



United States  
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# **Draft Forest Plan Amendments to incorporate relevant direction from the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy**

Helena National Forest  
Kootenai National Forest  
Lewis and Clark National Forest  
Lolo National Forest



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# **Draft Forest Plan Amendments to incorporate relevant direction from the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy into the forest plans for the Helena, Kootenai, Lewis and Clark, and Lolo National Forests**

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### Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
GBCS	Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy
NCDE	Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem
NFS	National Forest System
OMRD	open motorized route density
TMRD	total motorized route density
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

# Introduction

## Proposed Action

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, is preparing an amendment to incorporate habitat-related direction applicable to National Forest System (NFS) lands from the draft Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy into the forest plans for the Helena, Kootenai, Lewis and Clark and Lolo National Forests. This document describes the proposed action (i.e., the proposed amendment) — the proposal for changes to the amendment forests' current land management plans. Figure 6-1 shows the national forests within the NCDE that would be affected by the amendment.

## Purpose of this Amendment

The purpose of the amendment is to incorporate relevant habitat-related direction from the draft NCDE Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy into the forest plans for the Helena, Kootenai, Lewis and Clark and Lolo National Forests (also referred to as “amendment forests”) to have an integrated set of plan direction (also referred to as plan components) consistent across the national forests that are a part of the NCDE.

## Need for the Amendment

Under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, federal agencies are directed to use their authorities to seek to conserve endangered and threatened species. The amendment forests' associated plans (Helena National Forest, approved by the Regional Forester in 1986; Kootenai National Forest, approved by the Regional Forester in 2015, and Lewis and Clark National Forest, approved by the Regional Forester in 1986; Lolo National Forest, approved by the Regional Forester in 1986), have management direction related to grizzly bear habitat, to support recovery of the threatened grizzly bear.

Since the development of this planning direction, the grizzly bear population in the NCDE has met and exceeded recovery goals. Habitat conditions and management on the national forests have contributed importantly to the increased population size and improved status of the grizzly bear across the NCDE. To support a healthy, recovered grizzly population, the Forest Services' continued, effective management of the NCDE grizzly bear's habitat is necessary.

In 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced the availability of a draft Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy for the NCDE population for public review and input. When finalized, the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy would become the post-delisting management plan for the NCDE grizzly bears and their habitat. By incorporating the relevant habitat-related direction from the draft Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy into forest plans, the proposed amendments will demonstrate to the USFWS that adequate regulatory mechanisms exist on national forests within the NCDE to support delisting. Thus, the amendment forests need to amend their forest plans and incorporate the relevant desired conditions, standards, guidelines, and monitoring items related to habitat management on National Forest System lands in the NCDE and contained in the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. This will show that the amendment forests have adequate regulatory mechanisms in place to support a recovered grizzly bear population.

The Flathead National Forest (which also lies within the NCDE) is concurrently proposing to incorporate the relevant portions of the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy to its forest plan through a separate plan revision process. The Flathead planning team, in addition to conducting the plan revision, is coordinating the National Environmental Policy Act effort for the amendment with the Helena, Kootenai, Lewis and

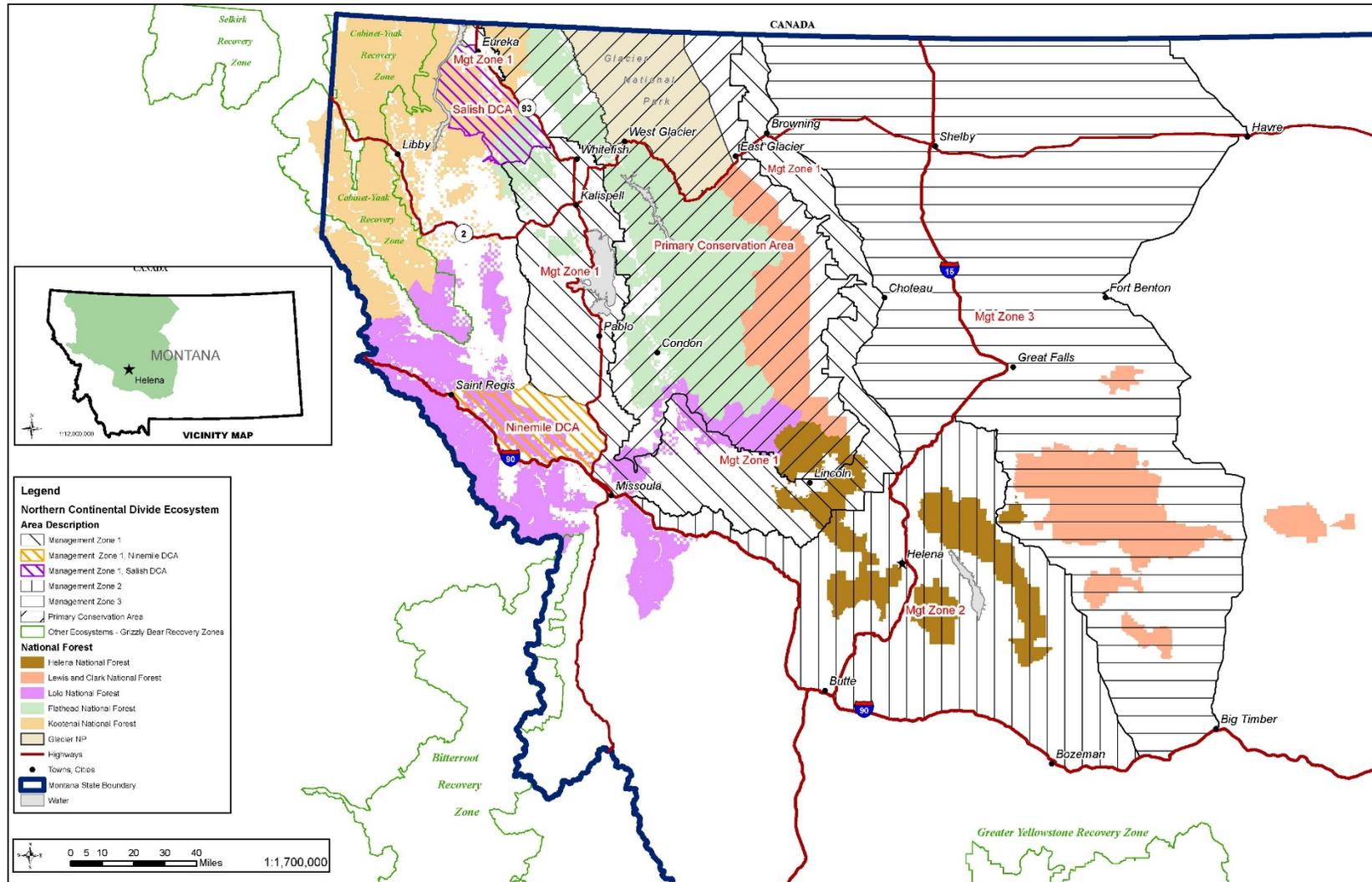


Figure 6-1. Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones and the national forests within the NCDE that are covered by the amendments

Clark, and Lolo National Forests, to be in support of the de-listing of the grizzly bear and to be consistent in the planning process.

## Plan Components

Plan components guide future projects and activities and the forest plan monitoring program. The proposed plan components provide the grizzly bear habitat-related management direction within the portions of each forest that lie within the NCDE.

### Desired conditions

Desired conditions (DCs) are the social, economic, and ecological attributes that will be used to guide management of the land and resources of the national forests. The desired condition for some resources may currently exist, and for other resources may only be achievable over a long time period. The Forest Service may need to make adjustments in the desired conditions if monitoring results indicate they are not achievable in the long term. Budget levels are an important factor in moving towards the desired conditions.

The proposed amendment presents two types of desired conditions:

- NCDE-wide desired conditions that apply across a national forest, as applicable to specific areas as designated on a map.
- Desired conditions specific to zone 1 and/or the demographic connectivity areas. These do not substitute for, nor repeat, NCDE-wide desired conditions, but provide focus on specific circumstances within specific geographic locations.

### Standards

A standard (STD) is a limitation or requirement that is applied to project and activity decision-making to help achieve goals, desired conditions, and objectives. Standards can be developed for forestwide application or for specific areas, and may be applied to all management activities or selected activities.

### Guidelines

A guideline (GDL) is an operational practice and procedure that is applied to project and activity decision-making to achieve goals, desired conditions, and objectives. Guidelines can be developed for forestwide application or for specific areas, and may be applied to all management activities or selected activities.

### Monitoring

Monitoring actions are part of a systematic process used to collect information. Monitoring is implemented to track changes and measure management effectiveness and progress toward achieving or maintaining the plan's desired conditions and ensure consistency in meeting standards and guidelines. Based upon monitoring results, changes in management direction, through revisions or amendments to a forest plan, may be deemed necessary.

The proposed plan components, including standards, guidelines, and/or monitoring items may only be changed through a clear demonstration of need that is based on biological data, the best available science, and/or new techniques. Any such changes would be subject to public review and would be guided by, and consistent with, the agreements reached in the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy and its overall goal to support a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE.

## Consistency with Planning Rule

The Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment signed the 2012 Planning Rule for the National Forest System on April 9, 2012, and the rule became effective May 9, 2012. The final directives on plan amendments were issued in January 2015. The 2012 Planning Rule states that plan amendments started after May 9, 2015, must conform to the 2012 Planning Rule requirements. Before that date, plan amendments may be made following the 1982 Rule process or by following the 2012 Planning Rule. (36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.17(b)(2)).

The Helena, Lewis and Clark, and Lolo National Forest plans were written under the requirements of the 1982 Planning Rule. The Kootenai National Forest plan was written under the requirements of the 1982 Planning Rule, via the transition allowances of the 2000 Planning Rule. To be consistent with their respective, current forest plans, all four amendment forests are developing this amendment to meet the requirements of the 1982 Planning Rule.

The Forest Service will prepare the amendment for the amendment forests concurrently with the Flathead National Forest plan revision. Doing so ensures that regulatory mechanisms for habitat protections specific to the de-listing of the grizzly bear would be made consistently across all five of the national forests that make up the NCDE and provides for efficiency and transparency in the planning process.

## Amendment Process and Organization

The steps for conducting a plan amendment process are as follows:

- The Responsible Official identifies a need to change the plan by means of a plan amendment.
- Invite input from public and governmental entities on the need to change the plan.
- Document the need to change the plan in the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act analysis document as part of the purpose and need.
- Provide opportunity for the public and governmental entities to comment on the proposed amendment and the environmental document. The comment period is at least 90 days when an environmental impact statement is prepared.
- Provide an opportunity to object to the plan amendment before approval.
- Respond to objections, if any (36 CFR Regulations 219.57(b); Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, chapter 50, sec. 51.66).
- Approve the final plan amendment and notify the public.

The evaluation of environmental effects for each of the amendment forests, as well as for the Flathead National Forest plan revision, is disclosed in a draft environmental impact statement. The DEIS includes separate impact analyses for each forest while also providing for a cumulative impacts analysis across all five affected forests in the NCDE.

It is important to note that this amendment does not authorize site-specific prohibitions or activities; rather it establishes broad direction, similar to zoning in a community. Project or activity decisions will need to be made following appropriate procedures, such as site-specific analysis in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, in order for prohibitions or activities to take place on the ground, within the broader direction of the forest plan.

Following this introduction, the amendment's proposed plan components are provided in the following order:

- Helena National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction
- Kootenai National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction
- Lewis and Clark National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction
- Lolo National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction

Each forest section includes a forest-specific map that shows the draft NCDE Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones. A glossary that applies to the entire amendment follows the proposed plan components.

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# Helena National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Helena National Forest, proposes to amend its current forest plan to incorporate the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy via the following plan components. This amendment applies only to Forest Service actions on National Forest System (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 6-1) and a map of the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Helena National Forest (figure 6-2) shows the areas that are covered by the amendment.

## Plan Components

The desired conditions, standards, and guidelines have specific alpha-numeric identifiers. All identifiers for the proposed amendment begin with “NCDE” because they are only applicable to the NCDE and are not applicable to other grizzly bear ecosystems. The identifiers are further differentiated as follows:

- area where direction applies (e.g., NCDE or NCDE-HNF Zone 1);
- type of forest plan component (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring);
- resource (e.g., AR = access and recreation, GRZ = grazing, and SFP = special forest products); and
- a unique number (i.e., numerical order starting with “01”).

As an example, direction from this amendment for a desired condition associated with access and recreation would be identified as NCDE-DC-AR-01.

## Wildlife (WL)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas) and zone 2, bear attractants on NFS lands are stored in a manner that reduces the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts in the NCDE.

**NCDE-DC-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE and contributes to connectivity with neighboring grizzly bear recovery zones.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-WL-01.** Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area and the Ninemile demographic connectivity area), zone 2 or zone 3 (see figure 6-2).

