

## CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE AND NEED

### A. Introduction

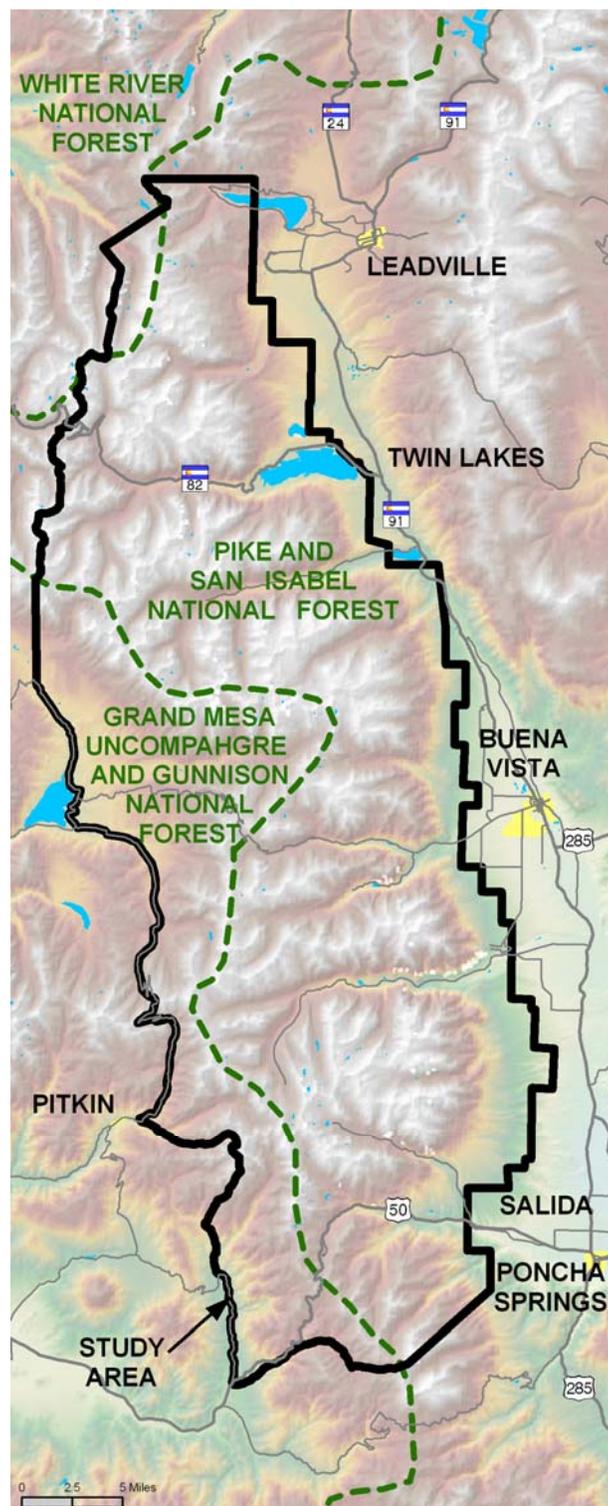
This chapter summarizes the Purpose and Need for this action. This includes describing the location, study area, public involvement activities and key issues.

### B. Location and Setting

In 2001, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service or USFS) Leadville, Salida and Gunnison Ranger Districts initiated a planning effort for the relocation of portions of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) to ensure consistency with the original vision of the trail. The Study Area, illustrated in Map 1-1, encompasses portions of the Pike and San Isabel National Forests (PSICC) in Lake and Chaffee Counties, the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) in Gunnison County, and the White River National Forest in Pitkin County. The San Isabel and Gunnison National Forest will be collectively referenced as the Forest(s) in the remainder of the document. The White River National Forest is included in the Study Area because it initially included alternative segments that were dismissed from further analysis (Chapter 2). Because this portion of the Study Area in White River National Forest contains no segments of the CDT or any of the Alternatives carried forward for analysis (Chapter 2), the White River National Forest will not be referenced in the remainder of the document.

