

Chapter 2 – Alternatives

2.1 Introduction

NEPA requires that Federal agencies consider all reasonable alternatives in achieving the purpose and need for a proposed action. The Forest Supervisor has approved the following alternatives developed by the interdisciplinary team in response to public comments and Forest Specialist input. A comparison table is provided at the end of Chapter 2. Maps provided in Appendix A provide the reader with the best picture of the alternatives.

2.1.1 Alternative 1 -The Proposed Action

The Proposed Action (Alternative 1) defines a combination of motorized and non-motorized areas in the Tony Grove-Franklin Basin area and addresses the creation of a groomed snow trail between the Tony Grove and Franklin Basin parking lots (see Alternative 1 map).

In the proposed action, the area from Blind Hollow through the lower part of the Tony Grove drainage and the majority of the Bunchgrass drainage is closed to motorized use. Due to wildlife concerns, access out of the Tony Grove Winter parking lot is only permitted on designated trails until they are out of the crucial wildlife habitat. The groomed snow trail on Tony Grove Road remains open to motorized use to access the higher country at and above Tony Grove Lake, but travel off of the trail is not allowed until the first ridge before Tony Grove Creek crosses the road (approximately 2.5 miles). The shortcut up through Tony Grove Creek is still open for motorized travel. The area open to motorized use follows the ridgeline traveling almost due west along the ridge, just north of the junction of the Coldwater Lake and Bear Hollow trails. The southern boundary follows just below the meadow above Coldwater Spring, south of the large sink hole and then due west below the 8950' contour to the eastern boundary of the Mount Naomi Wilderness. All of the large bowls above Tony Grove Lake (Cornice Ridge, Naomi Peak) White Pine Lake (Mount Gog, Mount Magog) and Steam Mill Lake remain open to snowmobiling.

The closure for the Bunchgrass drainage incorporates the existing closure up Tony Grove Creek, through Lewis M. Turner campground to the junction with the Tony Grove Road. Areas north and east of this, through the Bunchgrass drainage, are managed for non-motorized recreation, with the lower portion, as defined by the snow trail, having limited access to protect crucial wildlife habitat. The Bunchgrass non-motorized area extends east from Chicken Hill and White Pine Knob following the ridges to the east. This non-motorized area closes the traditional snowmobile route through the middle of the Bunchgrass drainage and exiting at the gravel pit off of the Tony Grove Road. In this alternative, a route through Bunchgrass is considered necessary to allow snowmobilers to return to the Tony Grove winter parking lot when weather conditions suddenly turn bad or snow conditions don't allow them to climb the hill near the summer White Pine Lake Trail to return to the parking lot. This alternative provides a snow trail out of White Pine

Canyon through the non-motorized area across Clark Hollow, and across the lower portion of the Bunchgrass drainage, returning to the Tony Grove parking lot.

Non-motorized winter recreation is also provided for in the Hell’s Kitchen drainage. The area closed to motorized use extends east from the ridges formed by Steam Mill Peak and the three peaks to the north and terminates at the junction of two intermittent streams west of Franklin Basin Road and the beaver ponds. The remainder of this general area is still open to motorized use. This includes the Steam Mill drainage and the high country between Steam Mill and Steep Hollow. All of Steep Hollow and the areas to the north of Steep Hollow remain open.

The proposed action includes a snow trail. The proposed trail leaving from the Franklin Basin parking lot would be twenty feet wide and groomed by Utah State Parks. This trail would require some tree removal and all woody brush removed on slopes with steep grades. Some leveling of the ground would be required at the beginning of the trail through the initial section of trees. The twenty foot cleared section would terminate in a turn-around on the northern ridge of White Pine Canyon near the existing summer trail. From here the snow trail would be reduced to eight feet wide and be groomed by a snowmobile with a pull behind groomer. This grooming would be done under permit to the proponent. This trail crosses White Pine Canyon, and Clarks Hollow where it sidehills through the meadows above Red Banks Campground, down into Bunchgrass and across the Bunchgrass ski trail and Bunchgrass Creek to the eastern edge of the Tony Grove Winter Parking lot. Below or east of the trail would be closed to winter use except on designated trails all the way to the Highway 89 (Logan Canyon National Scenic Byway). Two trails have been proposed through this area to allow private landowners access to the snow trail and areas open to motorized use above the snow trail.