**NCDE-STD-WL 02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

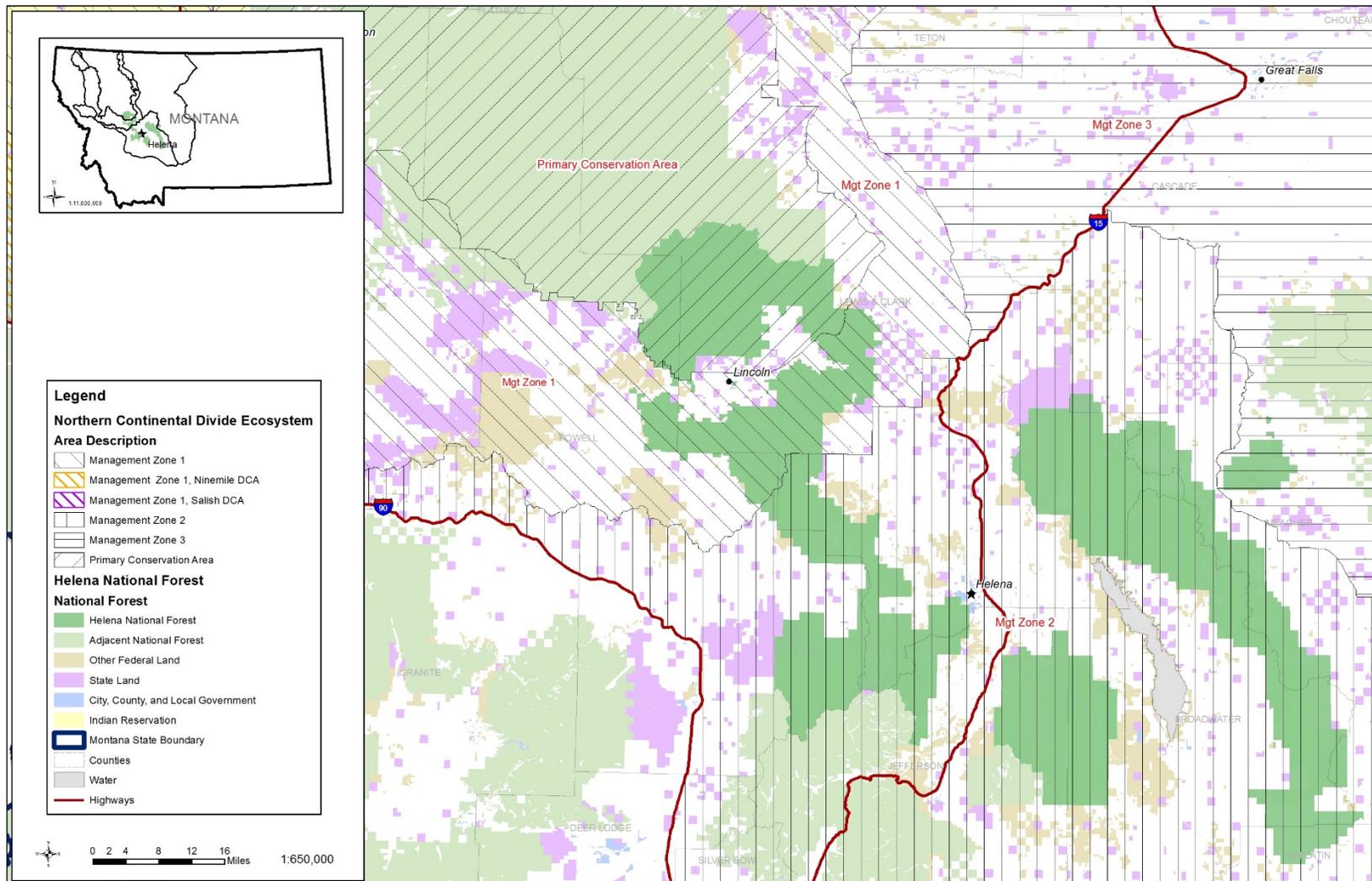


Figure 6-2. Areas on the Helena National Forest covered by the amendment

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of procedures for safely working and recreating in grizzly bear country, and informed about Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to turn-out of livestock or beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, if a contractor, permittee, lessee, operator or their employees elect to camp on NFS lands other than in a developed recreation site, a site evaluation should be prepared and written authorization (i.e., campsite agreement which includes the Food/Attractant Storage Special Order) should be obtained.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), clover should not be used in seed mixes on NFS lands. Native seed mixes or those that are less palatable to grizzly bears should be used so that seeded areas do not become an attractant.

## Access and Recreation (AR)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on NFS lands while providing open motorized route density (OMRD), total motorized route density (TMRD) and secure core levels that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity, and improvements of developed recreation sites provide for user comfort and safety while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-03.** Within each BMU in the primary conservation area, increases in the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use during the non-denning season, are limited to levels that are compatible with a stable to increasing bear population.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized use of roads with public restrictions shall be permitted for administrative use (see glossary), as long as it does not exceed either 6 trips (3 round trips) per week OR one 30-day unlimited use period during the non-denning season (see glossary). Exceptions to this standard include:

- Emergency situations as defined by 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 218.21.

*Note:* Administrative use is not included in baseline calculations and is not included in calculations of net increases or decreases.

**NCDE-STD-AR-02.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for open motorized route density or total motorized route density on NFS lands during the non-denning season (see glossary), with the following exceptions:

- temporary use of a motorized route for a project (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” definition in the glossary and NCDE-STD-AR-03);
- mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) conducted in accordance with valid existing rights and applicable standards and guidelines;
- updated/improved data on a motorized route without an actual change on the ground;
- changes in technology or projections result in changed calculations without actual change on the ground (e.g., a switch from NAD27 to NAD83 projection);
- a road closure location is moved a short distance (e.g. to the nearest intersection or turnout) to a better location to allow turn-arounds providing for public safety, to reduce vandalism, or to improve enforcement of the road closure;
- the agency exchanges, acquires, buys or sells lands;
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, human safety concerns or resource damage/concerns (e.g. a road paralleling a stream may be decommissioned and replaced by a new upslope road to reduce water quality impacts);
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

**NCDE-STD-AR-03.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary changes in the open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core shall be calculated for projects (as defined by “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary).

The 10-year running average for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5 percent temporary increase in open motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5 percent);
- 3 percent temporary increase in total motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3 percent);
- 2 percent temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2 percent).

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.).

*Refer to attachment 1 at the end of the document for examples showing how to calculate and apply the running average and temporary increase/decrease.*

**NCDE-STD-AR-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, restricted roads may be temporarily opened for public motorized use to allow authorized uses such as for firewood gathering, provided the period of use does not exceed 30 consecutive days and occurs outside of spring and fall bear hunting seasons.

**NCDE-STD-AR-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use by the public during the non-denning season shall be limited to one new developed recreation site per decade per bear management unit, or one increase in the overnight capacity at one site per decade per bear management unit above the baseline (see glossary). *See also* NCDE-GDL-AR-04. A change in the number or capacity of developed recreation sites may be offset by an equivalent reduction at another site(s) in the same bear management unit. This standard does not limit:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- an increase in the number of developed recreation sites due to the Forest Service acquiring lands with developed recreation sites.

**NCDE-STD-AR-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities if needed to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-AR-01.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, projects (as defined by “project in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE” in the glossary) should be designed so that on-the-ground implementation does not exceed 5 years in a 10-year period, to reduce the potential for grizzly bear disturbance or displacement. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.).
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 5-year time limitation is required (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, levels of secure core, open motorized route density and total motorized route density should be restored to pre-project levels (as defined by

“project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) within 1 year after completion of the project, in order to reduce the duration of grizzly bear displacement or disturbance due to project-related activities. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.).
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 1-year time limitation is made (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, facilities that provide for day-use by the public at developed recreation sites, or any increases in the number of day-use developed recreation sites during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary) should include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear-human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-04.** If there is an increase to the baseline in the number or capacity of overnight developed recreation sites under NCDE-STD-AR-05, the risk of increased grizzly bear-human conflicts should be reduced in the same bear management unit by providing additional information and education, conflict prevention resources (e.g. improved sanitation, backcountry food hanging poles, etc.), or law enforcement and patrols.

## Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the amount, type and distribution of vegetation provides for ecological, social and economic sustainability of NFS lands, while providing habitat components that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also NCDE-DC-WL-02.*

**NCDE-DC-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there is a mosaic of successional stages at a bear management subunit scale to provide for grizzly bear habitat needs over the long term.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, all proposed vegetation management projects shall be evaluated for their effects on grizzly bears and their habitat

### Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation and fuels management activities should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement, as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Management activities such as pre-commercial thinning, burning, weed spraying, and implementation of road best management practices may need to be completed during the spring time period in order to meet objectives (especially if needed to prevent resource damage), but should otherwise be restricted in time or space, if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities should be designed to avoid detrimental effects on the grizzly bear population and to include one or more measures to protect, maintain, increase and/or improve grizzly habitat quantity or quality in areas where it would not increase the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. *See also* NCDE-GDL-WL-01.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, measures to retain cover should be included in the project design if vegetation management activities would result in the loss of cover along grass/forb/shrub openings, riparian wildlife habitat, or wetlands, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management projects (including timber sales and other non-commercial vegetation management contracts) should include a provision providing for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear-human conflict situation.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities that may enhance grizzly habitat or attract bears (e.g., increase huckleberry production) should be avoided near campgrounds, facilities or other developed sites.

## Grazing (GRZ)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support ecologically sustainable grazing, and temporary grazing permits are used effectively for management of noxious weeds, while minimizing the risk of human-bear conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, issuance of new permits and reauthorization of existing allotments and Annual Operating Plans shall incorporate measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. New or re-authorized permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable animal unit months when returning to use.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery, which shall be followed by proper disposal of the carcass. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable animal unit months shall not be increased for inactive allotments. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as it does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands or an increase in animal unit months.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active cattle grazing allotments above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as that does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes such as controlling invasive exotic weeds or reducing fire risk, or for trailing of small livestock across NFS lands, shall include one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. Such activities shall not result in an increase in bear/small livestock conflicts or in removal of grizzly bears due to such conflicts. If grizzly bear conflicts arise, the livestock, rather than the grizzly bear, shall be removed. Exceptions to this standard include:

- operations which use livestock for packing purposes;
- outfitter and guide permits.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on sheep or cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out grazing or moving the livestock to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify any needed measures to protect key grizzly bear food production areas (e.g., wet meadows, stream bottoms, aspen groves, and other riparian wildlife habitats) from conflicting and competing use by livestock, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

## Special Forest Products (SFP)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-SFP-01.** Provide a variety of public services and special forest products (such as mushrooms, huckleberries, firewood) from NFS lands while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-SFP-01.** Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) located on NFS lands shall incorporate measures including electric fencing to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as specified in the food storage order.

## Renewable/Non-Renewable Energy and Mineral Resources (MIN)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-MIN-01.** Mineral materials are available based upon public interest, in-service needs, material availability, and valid existing rights, where consistent with desired conditions for other resources. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) occurring on NFS lands shall either avoid, minimize and/or mitigate environmental impacts to grizzly bears or their habitat, subject to valid existing rights. Stipulations or mitigation measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed,

nor will additional stipulations or mitigation measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder's agreement.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include measures to reasonably mitigate potential impacts of mineral development for the following:

- Land surface and vegetation disturbance;
- Water table alterations;
- Construction, operation, and reclamation of mine-related facilities such as impoundments, rights of way, motorized routes, pipelines, canals, transmission lines or other structures.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following measures regarding grizzly bear attractants:

- Bear resistant food storage and garbage containers shall be used at development sites and at any campgrounds or dispersed sites where exploration or production-related human occupancy is anticipated;
- Garbage shall be removed in a timely manner;
- Road kills shall be removed daily to a designated location determined in close coordination with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks;
- Feeding of wildlife shall not be allowed;
- Locations of work camps shall be approved in advance of operations. Food storage requirements shall be strictly adhered to in any work camps.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if minerals activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following mitigation measures, stipulations, or surface use criteria regarding grizzly bear habitat:

- Ground-disturbing activities in identified grizzly bear spring habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided between April 1 and June 30. If timing restrictions are not practicable, other measures shall be taken to reasonably mitigate negative impacts of mineral activity to grizzly bears;
- Seismic activity in identified grizzly bear denning habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided during the denning season (see glossary);

- Cumulative impacts of multiple, concurrent seismic and/or drilling operations shall be limited by timing restrictions. If timing restrictions are not practicable, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate negative impacts to the grizzly bear;
- Reasonable and appropriate measures regarding the maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration or mitigation of functioning aquatic systems and riparian habitat conservation areas shall identify how reclamation will occur, plant species to be used in reclamation, a timeframe of when reclamation will be completed, and monitoring criteria;
- Reclamation and revegetation of motorized routes, drilling pads, and other areas disturbed from mineral activities shall be completed as soon as practicable by the operator.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if mineral activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operations, permits, and/or leases shall include the following mitigation measures regarding motorized access:

- Public motorized use that is not associated with minerals activities shall be prohibited on motorized routes constructed for exploration and/or development;
- A traffic management plan shall be developed as part of the proposed activity to identify when and how motorized routes will be used, maintained, and monitored (if required), and how motorized route standards and guidelines will be implemented after activities have ended;
- Helicopter use associated with seismic activity, exploration, drilling or development must follow an approved plan or permit;
- Speed limits shall be adopted on motorized routes if needed to prevent or reduce collisions with grizzly bears.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-07.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), minerals contractors or lessees shall require employees to attend training related to safely living near and working in grizzly bear habitat prior to starting work, and on an annual basis thereafter.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new leasable minerals activities including leases, surface use plans for proposed wells or operations, or permits to conduct seismic exploration or drilling.