### C. Background

On October 2, 1968, Congress enacted the National Trails System Act (P.L. 90-543), which established a nationwide trail system and designated the Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail. Based on this Act, a study of the CDT was initiated. The Study Report was completed in 1976, addressing development plans and costs, operation and maintenance needs, expected visitation, land ownership and use, and economic impacts of the trail. The legislative Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the



Map 1-1. Study Area.

proposed Continental Divide Trail, to accompany the Study Report, was completed in 1977. The CDT Study Report identifies that:

The primary purpose of this trail is to provide a continuous, appealing trail route, designed for the hiker and horseman, but compatible with other land uses.... To provide hiking and horseback access to those lands where man's impact on the environment has not been adverse to a substantial degree and where the environment remains relatively unaltered.... The basic goal of the trail is to provide the hiker and rider an entry to the diverse country along the Continental Divide in a manner which will assure a high quality recreation experience while maintaining a constant respect for the natural environment.

The Study Report also states that “national scenic trails are intended to be established primarily for hiking and horseback riding, and that motorized vehicular use is specifically prohibited by the National Trails System Act.” On November 10, 1978, based on the FEIS, Congress amended the National Trails System Act with the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 to establish and designate the CDT. Section 7(c) allows for other motorized use along the trail by exception:

...Provided that the Secretary charged with the administration of such trail shall establish regulations which shall authorize the use of motorized vehicles when, in his judgment, such vehicles are necessary to meet emergencies or to enable adjacent landowners or land users to have reasonable access to their lands or timber rights. Provided further, that private lands included in the national recreation, national scenic, or national historic trails by cooperative agreement of a landowner shall not preclude such owner from using motorized vehicles on or across such trails or adjacent lands from time to time in accordance with regulations to be established by the appropriate Secretary... Other uses along the historic trails and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail, and which, at the time of designation, are allowed by administrative regulations, including the use of motorized vehicles, shall be permitted by the Secretary charged with administration of the trail.

The CDT Study Report FEIS of 1977 was adopted by the Chief of the Forest Service on August 5, 1981 (Federal Register Vol. 40, No. 150). The analysis and information contained in the CDT Study Report FEIS was to be used in the development of the Comprehensive Plan and future environmental documents.

House Report No. 98-28 of 1983 discusses a new subsection, 7(j), that was added to the National Trails System Act specifying various types of potential uses that may be allowed on specific components of the National Trails System:

While the new subsection would permit the appropriate secretaries to allow trail bikes and other off-the-road vehicles on portions of the National Trail System, the Committee emphasized that this provision gives authority to the secretaries to permit such uses where appropriate, but that it must also be exercised in keeping with those other provisions of the law that require the secretaries to

protect the resources themselves and the users of the system. It is intended, for example, that motorized vehicles will not normally be allowed on national scenic or historical trails and will be allowed on recreational trails only at times and places where such use will not create significant on-trail or off-trail environmental damage and will not jeopardize the safety of hikers, equestrians, or other uses or conflict with the primary purposes for which the trail, or the portion of the trail, were created.

The Comprehensive Plan (CP) for the CDT was signed by the Chief of the Forest Service in 1985 and modified by direction from the Deputy Chief in 1997. The CP directs that programmatic plans, such as Forest Plans, address the CDT by providing appropriate direction for the trail.

The CP identifies a “zone of concern” that addresses legal rights-of-way for the CDT. The CP recognized that non-substantial trail relocations would be “fairly common over time” for the CDT. Thereby, an appropriate width of rights-of-way would be required to avoid potentially cumbersome amendment processes and delays and extra costs associated with rights-of-way issues for these relocations. Rights-of-Way Description policy states:

The “zone of concern” regarding the location of the CDT is considered to be that area of the Rocky Mountains laying 50 miles to either side of the geographic Continental Divide.

Initial location and any subsequent relocations of segments of the CDT may occur within the “zone of concern” without further acts of Congress, provided that such locations or relocations are in accordance with a) the Location Criteria set forth in Section B (*Management Policies and Direction*) of the CDT Comprehensive Plan, and b) the appropriate Federal, State, or local government land use management direction for the affected area.

The CP further states that the relocation of the CDT tread way outside of the right-of-way would require a Federal Register Notice and an Act of Congress, in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 1246.

The CP for the CDT stipulates, under Section B. *Management Policies and Direction*, 1) *Location Criteria*:

The trail shall be located as close to the geographic Continental Divide as possible, but as far away as necessary to provide for the safe travel and diverse recreation appeal, to be economically feasible and to keep environmental impacts to a minimum. Use public lands or existing public rights-of-way as much as possible. Accordingly, deviations from the Continental Divide shall be limited to the distance needed in order to take these considerations into account.