2.1.2 Alternative 1A – Big Curve

This new sub-alternative is in response to those comments concerned with safe and convenient travel along the snow trail and in the area southwest of the Tony Grove parking area. Alternative 1A includes the same provisions as in Alternative 1 (the Proposed Action) but would open the “Big Curve” area to motorized travel and the snow trail would be groomed 20 feet wide the entire length. The area opened to motorized use in the “Big Curve” area would be the small triangular section directly southwest of the Tony Grove parking area (same triangular area open in Alternative 3). Respondents felt this area was needed to provide an alternative to riding on bare asphalt, as typically happens as snow melts from the roadway in this area. The respondents also suggested a 20-foot wide snow trail would be easier to groom and provide safer travel for skiers and snowmobilers. See Alternative 1A map in the EA.

2.1.3 Alternative 1B - Signed Trail to the North

This new sub-alternative in is response to concerns over resource effects associated with the groomed snow trail. Alternative 1B would include the same provisions as in Alternative 1, but would have no portion of a snow trail groomed and the southern

portion through the Bunchgrass area would not exist. The location of the eastern boundary between the Bunchgrass closure and Franklin Basin parking area would be signed, but no clearing of vegetation or ground disturbance would take place and a trail would not be groomed. No motorized access would be allowed through the Bunchgrass closure area. No convenient loop back to Tony Grove would be established. Riders would need to exit the White Pine/Steam Mill area to the Franklin Basin parking area. Motorized users experiencing either a mechanical or medical emergency (including the inability to climb back up out the White Pine Lake area) could ride to the Franklin Basin parking 1. Private landowners adjacent to the motorized use area would have motorized access to and from the motorized use area (through wildlife habitat) on specified, ungroomed trails. See Alternative 1B map.

2.1.4 Alternative 1C - Twin Creek Area

This new sub-alternative combines portions of Alternatives 1 and 3, and is in response to concerns about access to higher ground from the Tony Grove parking area and traveling on bare asphalt as snow melts back from south-facing areas. Alternative 1C includes the same provisions as in Alternative 1, but the southern boundary is extended to the Twin Creek Road and it includes the “Big Curve” area (same as Alternative 3). See Alternative 1C map.

2.1.5 Alternative 2 - Temporal Alternative

As an alternative to geographic separation of uses, this alternative establishes a temporal separation of uses. Under this alternative, motorized and non-motorized communities would each have opportunities to use the entire area, exclusive of the other community, for alternating periods of time (every other two weeks). The rationale for a two-week alternating period is generally: 1) it is “long enough” for a chance of a “fresh snowfall” over a two-week period (a greater chance than during a shorter period of time, such as one week or less); and, 2) it is “short enough” so you don’t have to wait very long to use the area (such as if out of town visitors happen to come during a time when the area is closed to their preferred method of use). A longer period, such as a month or more, would necessitate a longer wait between use opportunities.

Under the temporal alternative, the area is delineated as follows: the southernmost boundary of the area would be the same as the Revised Forest Plan alternative (Twin Creeks road to its termination at Bubble Springs, due north to the ridgeline, to approximately the junction of the Bear Hollow and Cottonwood Springs Trails, along the southern extent of the large meadow, to the south around the sink hole below the meadow and from there due west part way up the ridge leading to peak 8950). The western boundary would be the Mt. Naomi Wilderness boundary and the eastern boundary would be Highway 89 to the junction with the Franklin Basin Road; at that point the eastern boundary would be the Logan River. The northern boundary would be the Utah-Idaho border (see Alternative 2 map).

The Tony Grove parking area would be open only to the allowed type of use (motorized or non-motorized) during their alternating periods of use. Franklin Basin parking area is owned by the School and Institutional Trust Land Administration of the State of Utah. Parking would be open to both users during any alternating period of time.

A calendar showing the alternating periods of use would be available well in advance of the winter recreation season and posted widely along the boundaries (Highway 89, Tony Grove and Franklin Basin parking, and the Cub River on the Idaho side) and would be circulated widely on the internet and through the tourist bureaus and the media.

This alternative includes no provision for a snow trail between Tony Grove and Franklin Basin parking areas. Every two weeks the entire area would be motorized and the next two weeks the entire area would be non-motorized.

A few comments were received from people that use snowmobiles to reach the high country where they snowboard or ski on the upper slopes. Winter visitors that use both motorized and non-motorized means for their particular activity would be allowed only during the motorized period of use.

2.1.6 Alternative 3 - Revised Forest Plan

This alternative is the 2003 Revised Forest Plan decision, and is a No Action alternative, in that it represents no change from current management direction.