Helicopter use plans should:

- Avoid establishing recurring helicopter use (see glossary), especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas;
- Avoid establishing landing zones, especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas. If a landing zone is deemed necessary for safe implementation of the seismic or surface use plan or permit to drill, the landing zone should be constructed only in an area that has had site-specific analysis and approval.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), leasable energy activities should use the best available noise-

reduction technology on equipment and motorized vehicles to reduce potential disturbance or displacement of grizzly bears, whenever possible.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, wildlife cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, the following tiered measures should be considered to mitigate impacts to grizzly bear habitat. Beginning at Step 1, any subsequent steps would be implemented only if the prior steps are not possible or achievable.

- Step 1: The operator should reclaim the affected area back to suitable bear habitat that has similar or improved characteristics and qualities as the original habitat (such as the same native vegetation).
- Step 2: If Step 1 is not attainable, operators should either acquire a perpetual conservation easement (or easements) or purchase comparable or better replacement grizzly bear habitat within the primary conservation area. Acquisition of habitat within connectivity corridors could also be considered for mitigation, when appropriate. Habitat acquired for mitigation may require a purchase rate of >1:1 on an acreage basis, depending on the quality of habitat degraded and habitat available for acquisition.
- Step 3: If Steps 1 or 2 are not achievable, the next option is to consider offsetting negative effects to bears and grizzly bear habitat with other appropriate types of actions.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral permittees, leasees and operators.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

## Helena National Forest — Zone 1

### Desired condition

**NCDE-HNF Zone 1-DC-01.** Within the Helena National Forest portion of NCDE zone 1 (see figure 6-2), roads and trails provide for public and administrative access to NFS lands. Grizzly bear habitat in zone 1 contributes to sustaining the grizzly bear population in the NCDE and providing the opportunity for movement of bears to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

### Standard

**NCDE-HNF Zone 1-STD-01.** Within the Helena National Forest portion of NCDE zone 1 (see figure 6-2), there shall be no net increase above the baseline in miles of roads open to public motorized use during the non-denning season on NFS lands. This standard does not apply to the following:

- motorized use by agency personnel or others authorized by the appropriate agency personnel;
- temporarily opening a road for a short period of time to allow for public firewood gathering and other authorized use;

- updated/improved road data without an actual change on the ground;
- changes in technology or projections result in changed calculations without actual change on the ground (e.g., a switch from NAD27 to NAD83 projection);
- a road closure location is moved a short distance (e.g. to the nearest intersection or turnout ) to a better location to allow turn-arounds providing for public safety, to reduce vandalism, or to improve enforcement of the road closure;
- the agency exchanges, acquires, buys or sells lands;
- a change in an open road is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended);
- motorized use for mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) conducted in accordance with valid existing rights and applicable standards and guidelines;
- a change in an open road is necessary to address grizzly bear-human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- motorized emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

## Monitoring (MON)

**NCDE-MON-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, net changes in the level of secure core, open motorized route density ( $> 1 \text{ mi}/\text{mi}^2$ ) and total motorized route density ( $> 2 \text{ mi}/\text{mi}^2$ ) every 2 years within each bear management unit subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites designed and managed for overnight use on NFS lands within each bear management unit will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The number of day use recreation sites and trailheads in each bear management unit in the NCDE primary conservation area and administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep animal unit months within the primary conservation area will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), where it is determined there is potential for adverse effects to the grizzly bear population or its habitat resulting from leasable or locatable mineral activities, a monitoring plan will be developed for the life of the mineral activity. The monitoring plan will outline how changes in habitat and/or disturbance to bears will be monitored and mitigations (e.g., monitoring of mining reclamation measures) will be identified and funded.

**NCDE-MON-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the 10-year running average for projects (see **NCDE STD-AR-03** and “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by forest staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running averages allowed by **NCDE-STD-AR-03** are exceeded, the rationale will be documented in writing and submitted to the NCDE Coordinating Committee (see glossary).

**NCDE-MON-06.** In NCDE zone 1 on the Helena National Forest, the miles of road open for public use during the non-denning season on NFS lands will be monitored and compared with the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

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# Kootenai National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Kootenai National Forest, proposes to amend its current forest plan to incorporate the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy via the following plan components. This amendment applies only to Forest Service actions on National Forest System (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 6-1) and a map of the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Kootenai National Forest (figure 6-3) show the areas that are covered by the amendment.

## Plan Components

The desired conditions, standards, and guidelines have specific alpha-numeric identifiers. All identifiers for the proposed amendment begin with “NCDE” because they are only applicable to the NCDE and are not applicable to other grizzly bear ecosystems. The identifiers are further differentiated as follows:

- area where direction applies (e.g., NCDE or NCDE-KNF Zone 1);
- type of forest plan component (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring)
- resource (e.g., AR = access and recreation, GRZ = grazing, and SFP = special forest products);
- a unique number (i.e., numerical order starting with “01”).

As an example, direction from this amendment for a desired condition associated with access and recreation would be identified as NCDE-DC-AR-01.

## Wildlife (WL)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas) and zone 2, bear attractants on NFS lands are stored in a manner that reduces the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts in the NCDE.

**NCDE-DC-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE and contributes to connectivity with neighboring grizzly bear recovery zones.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-WL-01.** Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area and the Ninemile demographic connectivity area), zone 2 or zone 3 (see figure 6-3).

**NCDE-STD-WL 02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

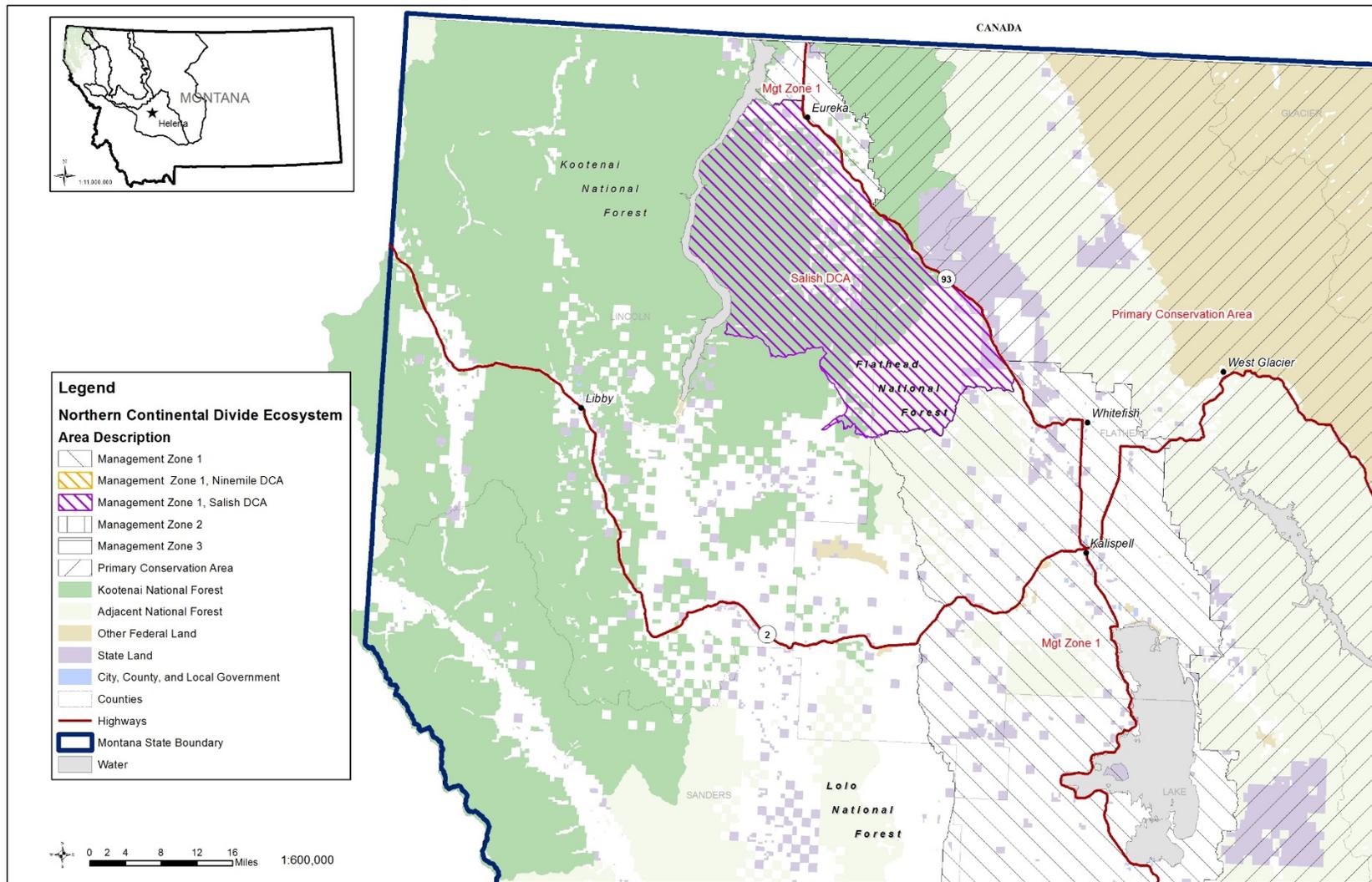


Figure 6-3. Areas on the Kootenai National Forest covered by the amendment

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of procedures for safely working and recreating in grizzly bear country, and informed about Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to turn-out of livestock or beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, if a contractor, permittee, lessee, operator or their employees elect to camp on NFS lands other than in a developed recreation site, a site evaluation should be prepared and written authorization (i.e., campsite agreement which includes the Food/Attractant Storage Special Order) should be obtained.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), clover should not be used in seed mixes on NFS lands. Native seed mixes or those that are less palatable to grizzly bears should be used so that seeded areas do not become an attractant.

## Access and Recreation (AR)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on NFS lands while providing open motorized route density (OMRD), total motorized route density (TMRD) and secure core levels that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity, and improvements of developed recreation sites provide for user comfort and safety while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-03.** Within each bear management unit in the primary conservation area, increases in the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use during the non-denning season, are limited to levels that are compatible with a stable to increasing bear population.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized use of roads with public restrictions shall be permitted for administrative use (see glossary), as long as it does not exceed either 6 trips (3 round trips) per week OR one 30-day unlimited use period during the non-denning season (see glossary). Exceptions to this standard include:

- Emergency situations as defined by 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 218.21.

*Note:* Administrative use is not included in baseline calculations and is not included in calculations of net increases or decreases.

**NCDE-STD-AR-02.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for open motorized route density or total motorized route density on NFS lands during the non-denning season (see glossary), with the following exceptions:

- temporary use of a motorized route for a project (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” definition in the glossary and NCDE-STD-AR-03);
- mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) conducted in accordance with valid existing rights and applicable standards and guidelines;
- updated/improved data on a motorized route without an actual change on the ground;
- changes in technology or projections result in changed calculations without actual change on the ground (e.g., a switch from NAD27 to NAD83 projection);
- a road closure location is moved a short distance (e.g. to the nearest intersection or turnout) to a better location to allow turn-arounds providing for public safety, to reduce vandalism, or to improve enforcement of the road closure;
- the agency exchanges, acquires, buys or sells lands;
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, human safety concerns or resource damage/concerns (e.g. a road paralleling a stream may be decommissioned and replaced by a new upslope road to reduce water quality impacts);
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

**NCDE-STD-AR-03.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary changes in the open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core shall be calculated for projects (as defined by “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary).

The 10-year running average for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5 percent temporary increase in open motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5 percent);
- 3 percent temporary increase in total motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3 percent);
- 2 percent temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2 percent).

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.).

*Refer to attachment 1 at the end of the document for examples showing how to calculate and apply the running average and temporary increase/decrease.*

**NCDE-STD-AR-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, restricted roads may be temporarily opened for public motorized use to allow authorized uses such as for firewood gathering, provided the period of use does not exceed 30 consecutive days and occurs outside of spring and fall bear hunting seasons.

**NCDE-STD-AR-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use by the public during the non-denning season shall be limited to one new developed recreation site per decade per bear management unit, or one increase in the overnight capacity at one site per decade per bear management unit above the baseline (see glossary). *See also* NCDE-GDL-AR-04. A change in the number or capacity of developed recreation sites may be offset by an equivalent reduction at another site(s) in the same bear management unit. This standard does not limit:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- an increase in the number of developed recreation sites due to the Forest Service acquiring lands with developed recreation sites.