According to the CP, “the following is a reason which does not justify significant deviation from the geographic divide,”

Costs – A less costly route must also provide essentially equal or greater scenic recreational opportunities than a more costly route located closer to the Divide. Exceptions may be made during the interim period before relocation or new construction of a preferred route can be implemented.

Costs alone are not an acceptable reason for locating the trail away from the Continental Divide unless the distant location provides equal or greater scenic recreational opportunities.

On August 20, 1993, the Rocky Mountain Regional Forester signed a Record of Decision approving construction of the segment of the CDT that would pass through Wyoming and Colorado. On July 3, 1997, correspondence from the Deputy Chief of the Forest Service to Regional Foresters stated, "...as the CDT is further developed, it is expected that the trail will eventually be relocated off of roads for its entire length." The memo further states that: "It is the intent of the Forest Service that the CDT will be for non-motorized recreation. As new trail segments of the CDT are constructed to link existing non-motorized trail segments together, and to reroute the CDT off of primitive roads or other routes where motorized travel is allowed, motorized use should not be allowed nor considered. Allowing motorized use on these newly constructed trail segments would substantially interfere with the nature and purpose of the CDT."

#### **D. Proposed Action**

This project action will consist of the relocation of key areas of the CDT from Halfmoon Creek to South Fooses Creek (approximately 95 miles in length) to create a route that meets the Purpose and Need, including being designed for pack and saddle stock use and managed for hiking and pack and saddle stock use.

#### **E. Need**

Action is needed by the Forest Service at this time. The current location and increasing motorized use continues to be in conflict with the original intent of the CDT in the study area. The project is needed to:

- Locate or relocate portions of the CDT between Halfmoon Creek and South Fooses Pass to ensure that the CDT will be a nationally renowned, high-quality, primitive hiking and pack and saddle stock trail that provides access to the diverse country in close proximity to the Continental Divide.
- Provide a hiking and pack and saddle stock trail experience consistent with the Acts.
- Further interpret and protect natural, historic, cultural and scenic features along the trail.
- Improve safety for trail users.
- Create a trail that is easily identifiable as the CDT.

## F. Purpose

The CDT is to be an extended trail for non-motorized use that connects communities and people by providing scenic, high-quality, primitive hiking and pack and saddle stock experiences, while preserving the significant natural, historic and cultural resources along the trail. The trail should:

- Provide for nationally renowned, high-quality hiking and/or pack and saddle stock trail experiences.
- Provide connectors to communities along the CDT.
- Be consistent with the Acts and Forest Land and Resource Management Plans.
- Highlight and protect natural, historic, cultural and scenic features.
- Provide interpretive and educational materials that include accurate information on significant features, trail location, conditions and access.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) will determine the best combination of actions to locate a route within the study area that meets the intent and purpose of the Acts.

## G. Decisions Framework

The Forest Supervisors for the GMUG and PSICC are the officials responsible for this decision. These officials may decide to select the No Action Alternative, to defer action, to select an action alternative in its entirety, or to select components of an action alternative. The *1984 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Pike and San Isabel National Forests and Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands*; and the *1991 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests* (Forest Plans) provide long-term, programmatic Forest-wide goals and objectives (U.S. Forest Service 1984 and U.S. Forest Service 1991). The decision must be consistent with the Forest Plans or the Forest Plans would need to be amended. Forest Plan goals include:

- Provide a broad spectrum of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities in accordance with identified needs and demands.
- Meet demand for motorized and non-motorized dispersed recreation opportunities outside wilderness areas.
- Disperse recreationists by constructing and reconstructing trails, trailheads and other improvements.
- Provide opportunity for the economic growth of industries and communities dependent upon Forest outputs, including tourism.
- Enhance and/or preserve scenic values along heavily traveled roads, use areas and trails through management activities.
- Coordinate transportation facilities (both roads and trails) to meet the needs of the Forest.

- Provide a safe, efficient and environmentally sound transportation system.

These goals are the basis for the management requirements listed in the Forest Plans and Management Area Direction. The Forest-wide management requirements set the baseline conditions that must be maintained in order to implement the Forest Plan as it was intended. They establish the environmental quality and natural resource requirements that apply to all areas of the Forests.

The Forest Plan divides the Forests into individual Management Areas (MA), each of which has an emphasis that identifies management objectives within the MA's boundaries. The Forest Plan designates specific standards and guidelines to be used in the management of these areas to better meet the MA's emphasis. There are 10 MAs in the study area, each described in Table 1-1.