The decision included provisions for snowmobile access through closed areas. The boundaries for areas open and closed to motorized winter recreation for the no action alternative are as shown on the Winter Recreation Alternative 7 Map 1, which accompanied the 2003 Revised Forest Plan and Record of Decision, and are described generally as follows:

The southernmost boundary of the area open to motorized travel is the Twin Creeks Road to its termination at Bubble Springs. From here the boundary goes due north to the ridgeline to approximately the junction of the Bear Hollow and Cottonwood Springs Trails. At this point the boundary follows the 1991 boundary along the southern extent of the large meadow, deviates to the south around the sink hole below the meadow and from there extends due west part way up the ridge leading to peak 8950, terminating at the eastern boundary of the Mt. Naomi Wilderness. This portion of the boundary would continue to need signing.

From here the western boundary of the area open to motorized use would follow the ridgeline to the north, which is also the Mt. Naomi Wilderness boundary, all the way to the northern district boundary (Idaho border).

The motorized closure extends from the Tony Grove parking lot to the west and is formed by the south and western edge of the Tony Grove Creek/Lewis M. Turner closure from the 1991 travel plan. It continues along the north side of the Tony Grove Road until

the intersection with the Right Fork of Tony Grove Creek. From here, the southwestern boundary of the motorized closure follows a ridge just north of the gravel pit and continues along the ridge, forming the south and western boundaries of the closure. Continuing along the ridgeline, the boundary crosses the top of Chicken Hill and the saddle at the head of Bunchgrass drainage, continuing north to the peak of White Pine Knob. From this peak, the boundary goes due north to peak 9230. From this point the western boundary of the motorized closure goes northeast to Steam Mill Peak and extends from Steam Mill Peak north over the next two peaks. From the second peak north of Steam Mill Peak, the boundary closure travels to peak 8761. From here the boundary follows a northeasterly and easterly curving ridge to the south of Steep Hollow Road, where the boundary ties in with the Franklin Basin Road. This motorized closure encompasses the Bunchgrass, lower White Pine and Hell’s Kitchen Canyon drainages (see Alternative 3 map).

2.1.7 Alternative 4 - No Winter Recreation Use

This alternative closes the project area to all recreation use during the winter season. This is a second No Action alternative, in that no action or activity will take place. It provides a baseline for estimating the effects of recreation activity and track changes in resource effects in the area (see Alternative 4 map).

2.1.8 Alternative 5 – North/South Temporal

This alternative was submitted in response to the Preliminary EA and was referred to as the “Everyone Everywhere Alternative” by the proponents. They feel a temporal separation of uses is a reasonable thing to try. However, they believe a longer period would make it more functional. In contrast to the Temporal Alternative which alternates use every two weeks over the entire Tony Grove - Franklin Basin area, Alternative 5 applies a season-long temporal separation to alternating halves of the area. The separation boundary for this alternative would be along the northern ridge of White Pine Canyon. There would be no over-the-snow connector trail in this alternative.

The northern and southern halves would be alternately open to motorized use every other year. Non-motorized use would be allowed at any time. In closed years, motorized access to the higher bowls from Tony Grove would be allowed after some date when non-motorized use declines dramatically (approximately April 15).

The northern boundary for this alternative would be the ridge to the northeast of Doubletop Mountain, following to the southeast, and connecting to the Franklin Basin Road. The southern boundary approximates Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 except it follows Twin Creek instead of the Twin Creek road in the southeast corner (see Alternative 5 Map).

Under Alternative 5, the Franklin Basin Road (groomed by the State of Utah) would be open to motorized travel every year, but travel would be restricted to the road until north

of the northern boundary as described above. The Franklin Basin parking area would be open to everyone every year.

Tony Grove road would be non-motorized during the non-motorized years and motorized during the motorized year. It could be groomed (either State-groomed or pull-behind by proponents) every year, but only for the allowed use (motorized or non-motorized) each year.

2.1.9 Alternative 6 – Additional Non-motorized

This alternative is being analyzed in response to a request for consideration of an alternative that maximizes non-motorized use in the Franklin Basin area. This alternative is referred to as the “Moving Forward Equitably Alternative” by the proponents. In general, the non-motorized area in this proposal is similar to Alternative 3, except that it includes all of Steam Mill Canyon to the Wilderness boundary. The northern boundary of the non-motorized area follows ridges just south of the Steep Hollow Road and the southern boundary follows Alternative 3 until north of White Pine Canyon where it generally follows the Bunchgrass/White Pine summer trail to the Wilderness boundary. This alternative includes a provision for a motorized egress corridor in White Pine Canyon to the Tony Grove parking area, the lower portion of which would be groomed with a pull-behind groomer (see Alternative 6 Map).

Under Alternative 6, the concept of two new parking lots for motorized users to provide separate parking is being proposed. New motorized parking would be provided a short distance up the Tony Grove road and at the Twin Creeks road. The current Tony Grove winter parking lot would be for non-motorized parking.