**NCDE-STD-AR-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities if needed to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-AR-01.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, projects (as defined by “project in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE” in the glossary) should be designed so that on-the-ground implementation does not exceed 5 years in a 10-year period, to reduce the potential for grizzly bear disturbance or displacement. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.);
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 5-year time limitation is required (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, levels of secure core, open motorized route density and total motorized route density should be restored to pre-project levels (as defined by

“project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) within 1 year after completion of the project, in order to reduce the duration of grizzly bear displacement or disturbance due to project-related activities. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.);
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 1-year time limitation is made (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, facilities that provide for day-use by the public at developed recreation sites, or any increases in the number of day-use developed recreation sites during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary) should include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear-human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-04.** If there is an increase to the baseline in the number or capacity of overnight developed recreation sites under NCDE-STD-AR-05, the risk of increased grizzly bear-human conflicts should be reduced in the same bear management unit by providing additional information and education, conflict prevention resources (e.g. improved sanitation, backcountry food hanging poles, etc.), or law enforcement and patrols.

## Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the amount, type and distribution of vegetation provides for ecological, social and economic sustainability of NFS lands, while providing habitat components that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there is a mosaic of successional stages at a bear management subunit scale to provide for grizzly bear habitat needs over the long term.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, all proposed vegetation management projects shall be evaluated for their effects on grizzly bears and their habitat

### Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation and fuels management activities should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement, as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Management activities such as pre-commercial thinning, burning, weed spraying, and implementation of road best management practices may need to be completed during the spring time period in order to meet objectives (especially if needed to prevent resource damage), but should otherwise be restricted in time or space, if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities should be designed to avoid detrimental effects on the grizzly bear population and to include one or more measures to protect, maintain, increase and/or improve grizzly habitat quantity or quality in areas where it would not increase the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. *See also* NCDE-GDL-WL-01.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, measures to retain cover should be included in the project design if vegetation management activities would result in the loss of cover along grass/forb/shrub openings, riparian wildlife habitat, or wetlands, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management projects (including timber sales and other non-commercial vegetation management contracts) should include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear-human conflict situation.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities that may enhance grizzly habitat or attract bears (e.g., increase huckleberry production) should be avoided near campgrounds, facilities or other developed sites.

## Grazing (GRZ)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support ecologically sustainable grazing, and temporary grazing permits are used effectively for management of noxious weeds, while minimizing the risk of human-bear conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, issuance of new permits and reauthorization of existing allotments and Annual Operating Plans shall incorporate measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. New or re-authorized permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable animal unit months when returning to use.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery, which shall be followed by proper disposal of the carcass. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable animal unit months shall not be increased for inactive allotments. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as it does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands or an increase in animal unit months.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active cattle grazing allotments above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as that does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes such as controlling invasive exotic weeds or reducing fire risk, or for trailing of small livestock across NFS lands, shall include one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. Such activities shall not result in an increase in bear/small livestock conflicts or in removal of grizzly bears due to such conflicts. If grizzly bear conflicts arise, the livestock, rather than the grizzly bear, shall be removed. Exceptions to this standard include:

- operations which use livestock for packing purposes;
- outfitter and guide permits.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on sheep or cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out grazing or moving the livestock to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify any needed measures to protect key grizzly bear food production areas (e.g., wet meadows, stream bottoms, aspen groves, and other riparian wildlife habitats) from conflicting and competing use by livestock, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

## Special Forest Products (SFP)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-SFP-01.** Provide a variety of public services and special forest products (such as mushrooms, huckleberries, firewood) from NFS lands while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-SFP-01.** Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) located on NFS lands shall incorporate measures including electric fencing to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as specified in the food storage order.

## Renewable/Non-Renewable Energy and Mineral Resources (MIN)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-MIN-01.** Mineral materials are available based upon public interest, in-service needs, material availability, and valid existing rights, where consistent with desired conditions for other resources. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) occurring on NFS lands shall either avoid, minimize and/or mitigate environmental impacts to grizzly bears or their habitat, subject to valid existing rights. Stipulations or mitigation measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed,

nor will additional stipulations or mitigation measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder's agreement.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include measures to reasonably mitigate potential impacts of mineral development for the following:

- Land surface and vegetation disturbance;
- Water table alterations;
- Construction, operation, and reclamation of mine-related facilities such as impoundments, rights of way, motorized routes, pipelines, canals, transmission lines or other structures.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following measures regarding grizzly bear attractants:

- Bear resistant food storage and garbage containers shall be used at development sites and at any campgrounds or dispersed sites where exploration or production-related human occupancy is anticipated;
- Garbage shall be removed in a timely manner;
- Road kills shall be removed daily to a designated location determined in close coordination with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks;
- Feeding of wildlife shall not be allowed;
- Locations of work camps shall be approved in advance of operations. Food storage requirements shall be strictly adhered to in any work camps.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if minerals activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following mitigation measures, stipulations, or surface use criteria regarding grizzly bear habitat:

- Ground-disturbing activities in identified grizzly bear spring habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided between April 1 and June 30. If timing restrictions are not practicable, other measures shall be taken to reasonably mitigate negative impacts of mineral activity to grizzly bears;
- Seismic activity in identified grizzly bear denning habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided during the denning season (see glossary);

- Cumulative impacts of multiple, concurrent seismic and/or drilling operations shall be limited by timing restrictions. If timing restrictions are not practicable, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate negative impacts to the grizzly bear;
- Reasonable and appropriate measures regarding the maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration or mitigation of functioning aquatic systems and riparian habitat conservation areas shall identify how reclamation will occur, plant species to be used in reclamation, a timeframe of when reclamation will be completed, and monitoring criteria;
- Reclamation and revegetation of motorized routes, drilling pads, and other areas disturbed from mineral activities shall be completed as soon as practicable by the operator.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if mineral activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operations, permits, and/or leases shall include the following mitigation measures regarding motorized access:

- Public motorized use that is not associated with minerals activities shall be prohibited on motorized routes constructed for exploration and/or development;
- A traffic management plan shall be developed as part of the proposed activity to identify when and how motorized routes will be used, maintained, and monitored (if required), and how motorized route standards and guidelines will be implemented after activities have ended;
- Helicopter use associated with seismic activity, exploration, drilling or development must follow an approved plan or permit;
- Speed limits shall be adopted on motorized routes if needed to prevent or reduce collisions with grizzly bears.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-07.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), minerals contractors or lessees shall require employees to attend training related to safely living near and working in grizzly bear habitat prior to starting work, and on an annual basis thereafter.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new leasable minerals activities including leases, surface use plans for proposed wells or operations, or permits to conduct seismic exploration or drilling.

Helicopter use plans should:

- Avoid establishing recurring helicopter use (see glossary), especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas;
- Avoid establishing landing zones, especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas. If a landing zone is deemed necessary for safe implementation of the seismic or surface use plan or permit to drill, the landing zone should be constructed only in an area that has had site-specific analysis and approval.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), leasable energy activities should use the best available noise-

reduction technology on equipment and motorized vehicles to reduce potential disturbance or displacement of grizzly bears, whenever possible.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, wildlife cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, the following tiered measures should be considered to mitigate impacts to grizzly bear habitat. Beginning at Step 1, any subsequent steps would be implemented only if the prior steps are not possible or achievable.

- Step 1: The operator should reclaim the affected area back to suitable bear habitat that has similar or improved characteristics and qualities as the original habitat (such as the same native vegetation).
- Step 2: If Step 1 is not attainable, operators should either acquire a perpetual conservation easement (or easements) or purchase comparable or better replacement grizzly bear habitat within the primary conservation area. Acquisition of habitat within connectivity corridors could also be considered for mitigation, when appropriate. Habitat acquired for mitigation may require a purchase rate of >1:1 on an acreage basis, depending on the quality of habitat degraded and habitat available for acquisition.
- Step 3: If Steps 1 or 2 are not achievable, the next option is to consider offsetting negative effects to bears and grizzly bear habitat with other appropriate types of actions.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral permittees, leasees and operators.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

## Kootenai National Forest — Zone 1

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-KNF Zone 1-DC-01.** Within the Kootenai National Forest portion of NCDE zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area) (see figure 6-3) roads provide for public and administrative access to NFS lands while contributing to sustaining the grizzly bear population in the NCDE. The demographic connectivity area provides habitat that can be used by female grizzly bears and allows for bear movement between grizzly bear ecosystems.

### Standards

**NCDE- KNF Zone 1-STD-01.** Within the Kootenai National Forest portion of NCDE zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area) (see figure 6-3), NFS lands shall be managed according to FW-STD-WL-02 and appendix B, which states there shall be no increases in permanent linear miles of open or total roads within the bears outside recovery zone (BORZ) polygons, with listed exceptions. A temporary increase in open and total miles of road is allowed under specified conditions (page 150 of appendix B of the forest plan).

**NCDE-KNF Zone 1-STD-02.** Within the Kootenai National Forest portion of NCDE zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area) (see figure 6-3), NFS lands which lie outside the area covered by the Tobacco BORZ (page 150-151 of appendix B) shall be managed according to Kootenai National Forest Plan standards and guidelines.

## Monitoring (MON)

**NCDE-MON-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, net changes in the level of secure core, open motorized route density ( $> 1 \text{ mi/mi}^2$ ) and total motorized route density ( $> 2 \text{ mi/mi}^2$ ) every 2 years within each bear management unit subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites designed and managed for overnight use on NFS lands within each bear management unit will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The number of day use recreation sites and trailheads in each bear management unit in the NCDE primary conservation area and administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep animal unit months within the primary conservation area will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), where it is determined there is potential for adverse effects to the grizzly bear population or its habitat resulting from leasable or locatable mineral activities, a monitoring plan will be developed for the life of the mineral activity. The monitoring plan will outline how changes in habitat and/or disturbance to bears will be monitored and mitigations (e.g., monitoring of mining reclamation measures) will be identified and funded.

**NCDE-MON-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the 10-year running average for projects (see **NCDE STD-AR-03** and “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by forest staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running averages allowed by **NCDE-STD-AR-03** are exceeded, the rationale will be documented in writing and submitted to the NCDE Coordinating Committee (see glossary).

**NCDE-MON-06.** In NCDE zone 1 on the Kootenai National Forest, permanent linear miles of open or total roads on NFS lands within the bears outside recovery zone (BORZ) polygons will be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

## Reference

USDA Forest Service. 2011. Record of Decision, Forest Plan Amendments for Motorized Access Management within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones. USDA Forest Service, Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. November 2011. Libby, MT.

# Lewis and Clark National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Lewis and Clark National Forest, proposes to amend its current forest plan to incorporate the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy via the following plan components. This amendment applies only to Forest Service actions on National Forest Service (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 6-1) and a map of the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Lewis and Clark National Forest (figure 6-4) show the areas that are covered by the amendment.

## Plan Components

The desired conditions, standards, and guidelines have specific alpha-numeric identifiers. All identifiers for the proposed amendment begin with “NCDE” because they are only applicable to the NCDE and are not applicable to other grizzly bear ecosystems. The identifiers are further differentiated as follows:

- area where direction applies (NCDE);
- type of forest plan component (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring)
- resource (e.g., AR = access and recreation, GRZ = grazing, and SFP = special forest products);
- a unique number (i.e., numerical order starting with “01”).

As an example, direction from this amendment for a desired condition associated with access and recreation would be identified as NCDE-DC-AR-01.

## Wildlife (WL)

### Desired Conditions

**NCDE-DC-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas) and zone 2, bear attractants on NFS lands are stored in a manner that reduces the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts in the NCDE.

**NCDE-DC-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE and contributes to connectivity with neighboring grizzly bear recovery zones.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-WL-01.** Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area and the Ninemile demographic connectivity area), zone 2 or zone 3 (see figure 6-4).

