheat Grass Analysis Area: 118 sites totaling 4.8 acres.	
<b>PRESENT AND ONGOING ACTIONS</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
Motorized Recreation Use (non-winter)	See previous description.	Ongoing
Road maintenance	Cleaning culverts, blading existing roads.	Ongoing
Recreation Use	Hunting and camping at dispersed sites.	Ongoing
Livestock grazing and management	See previous description.	Ongoing
Fire Suppression	Active fire suppression of human-caused fires. Lightening fires within wildland fire use consideration areas may be managed as wildland fire use.	Ongoing
Noxious Weeds Treatment	Treatment of about 50 acres annually, primarily along roads of maintenance level 3 roads or above.	Ongoing
Implementation of Ogden Travel Plan	ROD, Final EIS, and Supplemental EIS (September 2007)	Ongoing
Saddle Creek Vegetation Treatment Project (Logan Ranger District)	Decision Memo signed September 2007 for: Prescribed Fire - 540 acres Mechanical Treatment - 235 acres	Ongoing
<b>REASONABLY FORESEEABLE ACTIONS</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
Prescribed Burns *These burns are not in the Big Creek watershed. They are in adjacent watersheds, but may need to be considered depending on resource.	Curtis Aspen Prescribed Fire (2008-2009) - 1,563 acres Blacksmith (2008-2010) - 4,780 acres Hells Hollow (2009-2011) - 6,000 acres	2008-2011

In addition to the past, present and ongoing, and reasonably foreseeable activities listed in Table 3.1.1, other actions were considered and Table 3.1.2 presents the justification for elimination from further consideration in Chapter 3.

**Table 3.1.2. Actions not considered in the cumulative effects analysis and the reason for elimination from consideration.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<u>Water storage and pipelines:</u> Old Canyon Pipeline (1991), North Otter Pipeline (1992) <u>Radio/Telecommunications:</u> Monte Cristo Radio site, AT&T Cable Removal (Hyrum-Randolph, 1998).	None of these actions have effects that overlap or interact with the effects of the proposed vegetation treatments or road construction.
<u>Proposed permit proposals:</u> Curtis Creek Warming Hut (2006).	None of these actions have effects that overlap or interact with the effects of the proposed vegetation treatments or road construction.
<u>Adjacent Property Access:</u> This Ranger District has numerous privately owned in-holdings especially in the Curtis Creek area. Some of these are State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) that may in the future be sold to private developers. Experience has shown that as owners of these parcels change, the new owner will reassess the need for access to the property through National Forest System lands and may apply for a change to USFS road management. This may be in the form of a new road, a new closure, an upgrade to a system road, or a road easement.	Action is too speculative in nature to reasonably analyze.
<u>Land Acquisition:</u> Private in-holding in the Curtis Creek Analysis area.	When and if these acquisitions take place is unknown. Consequently, access needs for future land ownership patterns is too speculative in nature to reasonably analyze.
<u>Permittee access (livestock, special use):</u> About 15 grazing permittees and 52 special use (SU) permits include administrative use of roads and are not open to the public.  System roads open to the general public and used by permittees are considered within the proposed alternatives.	Administrative use by permittees is so limited there are negligible effects to consider as cumulative.  Permittee use on system roads has been considered as public use in the effects disclosure.
<u>Vegetation treatment on intermingled private land:</u>	There are no proposed vegetation treatment activities on nearby private land. There are potential future opportunities. The effects are described in general terms in Section 3.5. Site-specific effects of acres affected cannot be meaningfully evaluated until there are more concrete proposals.