



File Code: 1920

Date: April 6, 2023

Subject: Administrative Change to 2018 Flathead National Forest Land Management Plan

To: Project File

This letter documents the following administrative changes made to the Flathead National Forest Land Management Plan (2018 Forest Plan) to correct inaccuracies and incorporate improved geospatial accuracy:

- To incorporate greater accuracy in geospatial data for the Jewel Basin, Limestone-Dean Ridge, and Tuchuck-Whale Recommended Wilderness Areas (RWAs), Table 24 (*Total approximate acres of areas recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System*) is being updated to reflect minor acreage changes due to the corrections.
- Four administrative areas were erroneously labeled as fire lookouts rather than airstrips in Table 27 (*Administrative sites*). The table is being updated to incorporate the correct labels.

Administrative Changes

Corrections to Recommended Wilderness Area Boundaries and Table 24

The Jewel Basin, Limestone-Dean Ridge, and Tuchuck-Whale RWA boundaries were intended to fully exclude several National Forest System trails from the RWAs to allow mechanized, non-motorized use. Minor inaccuracies, however, were recently discovered.

RWA boundaries were drawn using the best information available during plan revision. Data with improved geospatial accuracy relating to geological features and existing infrastructure is now available, and indicates that small portions of five trails that should have been wholly outside the RWAs were actually within RWA boundaries in certain locations.

As summarized below in Table 1, the Jewel Basin, Limestone-Dean Ridge, and Tuchuck-Whale boundaries will be corrected to exclude these trails and incorporate current geospatial data to align with management area intent.

Table 1. Description of adjustments to Recommended Wilderness Areas

Recommended wilderness area	Acres in the 2018 Forest Plan	Trails impacted by adjustment	Acres of RWA impacted by adjustment	Adjusted acres post-change
Jewel Basin	18,462	Trail 64	Reduction of 8 acres	18,454
Limestone-Dean Ridge	15,026	Trail 327	Reduction of 21 acres	15,005
Tuchuck-Whale	79,821	Trail 372 Trail 375 Trail 26	Reduction of 44 acres and addition of 8 acres Net change: reduction of 36 acres	79,785
Total for three RWAs	113,309	Five trails	Total reduction of 73 acres Total addition of 8 acres Total net change of 65 acres	113,243 (99.94% of 2018 Forest Plan acres)



The analysis in the Forest Plan final environmental impact statement remains unchanged and accurately describes resource conditions and management activities. Actual trail locations will remain unchanged, and eligibility for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System is not affected.

Due to these corrections, the following corrections are being made to Table 24 on page 89 of the 2018 Forest Plan. Corrections are in bolded text.

Table 24. Total approximate acres of areas recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System

Recommended wilderness area	Acres*
Alcove-Bunker	18,901
Elk Creek	1,442
Java-Bear Creek	1,824
Jewel Basin	48,462 18,454
Limestone-Dean Ridge	45,026 15,005
Slippery Bill-Puzzle	12,393
Swan Front	42,534
Tuchuck-Whale	79,821 79,785
Total Acres	490,403 190,338

*Acres are from GIS dataset and include acres for all waterbodies.

Corrections to Administrative Site Types in Table 27

Four administrative areas were erroneously labeled as fire lookouts rather than airstrips. As a result, the following corrections are being made to Table 27 (*Administrative sites on the Forest*) on page 96 of the 2018 Forest Plan. Corrections are in bolded text. Only the four rows below are being corrected. The remainder of the table remains unchanged.

Table 27. Administrative sites on the Forest

Geographic Area	Site Name	Type of Area	Acres
Middle Fork	Schafer Meadows	Fire Lookout Airstrip	33
South Fork	Meadow Creek	Fire Lookout Airstrip	32
South Fork	Spotted Bear	Fire Lookout Airstrip	37
Swan Valley	Condon	Fire Lookout Airstrip	28

2012 Planning Rule Compliance

Administrative Change Process

These changes to the 2018 Forest Plan are being made in accordance with the administrative change process of 36 C.F.R. § 219.13(c)(2). The administrative change process is appropriate to use because:

- It allows for the correction of clerical errors. 36 C.F.R. § 219.13(c).
- Clerical errors include “an error of the presentation of material in the plan such as phrasing, grammar, typographic errors, or minor errors in data or mapping that were appropriately evaluated in the development of the plan, plan revision, or plan amendment.” 77 Fed. Reg. 21161 at 21239.
- The changes documented in this letter are limited to the correction of minor errors in data or mapping (RWA boundaries) and typographical errors (administrative site types).

Public Notice

Administrative changes may be made following public notice. 36 C.F.R. § 219.13(c). For these changes, notice is being provided by posting this letter on the Flathead National Forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/flathead/landmanagement/planning>.

Effective Date

These changes are effective 30 days from date of this letter.

Contact for More Information

For more information, please contact Michele Draggoo at (406) 249-4067 or michele.draggoo@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kurt E. Steele", with a stylized flourish at the end.

KURTIS E. STEELE
Forest Supervisor