**NCDE-STD-WL 02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

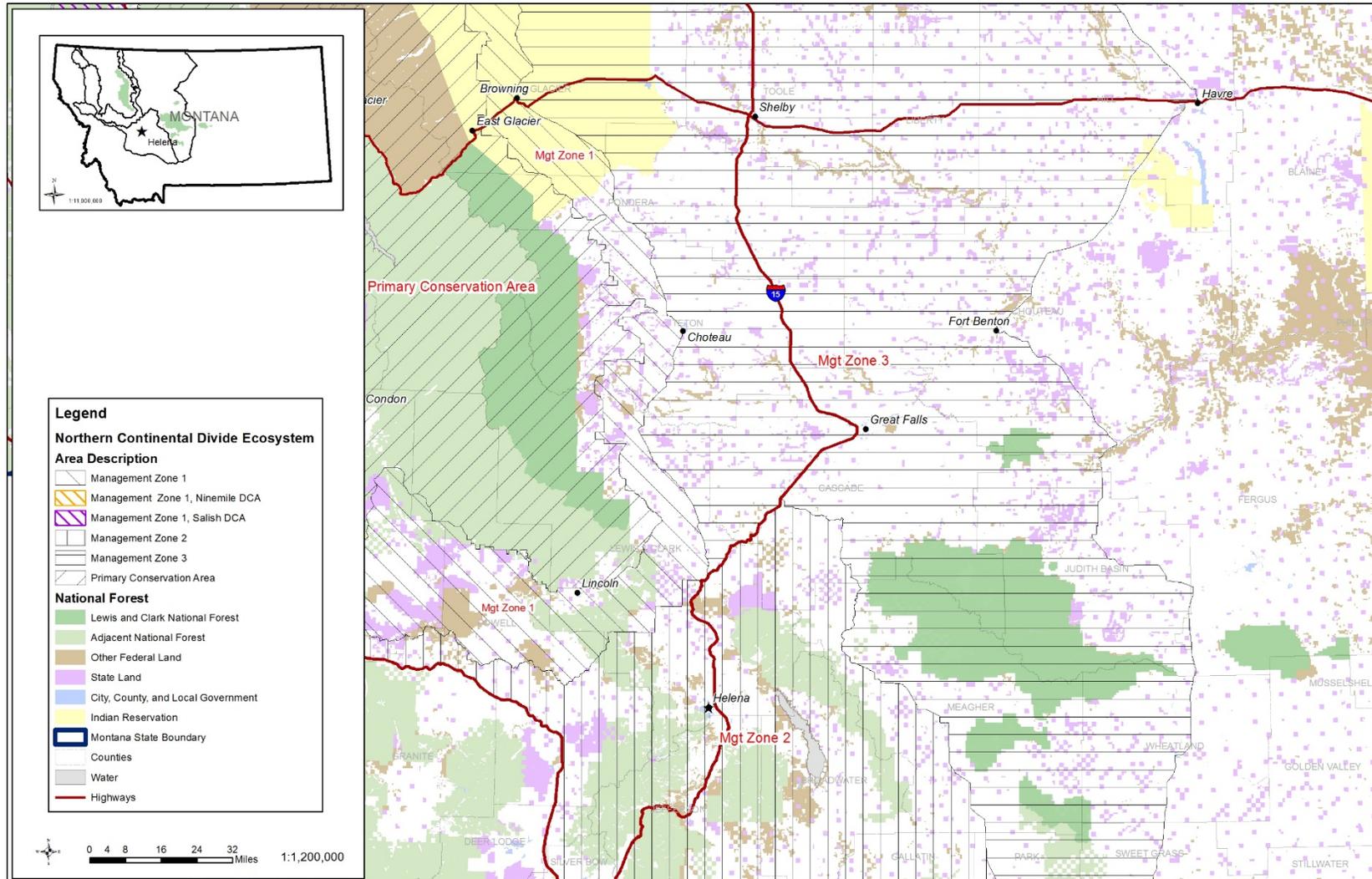


Figure 6-4. Areas on the Lewis and Clark National Forest covered by the amendment

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of procedures for safely working and recreating in grizzly bear country, and informed about Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to turn-out of livestock or beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, if a contractor, permittee, lessee, operator or their employees elect to camp on NFS lands other than in a developed recreation site, a site evaluation should be prepared and written authorization (i.e., campsite agreement which includes the Food/Attractant Storage Special Order) should be obtained.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), clover should not be used in seed mixes on NFS lands. Native seed mixes or those that are less palatable to grizzly bears should be used so that seeded areas do not become an attractant.

## Access and Recreation (AR)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on NFS lands while providing open motorized route density (OMRD), total motorized route density (TMRD) and secure core levels that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity, and improvements of developed recreation sites provide for user comfort and safety while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-03.** Within each bear management unit in the primary conservation area, increases in the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use during the non-denning season, are limited to levels that are compatible with a stable to increasing bear population.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized use of roads with public restrictions shall be permitted for administrative use (see glossary), as long as it does not exceed either 6 trips (3 round trips) per week OR one 30-day unlimited use period during the non-denning season (see glossary). Exceptions to this standard include:

- Emergency situations as defined by 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 218.21.

*Note:* Administrative use is not included in baseline calculations and is not included in calculations of net increases or decreases.

**NCDE-STD-AR-02.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for open motorized route density or total motorized route density on NFS lands during the non-denning season (see glossary), with the following exceptions:

- temporary use of a motorized route for a project (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” definition in the glossary and NCDE-STD-AR-03);
- mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) conducted in accordance with valid existing rights and applicable standards and guidelines;
- updated/improved data on a motorized route without an actual change on the ground;
- changes in technology or projections result in changed calculations without actual change on the ground (e.g., a switch from NAD27 to NAD83 projection);
- a road closure location is moved a short distance (e.g. to the nearest intersection or turnout) to a better location to allow turn-arounds providing for public safety, to reduce vandalism, or to improve enforcement of the road closure;
- the agency exchanges, acquires, buys or sells lands;
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, human safety concerns or resource damage/concerns (e.g. a road paralleling a stream may be decommissioned and replaced by a new upslope road to reduce water quality impacts);
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

**NCDE-STD-AR-03.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary changes in the open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core shall be calculated for projects (as defined by “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary).

The 10-year running average for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5 percent temporary increase in open motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5 percent);
- 3 percent temporary increase in total motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3 percent);
- 2 percent temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2 percent).

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.).

*Refer to attachment 1 at the end of the document for examples showing how to calculate and apply the running average and temporary increase/decrease.*

**NCDE-STD-AR-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, restricted roads may be temporarily opened for public motorized use to allow authorized uses such as for firewood gathering, provided the period of use does not exceed 30 consecutive days and occurs outside of spring and fall bear hunting seasons.

**NCDE-STD-AR-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use by the public during the non-denning season shall be limited to one new developed recreation site per decade per bear management unit, or one increase in the overnight capacity at one site per decade per bear management unit above the baseline (see glossary). *See also* NCDE-GDL-AR-04. A change in the number or capacity of developed recreation sites may be offset by an equivalent reduction at another site(s) in the same bear management unit. This standard does not limit:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- an increase in the number of developed recreation sites due to the Forest Service acquiring lands with developed recreation sites.

**NCDE-STD-AR-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities if needed to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-AR-01.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, projects (as defined by “project in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE” in the glossary) should be designed so that on-the-ground implementation does not exceed 5 years in a 10-year period, to reduce the potential for grizzly bear disturbance or displacement. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.);
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 5-year time limitation is required (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, levels of secure core, open motorized route density and total motorized route density should be restored to pre-project levels (as defined by

“project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) within 1 year after completion of the project, in order to reduce the duration of grizzly bear displacement or disturbance due to project-related activities. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.);
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 1-year time limitation is made (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, facilities that provide for day-use by the public at developed recreation sites, or any increases in the number of day-use developed recreation sites during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary) should include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear-human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-04.** If there is an increase to the baseline in the number or capacity of overnight developed recreation sites under NCDE-STD-AR-05, the risk of increased grizzly bear-human conflicts should be reduced in the same bear management unit by providing additional information and education, conflict prevention resources (e.g. improved sanitation, backcountry food hanging poles, etc.), or law enforcement and patrols.

## Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the amount, type and distribution of vegetation provides for ecological, social and economic sustainability of NFS lands, while providing habitat components that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there is a mosaic of successional stages at a bear management subunit scale to provide for grizzly bear habitat needs over the long term.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, all proposed vegetation management projects shall be evaluated for their effects on grizzly bears and their habitat.

### Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation and fuels management activities should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement, as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Management activities such as pre-commercial thinning, burning, weed spraying, and implementation of road best management practices may need to be completed during the spring time period in order to meet objectives (especially if needed to prevent resource damage), but should otherwise be restricted in time or space, if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities should be designed to avoid detrimental effects on the grizzly bear population and to include one or more measures to protect, maintain, increase and/or improve grizzly habitat quantity or quality in areas where it would not increase the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. *See also* NCDE-GDL-WL-01.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, measures to retain cover should be included in the project design if vegetation management activities would result in the loss of cover along grass/forb/shrub openings, riparian wildlife habitat, or wetlands, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management projects (including timber sales and other non-commercial vegetation management contracts) should include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear-human conflict situation.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities that may enhance grizzly habitat or attract bears (e.g., increase huckleberry production) should be avoided near campgrounds, facilities or other developed sites.

## Grazing (GRZ)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support ecologically sustainable grazing, and temporary grazing permits are used effectively for management of noxious weeds, while minimizing the risk of human-bear conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, issuance of new permits and reauthorization of existing allotments and Annual Operating Plans shall incorporate measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. New or re-authorized permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable animal unit months when returning to use.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery, which shall be followed by proper disposal of the carcass. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable animal unit months shall not be increased for inactive allotments. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as it does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands or an increase in animal unit months.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active cattle grazing allotments above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as that does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes such as controlling invasive exotic weeds or reducing fire risk, or for trailing of small livestock across NFS lands, shall include one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. Such activities shall not result in an increase in bear/small livestock conflicts or in removal of grizzly bears due to such conflicts. If grizzly bear conflicts arise, the livestock, rather than the grizzly bear, shall be removed. Exceptions to this standard include:

- operations which use livestock for packing purposes;
- outfitter and guide permits.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on sheep or cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out grazing or moving the livestock to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify any needed measures to protect key grizzly bear food production areas (e.g., wet meadows, stream bottoms, aspen groves, and other riparian wildlife habitats) from conflicting and competing use by livestock, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

## Special Forest Products (SFP)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-SFP-01.** Provide a variety of public services and special forest products (such as mushrooms, huckleberries, firewood) from NFS lands while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-SFP-01.** Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) located on NFS lands shall incorporate measures including electric fencing to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as specified in the food storage order.

## Renewable/Non-Renewable Energy and Mineral Resources (MIN)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-MIN-01.** Mineral materials are available based upon public interest, in-service needs, material availability, and valid existing rights, where consistent with desired conditions for other resources. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) occurring on NFS lands shall either avoid, minimize and/or mitigate environmental impacts to grizzly bears or their habitat, subject to valid existing rights. Stipulations or mitigation measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed,

nor will additional stipulations or mitigation measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder's agreement.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include measures to reasonably mitigate potential impacts of mineral development for the following:

- Land surface and vegetation disturbance;
- Water table alterations;
- Construction, operation, and reclamation of mine-related facilities such as impoundments, rights of way, motorized routes, pipelines, canals, transmission lines or other structures.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following measures regarding grizzly bear attractants:

- Bear resistant food storage and garbage containers shall be used at development sites and at any campgrounds or dispersed sites where exploration or production-related human occupancy is anticipated;
- Garbage shall be removed in a timely manner;
- Road kills shall be removed daily to a designated location determined in close coordination with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks;
- Feeding of wildlife shall not be allowed;
- Locations of work camps shall be approved in advance of operations. Food storage requirements shall be strictly adhered to in any work camps.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if minerals activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following mitigation measures, stipulations, or surface use criteria regarding grizzly bear habitat:

- Ground-disturbing activities in identified grizzly bear spring habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided between April 1 and June 30. If timing restrictions are not practicable, other measures shall be taken to reasonably mitigate negative impacts of mineral activity to grizzly bears;
- Seismic activity in identified grizzly bear denning habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided during the denning season (see glossary);

- Cumulative impacts of multiple, concurrent seismic and/or drilling operations shall be limited by timing restrictions. If timing restrictions are not practicable, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate negative impacts to the grizzly bear;
- Reasonable and appropriate measures regarding the maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration or mitigation of functioning aquatic systems and riparian habitat conservation areas shall identify how reclamation will occur, plant species to be used in reclamation, a timeframe of when reclamation will be completed, and monitoring criteria;
- Reclamation and revegetation of motorized routes, drilling pads, and other areas disturbed from mineral activities shall be completed as soon as practicable by the operator.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if mineral activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operations, permits, and/or leases shall include the following mitigation measures regarding motorized access:

- Public motorized use that is not associated with minerals activities shall be prohibited on motorized routes constructed for exploration and/or development;
- A traffic management plan shall be developed as part of the proposed activity to identify when and how motorized routes will be used, maintained, and monitored (if required), and how motorized route standards and guidelines will be implemented after activities have ended;
- Helicopter use associated with seismic activity, exploration, drilling or development must follow an approved plan or permit;
- Speed limits shall be adopted on motorized routes if needed to prevent or reduce collisions with grizzly bears.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-07.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), minerals contractors or lessees shall require employees to attend training related to safely living near and working in grizzly bear habitat prior to starting work, and on an annual basis thereafter.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new leasable minerals activities including leases, surface use plans for proposed wells or operations, or permits to conduct seismic exploration or drilling.

Helicopter use plans should:

- Avoid establishing recurring helicopter use (see glossary), especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas;
- Avoid establishing landing zones, especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas. If a landing zone is deemed necessary for safe implementation of the seismic or surface use plan or permit to drill, the landing zone should be constructed only in an area that has had site-specific analysis and approval.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), leasable energy activities should use the best available noise-

reduction technology on equipment and motorized vehicles to reduce potential disturbance or displacement of grizzly bears, whenever possible.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, wildlife cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, the following tiered measures should be considered to mitigate impacts to grizzly bear habitat. Beginning at Step 1, any subsequent steps would be implemented only if the prior steps are not possible or achievable.