A ski trail, where possible, would parallel the Franklin Basin groomed snowmobile trail. The snowmobile trail would have a proposed 20-mile per hour maximum speed limit where it parallels the ski trail. A foot bridge across the Logan River west of the existing road bridge would be constructed.

This alternative also includes the concept of a Nordic Center of groomed ski trails, a portion of which would be located on National Forest land and a portion on land administered by the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). Groomed trails or facilities associated with a Nordic Center and new parking lots would require further NEPA analysis.

Under Alternative 6, the trail down White Pine Canyon would allow motorized use and is termed a “snowmobile convenience egress corridor”. It generally follows the White Pine-Bunchgrass summer trail down White Pine Canyon. At the bottom, where it turns to the south to the Tony Grove parking area, it would be the same as the Proposed Action “snow trail”, that is, a pull-behind, groomed trail about 8 feet wide.

2.1.10 Alternative 7 – Additional Motorized

This alternative is being considered in response to a request for consideration of an alternative that maximizes the area open to winter motorized use in the Franklin Basin area. Referred to by the proponents as the “Simplified Boundary Management Alternative”, under this alternative the southern boundary uses a ridgeline-based boundary rather than the Twin Creek boundary used in Alternative 3. The snow trail (as described in the Proposed Action) would serve as the eastern boundary until it intersects with the Franklin Basin Road which would serve as the remainder of the eastern boundary. The western boundary would be the Wilderness boundary (see Alternative 7 Map).

The proponents of this alternative are concerned that closure areas under other alternatives create opportunities to be non-compliant, whether intentional or not. They feel while most recreationists want to be responsible and follow the rules, there can be incomplete, confusing, difficult to find, or non-existent information explaining what the restrictions are, where the boundaries are, and so forth. In response to this concern, they would like to see non-motorized closure areas eliminated and have more simplified boundaries.

Under Alternative 7, the snow trail would be included as in Alternative 1, with a 20-foot wide groomed trail from Franklin Basin to White Pine and an 8-foot wide, pull-behind groomed trail to the Tony Grove parking area. The area to the east of the snow trail would be closed to motorized use. Everything north of the southern boundary would be open to motorized (and non-motorized) all the time.

2.1.11 Recommended Mitigation

Water Quality and Aquatics

The following mitigation is recommended for the alternatives that include any portion of a State-groomed snow trail (Alternatives 1,1A, 1C, and 7)

1. Allow no ground disturbance (such as grading) in wetlands or wet areas
2. The access trail between Tony Grove and Franklin Basin parking lots will be closed when there are breaks in the snow cover and the ground surface is showing along the trail. These conditions are expected to occur in the late fall and during spring snow melt.
3. Grooming of the trail with a trail groomer between Franklin Basin parking area and White Pine Creek will occur when there is sufficient depth of snow such that vegetation along the trail is not damaged by the groomer.
4. Erosion control structures such as drainage dips, straw bails and sediment fence; or erosion control materials such as erosion matting or straw mulch will be installed to minimize erosion from areas of soil disturbance.
5. Equipment used for the construction of the groomed trail will be inspected for fluid leaks and fixed before being allowed to construct the trail. Fueling of

equipment used for trail construction will occur only outside of riparian habitat conservation areas (RHCAs).

Scenery

The following mitigation is recommended for the alternatives that include any portion of a State-groomed snow trail (Alternatives 1, 1A, 1C, and 7)

1. Use a local seed source for seeding the disturb areas.
2. Stock pile and remove rock generated from actions where a track would need to be constructed for the snow groomer.
3. When equipment is used for an action maximize its use by using re-habilitation efforts in adjacent landscapes.
4. Remove and furrow the top 6 inches of top soil to one side of the construction activity until the desired track is constructed and then spread over disturb area after construction.
5. When possible use a track hoe to construct trail track so that as much root mass can be left intact during construction.
6. Trail alignment should use large radius curves that follow the contour of the landscape.
7. When large woody vegetation is removed attention should be made so as to minimize or eliminate the contrast texture between the proposed trail alignment and the surrounding landscape.
8. During construction of the snow trail, up slope rounding and landscape contouring in cut slopes to reduce geometric effect of the road alignment.
9. Where extra material is generated from cuts, place material on the fill slope to reduce the grade to a maximum of 4:1.

Wildlife

The following mitigation is recommended for Alternatives 1, 1a, 1c, 6, and 7.