Additional guidance beyond the Forest Plans is found in the CP, as described above, the FEIS for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in Colorado and Wyoming, and the Wilderness Act of 1964 (P.L. 8A577). The FEIS Record of Decision was signed in 1993. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Reroute Environmental Assessment will tier to the Comprehensive Plan, the 1993 Colorado and Wyoming FEIS (U.S. Forest Service 1993a), and the CDT Study Report FEIS.

This EA is a project-level analysis that considers all applicable Forest Plan management direction. This EA tiers to both the PSICC and GMUG Forest Plans and is hereby incorporated by reference, as encouraged by 40 CFR 1520.20.

**Table 1-1. GMUG Management Areas.**

Management Area	Description	Recreation Use Guidance
1B Downhill Skiing and Winter Sports	Management emphasis provides for downhill skiing on existing sites and maintains selected inventoried sites for future downhill skiing recreation opportunities. Visual resources are managed so that the character is one of forested areas interspersed with openings of varying widths and shapes.	Provide opportunities for year-round recreation use.
2A Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunities	Management emphasis is for semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities, such as snowmobiling, four-wheel driving and motorcycling, both on and off roads and trails. Visual activities are managed so that management activities are not evident or remain visually subordinate.	Low to moderate contact with other groups and individuals. Limits on motorized trail densities.
2B Rural and Routed-Natural Recreation Emphasis	Management emphasis is for rural and routed-natural recreation opportunities. Motorized and non-motorized recreation activities, such as driving for pleasure, viewing scenery, picnicking, fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing are possible. Motorized travel may be prohibited or restricted to designated routes to protect physical and biological resources. Visual resources are managed so that management activities maintain or improve the quality of recreation opportunities. Management activities are not evident, remain visually subordinate, or may be dominant, but harmonize and blend with the natural setting.	Moderate to high contact with groups. Create a system of scenic byways to showcase scenery.
6B Livestock Grazing – Maintain Forage Composition	Emphasizes livestock grazing. Intensive grazing management systems are favored over extensive systems. Range condition is maintained through use of forage improvement practices, livestock management, and regulation of other resource activities. Conflicts between livestock and wildlife are resolved in favor of livestock. Investments are made in compatible resource activities. Dispersed recreational opportunities vary between semi-primitive non-motorized and routed natural. Management activities are evident but	Concentrate motorized recreation use near existing motorized roads and trails. All other areas, more than ½ mile away from motorized routes, permit non-

Management Area	Description	Recreation Use Guidance
	harmonize and blend with the natural setting.	motorized recreation activities. Limit winter recreation to low levels.
7A Timber Management	Emphasizes wood-fiber production and utilization of large roundwood of size and quality suitable for sawtimber. Roaded-natural recreation opportunities are provided along Forest arterial and collector roads. Semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities are provided on those local roads and trails that remain open; semi-primitive non-motorized opportunities are provided on those that are closed. Management activities are not evident.	Concentrate motorized recreation use near existing motorized roads and trails. All other areas, more than ½ mile away from motorized routes, permit non-motorized recreation activities. Limit winter recreation to low levels.
8 (8A/8B/8C) Wilderness Setting	(8A) Management emphasis is for the protection and perpetuation of essentially pristine bio-physical conditions and a high degree of solitude for both wildlife and humans with no perceptible evidence of past human use. Management activities are integrated in such a way that evidence of current human use is not noticeable the following season, or so that natural biological processes are not adversely or artificially changed over time by human use. (8B) Management emphasis is to provide for the protection and perpetuation of natural bio-physical conditions. On-site regulation of recreation is minimal. Travel is cross-country or by use of a low density constructed trail system. (8C) Management emphasis is to provide for the protection and perpetuation of essentially natural bio-physical conditions. Solitude and a low level of encounters with other users or evidence of past use is not an essential part of the social setting. Human travel is principally on system trails. Designated campsites are used and show evidence of repeated but acceptable levels of use. Management activities are integrated in such a way that current human use leaves only limited and site-specific evidence of their passing.	Emphasis of primitive recreation opportunities requiring a high degree of isolation, solitude and self-reliance while traveling cross-country. Manage for a low incidence of contact.
9A Riparian Management	Management emphasis is on all the component ecosystems of riparian areas. This area can occur within other management areas.	Semi-primitive non-motorized.