- Step 1: The operator should reclaim the affected area back to suitable bear habitat that has similar or improved characteristics and qualities as the original habitat (such as the same native vegetation).
- Step 2: If Step 1 is not attainable, operators should either acquire a perpetual conservation easement (or easements) or purchase comparable or better replacement grizzly bear habitat within the primary conservation area. Acquisition of habitat within connectivity corridors could also be considered for mitigation, when appropriate. Habitat acquired for mitigation may require a purchase rate of >1:1 on an acreage basis, depending on the quality of habitat degraded and habitat available for acquisition.
- Step 3: If Steps 1 or 2 are not achievable, the next option is to consider offsetting negative effects to bears and grizzly bear habitat with other appropriate types of actions.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral permittees, leasees and operators.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

## Monitoring (MON)

**NCDE-MON-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, net changes in the level of secure core, open motorized route density ( $> 1 \text{ mi}/\text{mi}^2$ ) and total motorized route density ( $> 2 \text{ mi}/\text{mi}^2$ ) every 2 years within each bear management unit subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites designed and managed for overnight use on NFS lands within each bear management unit will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The number of day use recreation sites and trailheads in each bear management unit in the NCDE primary conservation area and administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep animal unit months within the primary conservation area will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), where it is determined there is potential for adverse effects to

the grizzly bear population or its habitat resulting from leasable or locatable mineral activities, a monitoring plan will be developed for the life of the mineral activity. The monitoring plan will outline how changes in habitat and/or disturbance to bears will be monitored and mitigations (e.g., monitoring of mining reclamation measures) will be identified and funded.

**NCDE-MON-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the 10-year running average for projects (see **NCDE STD-AR-03** and “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by forest staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running averages allowed by **NCDE-STD-AR-03** are exceeded, the rationale will be documented in writing and submitted to the NCDE Coordinating Committee (see glossary).

## Lolo National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Lolo National Forest, proposes to amend its current forest plan to incorporate the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy (GBCS) via the following plan components. This amendment applies only to Forest Service actions on National Forest System (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 6-1) and a map of the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Lolo National Forest (figure 6-5) show the areas that are covered by the amendment

### Plan Components

The desired conditions, standards, and guidelines throughout the plan components have specific alphanumeric identifiers. All identifiers for the proposed amendment begin with “NCDE” because they are only applicable to the NCDE and are not applicable to other grizzly bear ecosystems. The identifiers are further differentiated as follows:

- area where direction applies (e.g., NCDE or NCDE-LNF Zone 1);
- type of forest plan component (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring)
- resource (e.g., AR = access and recreation, GRZ = grazing, and SFP = special forest products);
- a unique number (i.e., numerical order starting with “01”).

As an example, direction from this amendment for a desired condition associated with access and recreation would be identified as NCDE-DC-AR-01.

### Wildlife (WL)

#### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas) and zone 2, bear attractants on NFS lands are stored in a manner that reduces the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts in the NCDE.

**NCDE-DC-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE and contributes to connectivity with neighboring grizzly bear recovery zones.

#### Standards

**NCDE-STD-WL-01.** Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area and the Ninemile demographic connectivity area), zone 2 or zone 3 (see figure 6-5).

**NCDE-STD-WL 02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

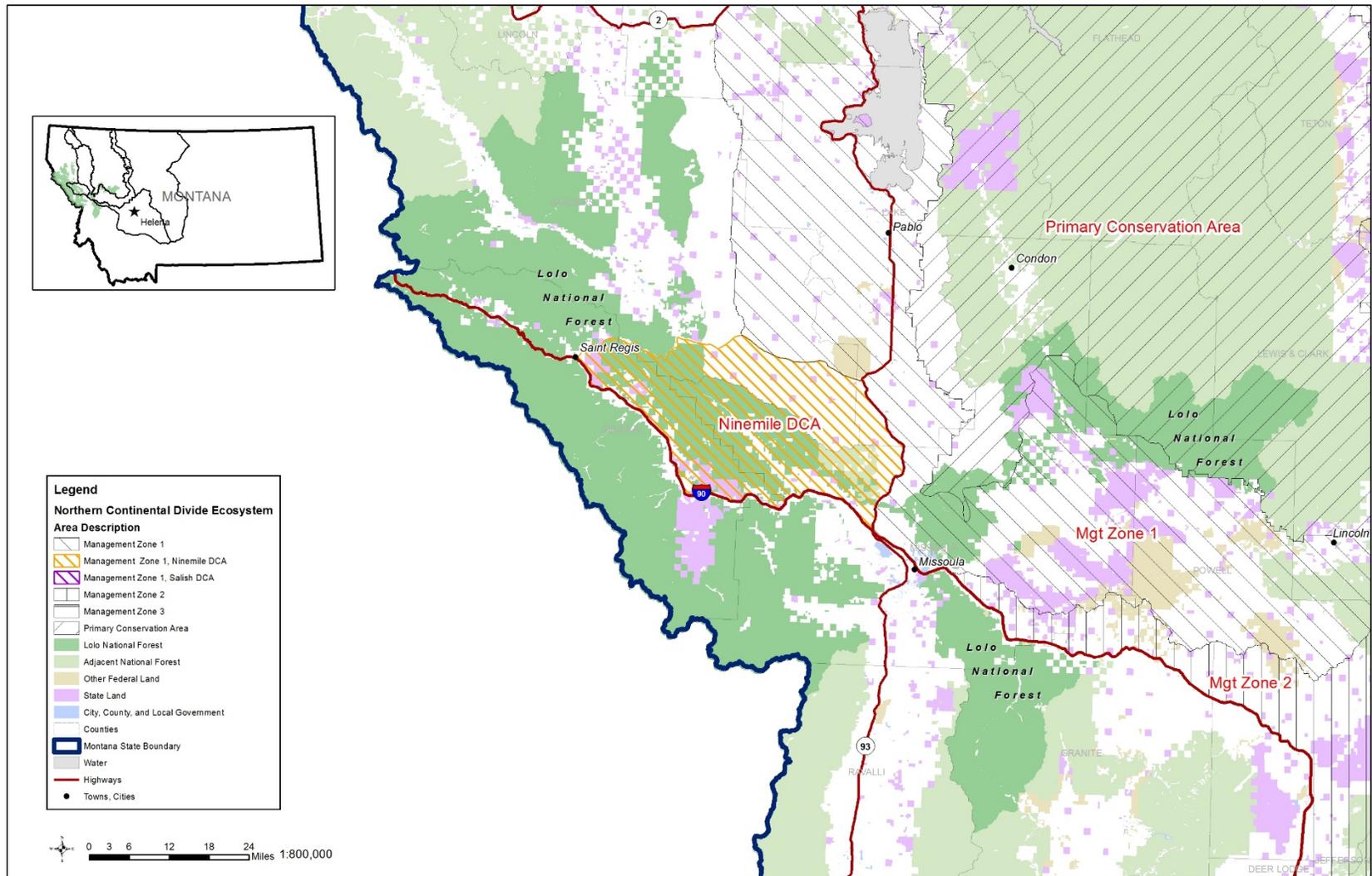


Figure 6-5. Areas on the Lolo National Forest covered by the amendment

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-WL-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of procedures for safely working and recreating in grizzly bear country, and informed about Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to turn-out of livestock or beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), and zone 2, if a contractor, permittee, lessee, operator or their employees elect to camp on NFS lands other than in a developed recreation site, a site evaluation should be prepared and written authorization (i.e., campsite agreement which includes the Food/Attractant Storage Special Order) should be obtained.

**NCDE-GDL-WL-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), clover should not be used in seed mixes on NFS lands. Native seed mixes or those that are less palatable to grizzly bears should be used so that seeded areas do not become an attractant.

## Access and Recreation (AR)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on NFS lands while providing open motorized route density (OMRD), total motorized route density (TMRD) and secure core levels that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity, and improvements of developed recreation sites provide for user comfort and safety while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-AR-03.** Within each bear management unit in the primary conservation area, increases in the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use during the non-denning season, are limited to levels that are compatible with a stable to increasing bear population.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-AR-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, motorized use of roads with public restrictions shall be permitted for administrative use (see glossary), as long as it does not exceed either 6 trips (3 round trips) per week OR one 30-day unlimited use period during the non-denning season (see glossary). Exceptions to this standard include:

- Emergency situations as defined by 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 218.21.

*Note:* Administrative use is not included in baseline calculations and is not included in calculations of net increases or decreases.

**NCDE-STD-AR-02.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for open motorized route density or total motorized route density on NFS lands during the non-denning season (see glossary), with the following exceptions:

- temporary use of a motorized route for a project (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” definition in the glossary and NCDE-STD-AR-03);
- mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) conducted in accordance with valid existing rights and applicable standards and guidelines;
- updated/improved data on a motorized route without an actual change on the ground;
- changes in technology or projections result in changed calculations without actual change on the ground (e.g., a switch from NAD27 to NAD83 projection);
- a road closure location is moved a short distance (e.g. to the nearest intersection or turnout) to a better location to allow turn-arounds providing for public safety, to reduce vandalism, or to improve enforcement of the road closure;
- the agency exchanges, acquires, buys or sells lands;
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in a motorized route is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, human safety concerns or resource damage/concerns (e.g. a road paralleling a stream may be decommissioned and replaced by a new upslope road to reduce water quality impacts);
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

**NCDE-STD-AR-03.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary changes in the open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core shall be calculated for projects (as defined by “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary).

The 10-year running average for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5 percent temporary increase in open motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5 percent);
- 3 percent temporary increase in total motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3 percent);
- 2 percent temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2 percent).

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.).

*Refer to attachment 1 at the end of the document for examples showing how to calculate and apply the running average and temporary increase/decrease.*

**NCDE-STD-AR-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, restricted roads may be temporarily opened for public motorized use to allow authorized uses such as for firewood gathering, provided the period of use does not exceed 30 consecutive days and occurs outside of spring and fall bear hunting seasons.

**NCDE-STD-AR-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands that are designed and managed for overnight use by the public during the non-denning season shall be limited to one new developed recreation site per decade per bear management unit, or one increase in the overnight capacity at one site per decade per bear management unit above the baseline (see glossary). *See also* NCDE-GDL-AR-04. A change in the number or capacity of developed recreation sites may be offset by an equivalent reduction at another site(s) in the same bear management unit. This standard does not limit:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites that is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- an increase in the number of developed recreation sites due to the Forest Service acquiring lands with developed recreation sites.

**NCDE-STD-AR-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities if needed to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-AR-01.** In each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, projects (as defined by “project in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE” in the glossary) should be designed so that on-the-ground implementation does not exceed 5 years in a 10-year period, to reduce the potential for grizzly bear disturbance or displacement. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.);
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 5-year time limitation is required (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, levels of secure core, open motorized route density and total motorized route density should be restored to pre-project levels (as defined by

“project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) within 1 year after completion of the project, in order to reduce the duration of grizzly bear displacement or disturbance due to project-related activities. Exceptions may be made where necessary, for example to accommodate:

- actions where existing rights preclude or constrain agency discretion (e.g., certain contracts, permits, leases, etc.);
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21.

If an extension to the 1-year time limitation is made (e.g., to meet contractual obligations or to complete on-the-ground treatments), the reasons should be documented in writing prior to authorization of the extension.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, facilities that provide for day-use by the public at developed recreation sites, or any increases in the number of day-use developed recreation sites during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary) should include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear-human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-AR-04.** If there is an increase to the baseline in the number or capacity of overnight developed recreation sites under **NCDE-STD-AR-05**, the risk of increased grizzly bear-human conflicts should be reduced in the same bear management unit by providing additional information and education, conflict prevention resources (e.g. improved sanitation, backcountry food hanging poles, etc.), or law enforcement and patrols.

## Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-DC-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the amount, type and distribution of vegetation provides for ecological, social and economic sustainability of NFS lands, while providing habitat components that contribute to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

**NCDE-DC-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there is a mosaic of successional stages at a bear management subunit scale to provide for grizzly bear habitat needs over the long term.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, all proposed vegetation management projects shall be evaluated for their effects on grizzly bears and their habitat.

### Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation and fuels management activities should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement, as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Management activities such as pre-commercial thinning, burning, weed spraying, and implementation of road best management practices may need to be completed during the spring time period in order to meet objectives (especially if needed to prevent resource damage), but should otherwise be restricted in time or space, if needed to reduce the potential for adverse grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities should be designed to avoid detrimental effects on the grizzly bear population and to include one or more measures to protect, maintain, increase and/or improve grizzly habitat quantity or quality in areas where it would not increase the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. *See also* NCDE-GDL-WL-01.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, measures to retain cover should be included in the project design if vegetation management activities would result in the loss of cover along grass/forb/shrub openings, riparian wildlife habitat, or wetlands, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management projects (including timber sales and other non-commercial vegetation management contracts) should include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear-human conflict situation.

**NCDE-GDL-VEG-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, vegetation management activities that may enhance grizzly habitat or attract bears (e.g., increase huckleberry production) should be avoided near campgrounds, facilities or other developed sites.