1. The southern portion of the proposed connector trail melts out sooner than the northern portion, exposing shrubs such as sagebrush and bitterbrush (see project record Wildlife Report: dated April 19, 2006). As snow depths decrease, elk move into these areas as the season progresses (transitional habitat). The trail proceeding south from White Pine Creek should be signed as closed when snowmobile activity could damage vegetation and cause disturbance, thus reducing impacts to sagebrush and bitterbrush habitat. The trail should only be groomed when sufficient snow exists on the southern portion near the Tony Grove parking area.

Recreation

The following mitigation is recommended for Alternatives 1, 1a, 1c, and 7.

1. In order to deter unauthorized use of the trail in the summer, signs and barriers (such as rocks and logs) will be placed at the trailheads and along the trail to impede travel on the trail.

The following mitigation is recommended for Alternatives 1, 1a, 1b, 1c, and 7.

1. In order to reduce safety concerns and provide non-motorized users an alternative to the Franklin Basin State-groomed trail, a suggested single track ski route would be flagged from the Forest boundary (just across the first bridge) to the Hells Kitchen non-motorized use area.

The following would be implemented for Alternatives 1, 1a, 1b, 1c, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7.

1. Implementation of any alternative allowing motorized use will follow 36 CFR 212.80 (the over-snow vehicle section of the Travel Management Rule, Subpart 212.80) and an “over-snow” motor vehicle use map would be published.

2.2 Alternatives Considered but Dismissed from Detailed Study

1) “Private Land Alternative” (private yurt located on private property)

An alternative was suggested by this proponent as a means to protect the non-motorized winter recreation experience in the vicinity of private property located within the project area (a private in-holding within the National Forest). An alternative that looked at this specific closure was considered, however it was dismissed from detailed study because the protection of this non-motorized experience would be afforded, and is considered, under Alternatives 3 and 6. The impacts to this private property in-holding are evaluated under Issue 1.6.1.3 Private land/Private Interests.

2) “50 foot wide” snow trail set-back (buffer)

An alternative for a 50-foot wide snow trail was suggested to provide a safe buffer for people to pull off the snow trail, for emergencies or to wait for others in their party. This alternative was considered but dismissed from detailed study because a buffer is not needed. The safety features of a 20-foot wide snow trail are addressed under Alternative 1A. Pulling slightly off the groomed snow trail in the event of an emergency or to wait for others would not be considered an infraction.

3) “Provide an over the snow trail within the UDOT easement along Highway 89”

Some respondents proposed an alternate route for the snow trail within the Highway 89 UDOT easement. This option was explored; however, it was dismissed from detailed study because it is not feasible for snowmobiles to travel safely along this highway corridor. There are obstacles (including a large culvert structure, a bridge, and the Logan River) preventing clear and safe passage along the highway.

4) “Summer OHV loop trail”

Some respondents suggested we develop a loop OHV trail incorporating the snow trail, and allow it to be used by OHVs in the summer. We have elected not to consider summer use with this winter recreation project. Summer recreation is not related to the purpose and need of this project, and as such, a decision regarding a summer OHV trail is beyond the scope of this analysis.

5) "Plowing lower Franklin Basin Road (to north of Hells Kitchen Canyon) and developing new parking for motorized use"

The State currently provides a groomed snowmobile trail along the Franklin Basin Road. Should a Nordic Center be established as proposed in Alternative 6, this suggestion could be considered as mitigation and was not considered in an individual alternative.

2.3 Forest Plan Direction and Consistency

2.3.1 Forest Plan Direction

Forest Plans establish guidance for project level decisions. The WCNF revised the Forest Plan in March 2003. Provided in Appendix C is the management direction that applies to this project. For other less directly pertinent Forest Plan direction see Chapter 4 in that document. A copy of the Revised Forest Plan is available in the Project File.

All uses of the National Forest must be consistent with the Forest Plan. Alternatives not consistent with the forest plan can either be modified or the plan amended to permit the proposal. If the decision is to amend the Plan the "significance" of the amendment must be determined. It is important to note that there is a difference between "significance" of the change to a forest plan and "significance" of the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Determination of "significance" for a forest plan amendment is based on the following criteria:

1. Timing – Identify when the change is to take place. Determine whether the change is necessary during or after the plan period (the first decade) or whether the change is to take place after the next scheduled revision of the forest plan. In most cases, the later the change, the less likely it is to be significant for the current forest plan. If the change is to take place outside the plan period, the forest plan amendment is not required.

2. Location and Size – Determine the location and size of the area involved in the change. Define the relationship of the affected area to the overall planning area. In most cases, the smaller the area affected, the less likely the change is to be a significant change in the forest plan.