## Grazing (GRZ)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support ecologically sustainable grazing, and temporary grazing permits are used effectively for management of noxious weeds, while minimizing the risk of human-bear conflicts on NFS lands. *See also* **NCDE-DC-WL-01** and **NCDE-DC-WL-02**.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, issuance of new permits and reauthorization of existing allotments and Annual Operating Plans shall incorporate measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. New or re-authorized permits shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable animal unit months when returning to use.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery, which shall be followed by proper disposal of the carcass. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable animal unit months shall not be increased for inactive allotments. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as it does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands or an increase in animal unit months.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, there shall be no increase in the number of active cattle grazing allotments above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. *Note:* Existing allotments may be combined or divided as long as that does not result in grazing allotments in currently un-allotted lands.

**NCDE-STD-GRZ-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes such as controlling invasive exotic weeds or reducing fire risk, or for trailing of small livestock across NFS lands, shall include one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts. Such activities shall not result in an increase in bear/small livestock conflicts or in removal of grizzly bears due to such conflicts. If grizzly bear conflicts arise, the livestock, rather than the grizzly bear, shall be removed. Exceptions to this standard include:

- operations which use livestock for packing purposes;
- outfitter and guide permits.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on sheep or cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out grazing or moving the livestock to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

**NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify any needed measures to protect key grizzly bear food production areas (e.g., wet meadows, stream bottoms, aspen groves, and other riparian wildlife habitats) from conflicting and competing use by livestock, as determined by a site-specific analysis.

## Special Forest Products (SFP)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-SFP-01.** Provide a variety of public services and special forest products (such as mushrooms, huckleberries, firewood) from NFS lands while minimizing the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts on NFS lands in the NCDE. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standard

**NCDE-STD-SFP-01.** Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) located on NFS lands shall incorporate measures including electric fencing to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as specified in the food storage order.

## Renewable/Non-Renewable Energy and Mineral Resources (MIN)

### Desired condition

**NCDE-DC-MIN-01.** Mineral materials are available based upon public interest, in-service needs, material availability, and valid existing rights, where consistent with desired conditions for other resources. *See also* NCDE-DC-WL-01 *and* NCDE-DC-WL-02.

### Standards

**NCDE-STD-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) occurring on NFS lands shall either avoid, minimize and/or mitigate environmental impacts to grizzly bears or their habitat, subject to valid existing rights. Stipulations or mitigation measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed,

nor will additional stipulations or mitigation measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder's agreement.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a provision for modification, cancellation, suspension, or temporary cessation of activities, if needed, to resolve a grizzly bear–human conflict situation.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include measures to reasonably mitigate potential impacts of mineral development for the following:

- Land surface and vegetation disturbance;
- Water table alterations;
- Construction, operation, and reclamation of mine-related facilities such as impoundments, rights of way, motorized routes, pipelines, canals, transmission lines or other structures.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following measures regarding grizzly bear attractants:

- Bear resistant food storage and garbage containers shall be used at development sites and at any campgrounds or dispersed sites where exploration or production-related human occupancy is anticipated;
- Garbage shall be removed in a timely manner;
- Road kills shall be removed daily to a designated location determined in close coordination with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks;
- Feeding of wildlife shall not be allowed;
- Locations of work camps shall be approved in advance of operations. Food storage requirements shall be strictly adhered to in any work camps.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if minerals activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for mineral activities shall include the following mitigation measures, stipulations, or surface use criteria regarding grizzly bear habitat:

- Ground-disturbing activities in identified grizzly bear spring habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided between April 1 and June 30. If timing restrictions are not practicable, other measures shall be taken to reasonably mitigate negative impacts of mineral activity to grizzly bears;
- Seismic activity in identified grizzly bear denning habitat (as identified in a site specific biological evaluation or other environmental document) shall be avoided during the denning season (see glossary);

- Cumulative impacts of multiple, concurrent seismic and/or drilling operations shall be limited by timing restrictions. If timing restrictions are not practicable, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate negative impacts to the grizzly bear;
- Reasonable and appropriate measures regarding the maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration or mitigation of functioning aquatic systems and riparian habitat conservation areas shall identify how reclamation will occur, plant species to be used in reclamation, a timeframe of when reclamation will be completed, and monitoring criteria;
- Reclamation and revegetation of motorized routes, drilling pads, and other areas disturbed from mineral activities shall be completed as soon as practicable by the operator.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), if mineral activities have the potential to adversely affect grizzly bears or their habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, new Plans of Operations, permits, and/or leases shall include the following mitigation measures regarding motorized access:

- Public motorized use that is not associated with minerals activities shall be prohibited on motorized routes constructed for exploration and/or development;
- A traffic management plan shall be developed as part of the proposed activity to identify when and how motorized routes will be used, maintained, and monitored (if required), and how motorized route standards and guidelines will be implemented after activities have ended;
- Helicopter use associated with seismic activity, exploration, drilling or development must follow an approved plan or permit;
- Speed limits shall be adopted on motorized routes if needed to prevent or reduce collisions with grizzly bears.

**NCDE-STD-MIN-07.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), minerals contractors or lessees shall require employees to attend training related to safely living near and working in grizzly bear habitat prior to starting work, and on an annual basis thereafter.

## Guidelines

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new leasable minerals activities including leases, surface use plans for proposed wells or operations, or permits to conduct seismic exploration or drilling.

Helicopter use plans should:

- Avoid establishing recurring helicopter use (see glossary), especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas;
- Avoid establishing landing zones, especially in spring habitats or other known important grizzly bear habitats or use areas. If a landing zone is deemed necessary for safe implementation of the seismic or surface use plan or permit to drill, the landing zone should be constructed only in an area that has had site-specific analysis and approval.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), leasable energy activities should use the best available noise-

reduction technology on equipment and motorized vehicles to reduce potential disturbance or displacement of grizzly bears, whenever possible.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, wildlife cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to adversely affect the grizzly bear or its habitat as determined by a site-specific analysis, the following tiered measures should be considered to mitigate impacts to grizzly bear habitat. Beginning at Step 1, any subsequent steps would be implemented only if the prior steps are not possible or achievable.

- Step 1: The operator should reclaim the affected area back to suitable bear habitat that has similar or improved characteristics and qualities as the original habitat (such as the same native vegetation).
- Step 2: If Step 1 is not attainable, operators should either acquire a perpetual conservation easement (or easements) or purchase comparable or better replacement grizzly bear habitat within the primary conservation area. Acquisition of habitat within connectivity corridors could also be considered for mitigation, when appropriate. Habitat acquired for mitigation may require a purchase rate of >1:1 on an acreage basis, depending on the quality of habitat degraded and habitat available for acquisition.
- Step 3: If Steps 1 or 2 are not achievable, the next option is to consider offsetting negative effects to bears and grizzly bear habitat with other appropriate types of actions.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral permittees, leasees and operators.

**NCDE-GDL-MIN-06.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

## Lolo National Forest — Zone 1

### Desired conditions

**NCDE-LNF Zone 1-DC-01.** Within the Lolo National Forest portion of NCDE zone 1 (including the Ninemile demographic connectivity area) (see figure 6-5), roads provide for public and administrative access to NFS lands while contributing to sustaining the grizzly bear population in the NCDE. The Ninemile demographic connectivity area provides habitat that can be used by female grizzly bears and allows for bear movement between grizzly bear ecosystems.

### Standards

**NCDE-LNF Zone 1-STD-01.** Within the Lolo National Forest portion of NCDE zone 1 (including the Ninemile demographic connectivity area) (see figure 6-5), there shall be no net increase above the baseline in miles of roads open to public motorized use during the non-denning season on NFS lands. This standard does not apply to the following:

- motorized use by agency personnel or others authorized by the appropriate agency personnel;

- temporarily opening a road for a short periods of time to allow for public firewood gathering and other authorized use;
- updated/improved road data without an actual change on the ground;
- changes in technology or projections result in changed calculations without actual change on the ground (e.g., a switch from NAD27 to NAD83 projection);
- a road closure location is moved a short distance (e.g. to the nearest intersection or turnout ) to a better location to allow turn-arounds providing for public safety, to reduce vandalism, or to improve enforcement of the road closure;
- the agency exchanges, acquires, buys or sells lands;
- a change in an open road is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended);
- motorized use for mining activities (as authorized under the Mining Law of 1872) and oil and gas activities (as authorized under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987) conducted in accordance with valid existing rights and applicable standards and guidelines;
- a change in an open road is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, human safety concerns or resource damage/concerns (e.g. a road paralleling a stream may be decommissioned and replaced by a new upslope road to reduce water quality impacts);
- motorized use for emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 218.21;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

## Guidelines

**NCDE-LNF Zone 1-GDL -01.** Within the Lolo National Forest portion of the Ninemile demographic connectivity area, projects requiring high levels of administrative use (see glossary) or commercial use of roads with restricted public use (i.e., greater than an average of ten round trips per day) should be designed to minimize adverse effects to the grizzly bear. Design features may include, but are not limited to, restricting public use during project activities, establishing project subdivisions and scheduling project activities to allow alternative areas for bear dispersal and security, limiting seasons of use, and limiting project duration.

## Monitoring (MON)

**NCDE-MON-01.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, net changes in the level of secure core, open motorized route density ( $> 1 \text{ mi}/\text{mi}^2$ ) and total motorized route density ( $> 2 \text{ mi}/\text{mi}^2$ ) every 2 years within each bear management unit subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-02.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites designed and managed for overnight use on NFS lands within each bear management unit will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The number of day use recreation sites and trailheads in each bear management unit in the NCDE primary conservation area and administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-03.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep animal unit months within the primary conservation area will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

**NCDE-MON-04.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area and zone 1 (including the Salish and the Ninemile demographic connectivity areas), where it is determined there is potential for adverse effects to the grizzly bear population or its habitat resulting from leasable or locatable mineral activities, a monitoring plan will be developed for the life of the mineral activity. The monitoring plan will outline how changes in habitat and/or disturbance to bears will be monitored and mitigations (e.g., monitoring of mining reclamation measures) will be identified and funded.

**NCDE-MON-05.** Within the NCDE primary conservation area, the 10-year running average for projects (*see* NCDE STD-AR-03 and “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by forest staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running averages allowed by NCDE-STD-AR-03 are exceeded, the rationale will be documented in writing and submitted to the NCDE Coordinating Committee (*see* glossary).

**NCDE-MON-06.** In NCDE zone 1 on the Lolo National Forest, the miles of road open for public use during the non-denning season on NFS lands will be monitored and compared with the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

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## Glossary

The following terms, and definitions, are to be used only where they apply within the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) for grizzly bears.

**administrative site** a location or facility constructed for use primarily by government employees to facilitate the administration and management of public lands. Examples on NFS lands include, but are not limited to, ranger stations, warehouses, and guard stations.

**administrative use** a generic term for authorized agency activity. Specifically, in the portion of the NCDE for grizzly bears mapped as the primary conservation area, motorized use of roads closed to the public is permitted for Federal agency personnel or personnel authorized to perform duties by appropriate agency officials, as long as it does not exceed either 6 trips (3 round trips) per week OR one 30-day unlimited use period during the non-denning season (see **non-denning season**).

**baseline** the environmental conditions at a specific point in time. The baseline for the NCDE is defined as December 31, 2011, as modified by exceptions specified in the standards or guidelines, and by changes that were evaluated and found to be acceptable through the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with USFWS while the grizzly bear was listed as Threatened. The baseline will be updated to reflect such changes.

**bear management subunit** an area of a bear management unit, in the portion of the NCDE for grizzly bears mapped as the primary conservation area, representing the approximate size of an average annual female grizzly bear home range (e.g., 31-68 mi<sup>2</sup> [Mace and Roberts 2012]).

**bear management unit** an area about 400 mi<sup>2</sup>, in the portion of the NCDE for grizzly bears mapped as the primary conservation area that meets yearlong habitat needs of both male and female grizzly bears.

**best management practice (BMP)** the method(s), measure(s), or practice(s) selected by an agency to meet its nonpoint source control needs. BMPs include but are not limited to structural and nonstructural controls and operation and maintenance procedures. BMPs can be applied before, during, and after pollution-producing activities to reduce or eliminate the introduction of pollutants into receiving waters (36 CFR 219.19).

**boneyard** an established site that is used by a grazing permittee for disposing of entire animal carcasses.

**capacity (of developed recreation sites within the NCDE primary conservation area)** the number of sites available in a campground; or the number of rooms available for lodging (as a commercial rental); or the number of cabins, bunkhouses or recreation residences available for overnight use (managed under a special use permit).

**cover** the elements of the environment used by an animal for hiding. Cover varies depending upon the species or the time of year and may include a variety of vegetation types as well as topography. The amount and quality of cover needed depends on the animal's size, mobility, and reluctance or willingness to venture into relatively open areas.

**demographic connectivity area** an area intended to allow female grizzly bear occupancy and potential dispersal beyond the NCDE to other recovery areas.

**denning season** the typical time period, within the NCDE, during which most grizzly bears are hibernating in dens. There are no restrictions on motorized use related to grizzly bears during the denning season, which occurs:

- west side of the Continental Divide: from 1 December through 31 March.
- east of the Continental Divide: from 1 December through 15 April.

**emergency situation** a circumstance on NFS lands for which immediate implementation of all or part of a decision is necessary for relief from hazards threatening human health and safety or natural resources on those NFS or adjacent lands; or that would result in substantial loss of economic value to the Federal Government if implementation of the decision were delayed. (36 CFR 218.21)

**grazing allotment** a designated area of land that is available for livestock grazing and is represented on a map. A grazing allotment can include National Forest Service (NFS) and non-NFS lands. Permits are issued for the use of allotments or portions of allotments. Allotments may be (Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2205):

- **active:** livestock grazing allotments, including pack and saddle stock allotments.
- **closed:** areas having suitable livestock range that have been closed to livestock grazing by administrative decision or action.
- **combined:** an allotment that has been combined into another allotment, and therefore, no longer exists as an independent allotment.
- **vacant:** an allotment that does not have a current grazing permit issued.

**grizzly bear–human conflict** an interaction between a grizzly bear and human in which bears either do, or attempt to, injure people, damage property, kill or injure livestock, damage beehives, obtain anthropogenic foods or attractants or agricultural crops.

**mitigate** to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate the adverse environmental impacts associated with an action.

**motorized route** a NFS road or trail that is designated for motorized use on a motor vehicle use map pursuant to 36 CFR 212.51.

**motorized use** the designation of roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicle use as specified in Federal Register / Vol. 70, No. 216 / Wednesday, November 9, 2005 /36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use; Final Rule.

**moving window analysis** a geographic information system procedure that quantifies the density of roads and trails by incrementally moving a template across a digital map.

**net change** the difference in a measurement (such as road density) after on-the-ground changes are accounted for pre- and post-project; allows for temporary changes during a project.

**Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem** a region identified in the Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy encompassing about 27.3 million acres of land in western and central Montana that is one of five areas in the lower 48 states where grizzly bear populations occur.

**NCDE Coordinating Committee** an interagency group that evaluates implementation of the NCDE Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy, promotes the exchange of data and information about the NCDE grizzly bear population among agencies and the public, and makes recommendations to the management agencies regarding implementation of the NCDE Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. Members of the interagency group may include Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S.

Park Service; U.S. Forest Service; APHIS-Wildlife Services; U.S. Geological Survey; U.S. Bureau of Land Management; Blackfoot Tribe, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

**non-denning season** the time period when grizzly bears typically are not hibernating:

- west side of the Continental Divide: from 1 April through 30 November.
- east side of the Continental Divide: from 16 April through 30 November.

**open motorized route density** a moving window analysis calculation that applies to the primary conservation area portion of the NCDE and includes Federal, State, and Tribal roads and motorized trails that are open to wheeled motor vehicle use by the public for any part of the non-denning season. *Note:* Motorized routes closed only by sign or order are considered to be open for purposes of this calculation. See also **moving window analysis**.

**primary conservation area** an area identified in the NCDE Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy to be managed as a source area for the grizzly bear population, where continuous occupancy by grizzly bears would be maintained. Habitat within the primary conservation area would receive the most stringent protection. The primary conservation area is the same area as the NCDE grizzly bear recovery zone identified in the Recovery Plan (<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/grizzly/>) [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1993].

**project** an organized effort to achieve an outcome on NFS lands identified by location, tasks, outputs, effects, times, and responsibilities for execution (36 CFR 219.19).

**project** (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE) a project in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE, for purposes of the motorized access standards and guidelines in the primary conservation area of the NCDE, refers to any temporary activity requiring construction of new roads, temporary roads, reconstruction or opening of restricted roads during the non-denning season, if such use exceeds administrative use levels (see **administrative use**). Activities involving recurring helicopter use (see **recurring helicopter use**) are also considered to be a project.

**recreation site** a defined, public recreation area. The Forest Service uses two categories for recreation sites: dispersed and developed. Both types may have improvements needed to protect resources such as signs, road closure devices, bear resistant food storage devices, and/or sanitation facilities. Some recreation sites are designed and managed for overnight use and some are designed and managed for day-use only (e.g. interpretive signs at roadside pull-outs; trailheads at roadside pull-outs or at road closures; picnic areas or boat launches that are closed at night; ski areas that do not have overnight lodging).

**developed sites** have agency improvements made out of manmade materials that are intended to provide for public recreation and user comfort/convenience. Examples on National Forest Service lands include, but are not limited to: ski areas, campgrounds, sites with cabins, huts, lodges, recreation residences, visitor centers, and trailheads. GBCS management direction applies to developed recreation sites.

**dispersed sites** have minimal to no agency improvements made out of manmade materials. Dispersed sites may include outfitter camps or other primitive camping spots along a road, trail, water body, or at a road closure.

**recreation site** a defined, public recreation area. The Forest Service uses two categories for recreation sites: dispersed and developed. Both types may have improvements needed to protect resources such as signs, road closure devices, bear resistant food storage devices, and/or sanitation facilities. Some

developed recreation sites are designed and managed for overnight use and some are designed and managed for day-use only (e.g., interpretive signs at roadside pull-outs; trailheads at roadside pull-outs or at road closures; day-use picnic areas or boat launches; ski areas that do not have overnight lodging).

- Developed recreation sites have agency improvements made out of manmade materials that are intended to provide for public recreation and user comfort/convenience. Examples on NFS lands include, but are not limited to: ski areas, campgrounds, sites with cabins, huts, lodges, recreation residences, visitor centers, and trailheads.
- Dispersed recreation sites have minimal to no agency improvements made out of manmade materials. Dispersed sites may include outfitter camps or other primitive camping spots along a road, trail, water body, or at a road closure.

**recurring helicopter use** a type of helicopter flight that involves multiple trips/passes each day consisting of low-altitude (< 500 m above-ground-level) flights that continues for a duration longer than 48 consecutive hours.

**road** a motor vehicle route more than 50 inches wide, unless identified and managed as a trail. (36 CFR 212.1, FSM 7705):

1. **decommissioned:** the stabilization and restoration of an unneeded road to a more natural state (36 CFR 212.1). Decommissioned roads do not count towards Total Motorized Route Density as long as they meet the definition of impassable.
2. **forest road or trail:** a route wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the NFS that is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the NFS and the use and development of its resources (36 CFR 212.1 – Definitions)
3. **impassable:** a road that has been treated in such a manner that the road is blocked and there is little resource risk if road maintenance is not performed on a regular basis (self-maintaining). These roads are not counted in the total motorized route density as long as the road (generally the first 50 to 300 feet) has been treated to make it inaccessible to wheeled motorized vehicles during the non-denning season. Roads may become impassable as a result of a variety of means, including but not limited to one or more of the following: natural vegetation growth, road entrance obliteration, scarified ground, fallen trees, boulders, culvert or bridge removal, etc. Impassable roads may remain on the inventoried road system if use of the road is anticipated at some point in the future. Some, but not all, roads placed in intermittent stored service may be impassable. [GBCS]
4. **intermittent stored service/intermittent service road, closed to traffic:** the road is in a condition that there is little resource risk if maintenance is not performed.
5. **maintenance level:** a term for the level of service provided by, and maintenance required for, a specific road, consistent with road management objectives and maintenance criteria (Forest Service Handbook 7709.59, 62.32).
  - ◆ level 1: these are roads that have been placed in storage between intermittent uses. The period of storage must exceed 1 year. Basic custodial maintenance is performed to prevent damage to adjacent resources and to perpetuate the road for future resource management needs. Emphasis is normally given to maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns.
  - ◆ level 2: assigned to roads open for use by high clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic, user comfort, and user convenience are not considerations.
  - ◆ level 3: assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities.

- ◆ level 4: assigned to roads that provide a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate travel speeds.
  - ◆ level 5: assigned to roads that provide a high degree of user comfort and convenience.
6. **NFS:** a forest road other than a road which has been authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a State, county, or other local public road authority (36 CFR 212.1)
  7. **temporary:** a road necessary for emergency operations or authorized by contract, permit, lease, or other written authorization that is not a forest road and that is not included in a forest transportation atlas (36 CFR 212.1). In the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary roads will meet the definition of impassable when no longer needed. [GBCS]

**running average** a method for computing the average of a stream of numbers for a specified period. A 10-year running average computes the mean for the values in the current year plus the previous 9 years. A running average is commonly used with time series data to smooth out short-term fluctuations and highlight longer-term trends or cycles.

**secure core** (grizzly bear) an area of the NCDE primary conservation area more than 500 meters from a route open to wheeled motorized use during the grizzly bear non-denning season, or a gated route, that is greater than or equal to 2,500 acres in size. Roads restricted with physical barriers (not gates), decommissioned roads, impassable roads, temporary roads, over-the-snow motorized routes/areas, and non-motorized trails are allowed within secure core, unless otherwise restricted (e.g., by other national forest plan direction).

**total motorized route density** a moving window analysis calculation that applies to the primary conservation area portion of the NCDE and includes Federal, State, and Tribal roads and motorized trails that do not meet the definition of an impassable road. See also **moving window analysis**.

**zone 1** an area surrounding the grizzly bear primary conservation area in the NCDE, where the intent is to maintain occupancy by grizzly bears, but at expected lower densities than inside the primary conservation area. zone 1 also includes two demographic connectivity areas.

**zone 2** an area adjacent to the grizzly bear zone 1 and/or zone 3 in the NCDE, where grizzly bears, particularly males, would have the opportunity to move between the NCDE and adjacent ecosystems. The intent of the zone 2 area is to allow for resource management and recreational opportunities while responding to grizzly bear-human conflicts with appropriate management actions.

**zone 3** the area that primarily consists of areas where grizzly bears do not have enough suitable habitat to support population growth. The intent is that grizzly bear occupancy is not actively discouraged in zone 3 and the management emphasis is on conflict response.

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## Attachment 1: How changes in route density and secure core would be implemented

As stated in NCDE-STD-AR-03, in each bear management subunit within the NCDE primary conservation area, temporary changes in the open motorized route density, total motorized route density and secure core shall be calculated for projects (as defined by “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary).

The 10-year running average for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5 percent temporary increase in open motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., open motorized route density baseline plus 5 percent);
- 3 percent temporary increase in total motorized route density in each subunit (i.e., total motorized route density baseline plus 3 percent);
- 2 percent temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2 percent).

### Hypothetical example

Two hypothetical examples (displayed as table 6-1 and table 6-2, respectively) show how temporary changes in open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core would be implemented for a project.

#### Temporary increase for projects — hypothetical example #1

According to standard NCDE-STD-AR-03, the 10-year running average for open motorized route density is allowed to increase by 5 percent. In the table 6-1 example, open motorized route density increases from 19 to 31 percent (12 percent net) for four years, or a 10-year running average of 4.8 percent (i.e., 48 percent divided by 10), so the standard is met.

The 10-year average for total motorized route density is allowed to increase by 3 percent. In the table 6-1 example, total motorized route density increases from 19 to 22 percent (3 percent net) for four years, or a 10-year running average of 1.2 percent (i.e. 12 percent divided by 10), so the standard is met.

The 10-year average for secure core is allowed to decrease by 2 percent. In the example, the net decrease in secure core is 5 percent per year for four years, or a 10-year running average of 2 percent (i.e., 20 percent divided by 10), so the standard is met. In this hypothetical example of a 4-year project, the 10-year running average for core has reached the limit of 2 percent, so another project in this subunit would not be possible during the non-denning season, unless that project complied with administrative use levels for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, or secure core.

**Table 6-1. Changes in values in a bear management subunit for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core for project in years 7 through 10.**

Variable	Baseline Value	yr 1	yr 2	yr 3	yr 4	yr 5	yr 6	yr 7	yr 8	yr 9	yr 10
OMRD	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	31	31	31	31
TMRD	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Secure Core	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
Net change	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	+12% OMRD +3% TMRD -5% core			

**Temporary increase for projects — hypothetical example #2**

According to standard NCDE-STD-AR-03, the 10-year running average for open motorized route density is allowed to increase by 5 percent. Open motorized route density increases from 17 to 22 percent (5 percent net) for five years, or a 10-year running average of 2.5 percent (i.e., 25 percent divided by 10), so the standard is met.

In the table 6-2 example, total motorized route density does not increase, so the standard is met.

In the table 6-2 example, the net decrease in secure core is 2 percent per year for five years, or a 10-year running average of 1 percent (i.e., 10 percent divided by 10), so the standard is met. In this hypothetical example of a 5-year project, none of the 10-year running averages have reached their respective limits of 5, 3, or 2 percent.

**Table 6-2. Changes in values in a bear management subunit for open motorized route density, total motorized route density, and secure core for project in years 5 through 10.**

Variable	Baseline Value	Yr-1	Yr-2	Yr-3	Yr-4	Yr-5	Yr-6	Yr-7	Yr-8	Yr-9	Yr-10
OMRD <sup>a</sup>	17	17	17	17	17	17	22	22	22	22	22
TMRD <sup>b</sup>	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Secure Core	60	60	60	60	60	60	64	64	64	64	64
Net change	-	0	0	0	0	0	+5% OMRD +0% TMRD -2% core				

- a. Open motorized route density
- b. Total motorized route density

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