3. Goals, Objectives, and Outputs – Determine whether the change alters long-term relationships between the levels of goods and services projected by the forest plan. Consider whether an increase in one type of output would trigger an increase or decrease in another. Determine whether there is a demand for goods and services not discussed in the forest plan. In most cases, changes in outputs are not likely to be a significant change in the forest plan unless the change would forego the opportunity to achieve an output in later years.

4. Management Prescription – Determine whether the change in a management prescription is only for a specific situation or whether it would apply to future decisions throughout the planning area. Determine whether or not the change alters the desired

future condition of the land and resources or the anticipated goods and services to be produced.

2.3.2 Forest Plan Consistency of Alternatives in this Analysis

Alternatives in this analysis have been evaluated for Forest Plan consistency. Proposed Forest Plan amendments and evaluation of their significance are shown below. Alternatives 1, 1A, 1B, 1C, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are not consistent with the Winter Recreation map for the Cache-Box Elder Management Area within the 2003 Revised Forest Plan. If any of these alternatives were selected as the decision the Revised Forest Plan (USFS, 2003) would need to be amended by replacing the winter recreation map for Cache-Box Elder Management Area.

2.3.3 Forest Plan Amendment Significance Evaluation

Timing

This change will take place following the disposition of any appeals of the decision. Implementation of the 2003 map began in the winter of 2003/2004. This change would be within the current planning period.

Location and Size

This amendment will apply only to the Tony Grove - Franklin Basin area of the Cache Box Elder Management Area. This represents less than 8% of the management area and less than 2% of the planning area.

Goals, Objectives, and Outputs

This amendment will not alter long-term relationships between the levels of goods and services projected by the Forest Plan. While areas managed as motorized or non-motorized would vary between the alternatives, the output level is within the levels evaluated during the planning process (See Table REC 12 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement accompanying the Revised Forest Plan, 2003).

Management Prescription

Replacing the winter recreation map of the Cache Box Elder Management Area does not change or affect the management prescription.

2.4 Comparison of Alternatives

Some respondents commented they were “losing acres” or their activity “deserved to have more acres” than another activity. However, all “acres” are not created equal. Many of the acres included in either motorized or non-motorized areas are not *usable* or *desirable* for their particular activity. Reasons for this include such things as rock outcrops or cliff bands, tall dense vegetation, or exposure to sun that can create poor snow conditions.

Even usable acres do not tell the whole story, as there must be access to use the areas. Snow conditions vary, especially by season. Acres usable in January may not be usable in October and November, or March and April. In these times of year, winter visitors must drive to the highest elevations possible (Tony Grove Road) to access areas with enough snow to travel on. While there may still be usable acres, visitor use declines early and late in the season, leaving some desirable acres unused.

Some comments suggested that the percent of acres in a specific area had increased or decreased. Those percents of acres are only meaningful in the area described and do not consider the adjacent acres that may be much larger and usable. These percentages are contingent on the size of the boundary drawn and again do not consider what may be usable or desirable acres.

Discussions with motorized and non-motorized advocates during the previous Forest Plan revision process did not illuminate which acres either group considered usable. Both groups considered every acre usable.

Given these concerns, “acres” are not an effective measure of the amount of area open to any particular use. For this analysis, relative amounts of desirable areas and the ability to access them, and qualitative descriptions are used to make comparisons between alternatives, especially related to the winter recreation experience. Table 2.1 below summarizes the alternatives.

Table 1. Comparison of Alternatives

Alternative	General Description of Motorized Use Area(s)	General Description of Non-motorized Use Area(s)	Snow Trail and Other Features
1	Southern boundary follows the Tony Grove Road about 2.5 miles, then follows east-west ridgelines to Coldwater Spring and west to the Wilderness boundary. Western boundary is the Wilderness boundary. Northern boundary is the State line. Eastern boundary is Bunchgrass non-motorized area, the State-groomed snow trail, and Franklin Road	Non-motorized use areas include Twin Creek on the southern end, Bunchgrass to Chicken Hill and White Pine Knob, and Hells Kitchen area	20' wide State-groomed trail from Franklin Basin parking area to White Pine Ck and 8' wide pull-behind-groomed trail from White Pine Ck to Tony Grove parking area (no bridges needed)
1A	Same boundary as Alternative 1, but "Big Curve" (triangular area SW of Tony Grove parking area) open to winter motorized use	Same as Alternative 1(except triangular area SW of Tony Grove parking area)	20' wide State-groomed trail from Franklin Basin parking area to Tony Grove parking area; Up to three new bridges would be constructed to allow State-groomed trail passage over incised streams
1B	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1	Snow trail from Franklin Basin parking area to Bunchgrass area is signed only; no portion of the trail is constructed or groomed
1C	Similar to Alternative 1, except southern boundary is the same as Alternative 3 (Twin Creek Road to ridgeline to Wilderness boundary)	Same as Alternative 1 (except does not include area between Twin Creek and Tony Grove Road)	Same as Alternative 1
2	Entire area is open to either motorized use or non-motorized use alternating every two weeks	Entire area is open to either motorized use or non-motorized use alternating every two weeks	No snow trail needed
3	Southern boundary is Twin Creek Road to ridgeline to Coldwater Spring to Wilderness boundary. Western boundary is the Wilderness boundary. Northern boundary is the State line. Eastern boundary is the non-motorized use area generally from Steep Hollow to west of Steam Mill Peak to White Pine Knob to Chicken Hill to Bunchgrass to Tony Grove parking area	Non-motorized use area is generally from Steep Hollow to west of Steam Mill Peak to White Pine Knob to Chicken Hill to Bunchgrass to Tony Grove parking area	No snow trail
4	No winter motorized or non-motorized recreation use	No winter motorized or non-motorized recreation use	No snow trail needed
5	Area is divided into two portions, north and south; alternating between motorized and non-motorized use in each portion every other year	Area is divided into two portions, north and south; alternating between motorized and non-motorized use in each portion every other year	No snow trail needed

Alternative	General Description of Motorized Use Area(s)	General Description of Non-motorized Use Area(s)	Snow Trail and Other Features
6	Same as Alternative 3 except winter non-motorized use area extends west to Wilderness boundary in Steam Mill Canyon	Same as Alternative 3 except winter non-motorized use area extends west to Wilderness boundary in Steam Mill Canyon	8' wide convenience egress corridor (pull-behind groomed) in White Pine Canyon; two new motorized parking areas; new footbridge across Logan River; Nordic ski center
7	Area open to motorized use includes everything north of the southern boundary which uses Tony Grove and ridgelines to the south of it; the western boundary is the Wilderness; the eastern boundary is the snow trail (as described in Alternative 1)	All areas open to motorized and non-motorized use; No exclusive non-motorized use areas	Same as Alternative 1

2.5 Summary of Effects
Table 2. Summary of Effects

Issue	Alternative 1	Alternative 1A	Alternative 1B	Alternative 1C	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 7
Motorized Recreation Experience	Moderate Provisions due to adequate alt. routes from high bowls, snow trail provides egress and flexibility, large area open to motorized	Moderate to High. Similar to Alt. 1 but slightly better due to improved egress and use of both parking lots due to snow trail groomed entire way and opening of big curve	Similar to Alt 1, but less egress due to no snow trail between parking areas and big curve not open. Possible increase to crowded parking.	Similar to Alt. 1a, but less developed snow trail and more area open	High provision due to flexible travel, egress and dispersal, but increases crowding issue at parking areas due to off/on closures	Lowest provision due to decreased flexibility for routes, egress and dispersal	Does not provide for Recreation Opportunities	Moderate to High High flexibility and egress, but less area for dispersal and higher potential for crowding at trailheads.	Low to Moderate least flexibility, egress, and dispersal except Alt 3. Low potential for crowding at trailheads due to proposed new parking areas.	Highest provision for Motorized recreation
Non-Motorized Recreation Experience	Low to Moderate due to large motorized area and snow trail affects access from parking	Similar to 1, but increased noise and smell and decreased safety from more/faster use on snow trail	Moderate due to decrease noise and smell, improved access from parking at Tony Grove without snow trail connecting to Franklin Basin	Similar to Alt 1 More area open, but not in quality ski terrain	High provision due to complete separation of use, but some safety concerns from unseen snowmobile tracks and potential for no fresh snow so less certainty of fresh powder due to short (2 week) rotation of uses	Moderate to High 2 nd largest area permanently closed to motorized shared access from parking, no snow trail or egress so quieter, decreased air quality at shared parking areas.	Does not provide for Recreation Opportunities	Highest provision due to large permanent closures, separate access from parking areas to greatest diversity of terrain	Moderate to High Similar to Alt 3, but increase noise and smells from egress route, decrease access from parking at Tony due to egress route	Lowest provision for Non-motorized recreation, no separation of use to address safety concerns or other issues raised
Manageability	Low to moderate due to large interior boundaries in White Pine Canyon and need to mark snow trail	Moderate Due to additional boundary at big curve and snow trail groomed entire way	Moderate to High Due to less snow trail and no boundary at big curve	Similar to Alt 1 but adds additional boundary at big curve and south of Tony Grove road to Twin Creeks	Highly manageable due to no interior boundaries or snow trail, but alternates every 2 weeks	Moderate to High due to less interior boundary, but has big curve and boundary south of Tony Grove road to Twin Creeks	Highest manageability due to most recognizable boundaries that are permanent,	Moderate to High simplified interior boundary, except upper Steam Mill, only rotates yearly,	Moderate Large interior boundary, plus need to mark egress route from White Pine to Tony Grove	Moderate to High No interior boundary except snow trail and big curve.
Enforceability	Least enforceable due to closure at big curve	Low to Moderate Similar to Alt. 1 but allows motorized use at big curve and improves ability to travel between parking areas.	Moderate to High Snow trail provides boundary and access to motorized area, but not across non-motorized	Low to Moderate Similar to Alt. 1 But adds new southern boundary and opens big curve	High Easy to access boundaries, no interior boundaries, no snow trail, but alternates every 2 weeks	Moderate Few interior boundaries, but closures part way up Steam Mill and White Pine difficult to implement	Highest Easy to access boundaries and permanently closed	Moderate to High Limited interior boundary, difficult to access upper Steam Mill and north boundary from Double top	Moderate Interior boundaries in upper Steam Mill and South of Steep Hollow difficult to access, egress route difficult of mark and travel	High Similar to Alt 4, but all uses allowed easier southern boundary than 4, but includes snow trail with limited interior boundary.

Issue	Alternative 1	Alternative 1A	Alternative 1B	Alternative 1C	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5	Alternative 6	Alternative 7
Private Land/ Private Interests	Private land and interests desiring motorized would benefit most; non-motorized would benefit least	Similar to Alt 1	Similar to Alt 1	Similar to Alt 1	Private interests/private land would be affected ½ half the time; other ½ time would benefit from their desired use type, exclusively	Private land and interests desiring non-motorized would benefit most; motorized would benefit least	Would negatively affect private land and private interests; little effect on private in-holding	Over long-term would be similar to Alt 2	Private land and interests desiring non-motorized would benefit most; motorized would benefit least	Similar to Alt 1
Wetlands/ Water Quality/ Aquatic Species (effects are associated with construction and/or use of the snow trail)	No adverse effects to wetlands; low potential for sedimentation; little impact to aquatic species due to mitigation and low probability of gas/oil leak	Due to the need for up to 3 bridges, this alternative has the highest potential for effect to wetlands, slightly higher potential for short-term effects to water quality, and slightly higher potential effect to aquatic species than Alternative 1	No construction of snow trail or bridges, so no effect to wetlands; very little to no impact to water quality or aquatic species due to mitigation and low probability of gas/oil leak	Effects to wetlands and water quality would be the same as Alternative 1; potential effect to aquatics same as Alt 1, except in addition this alternative opens Twin Creek to motorized; it would have same potential for effect as other creeks open in Alternative 1	Effects similar to Alternative 1B except motorized use (and therefore potential for gas/oil leak) would be 50% of the time. There would be no snow trail constructed or used, so no potential for sedimentation	Very little to no effect to wetlands, water quality, or aquatic species since no snow trail is constructed or used	There would be no winter recreation use so there would be no effect to wetlands, water quality, or aquatic species	Long-term effect would be similar to Alternative 2 because use over the entire area in the long term would be 50% ; there would be no trail constructed, so no potential for sedimentation	Effect would be similar to Alternative 3	Effects to wetlands and water quality similar to Alternative 1; slightly higher potential for effect to aquatics because more area open to motorized, yet still low probability of oil/gas leak
Scenery Management	Short term until vegetation is re-established. Less than 1/4 of trail construction evident from highway and about 2/3 of trail seen from recreation residences on private land	Longest effect on the landscape because of length of the trail and the steepness of the slope where the 20 foot wide trail is being proposed to be constructed	Little effect on the viewed landscape in the off snow season.	Has a similar effect to Alternative 1.	Little effect on the viewed landscape in the off snow season. During the snow season, tracks from skis or snowmobiles on the south face of the ridgeline that is just north of the Tony Grove turn off may be evident, but short term	Same effect as Alternative 2	Same effect as Alternative 2	Same effect as Alternative 2	Similar effects to Alternatives 2-5 except addition of pedestrian bridge near the Franklin Basin and parking areas just up Tony Grove Road and at Twin Creek road	Has a similar effect to Alternative 1
Wildlife	Mod/high effect to wildlife in general	Mod/high effect to wildlife in general	Lower effect to wildlife in general	Large effect to wildlife in general	Large effect to wildlife in general	Moderate effect to wildlife in general	Least effect to wildlife	Mod/high effect to wildlife in general	Mod/high effect to wildlife in general	Large effect to wildlife in general