**Table 1-2. PSICC Management Areas.**

Management Area	Description	Recreation Use Guidance
1B-1 Winter Sports Sites	Provides for existing winter sports sites. Recreation opportunities focus on downhill skiing during the winter and on dispersed recreation during the rest of the year. Cross-country skiing may occur.	Provide opportunities for year-round recreation use.
1B-2 Potential Winter Sports Development Sites	Provides for potential winter sports sites. Sites are maintained for future downhill skiing recreation opportunities. The area is natural appearing forest with subtle vegetation changes.	Opportunities should focus on dispersed uses.
2A Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunities	Management emphasis is for semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities, such as snowmobiling, four-wheel driving, and motorcycling, both on and off roads and trails.	Low to moderate contact with other groups and individuals. Limits on motorized trail densities.
2B Rural and Roaded-Natural Recreation Emphasis	Provides opportunity for outdoor recreation in roaded-natural and rural setting, including developed recreation facilities and year-round motorized and non-motorized recreation.	Moderate to high contact with groups. Create a system of scenic byways to showcase scenery.
3A Semi-primitive Non-motorized Recreation Opportunities	Provides opportunity for non-motorized recreation in a non-wilderness, semi-primitive setting.	Moderate contact with individuals. No motorized recreation use. Supports the construction of non-motorized trails.

Management Area	Description	Recreation Use Guidance
4B Wildlife Habitat for Management Indicator Species	Provides wildlife habitat needs, and permits dispersed motorized and non-motorized recreation and sustained forage yield.	Manage recreation so it does not conflict with wildlife habitat needs.
5B Big Game Winter Range	Management emphasis is on forage and cover on winter ranges. Winter habitat for deer, elk, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats is emphasized. New roads, other than short-term temporary roads, are located outside of the management area. Short-term roads are obliterated within one season after intended use. Existing local roads are closed and new motorized recreation use is managed to prevent unacceptable stress on big game animals during the primary big game use season.	Concentrate motorized recreation use near existing motorized roads and trails. All other areas, more than ½ mile away from motorized routes, permit non-motorized recreation activities. Limit winter recreation to low levels.
7A Wood-Fiber Production and Utilization (sawlogs)	Management emphasis is on wood-fiber production and utilization of large roundwood, of a size and quality suitable for sawtimber. Management activities are not evident or remain visually subordinate along Forest arterial and collector roads and primary trails. Roaded-natural recreation opportunities are provided along Forest arterial and collector roads. Semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities are provided on those local roads and trails that remain open; semi-primitive non-motorized opportunities are provided on those that are closed.	Provide roaded-natural recreation opportunities within ½ mile of Forest arterial, collector and local roads with better than primitive surfaces that are open to public travel. All other areas, more than ½ mile away from motorized routes, permit non-motorized recreation activities.
7D Wood-Fiber Production and Utilization for Products	Management emphasis is on production and utilization of small roundwood, of a size and quality suitable for products such as fuelwood, posts, poles, props, etc. Management activities, although they may be visually dominant, harmonize and blend with the natural setting.	Provide semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities with a low to moderate incidence of contact with other groups and individuals within ½ mile of designated local roads, with primitive surfaces and trails open to motorized recreation use.
8B Primitive Wilderness Opportunities	Management emphasis is to provide for the protection and perpetuation of natural bio-physical conditions. On-site regulation of recreation use is minimal. Travel is cross-country or by use of a low density constructed trail system.	Emphasize primitive recreation opportunities requiring a high degree of isolation, solitude, self-reliance and challenge while traveling cross-country or on system trails.
8C Semi-Primitive Wilderness Opportunities	Management emphasis is to provide for the protection and perpetuation of essentially natural bio-physical conditions. Solitude and a low level of encounters with other users or evidence of past use is not an essential part of the social setting. Human travel is principally on system trails. Designated campsites are used and show evidence of repeated but acceptable levels of use. Management activities are integrated in such a way that current human use leaves only limited and site-specific evidence of their passing.	Manage for maximum retention of the natural landscape. Provide semi-primitive recreation opportunities requiring predominantly unmodified natural settings, with a moderate to high degree of challenge and risk while traveling cross-country or on trails.
9A Riparian	Management emphasis is on all the component ecosystems of riparian areas. This area can occur within other management areas.	Semi-primitive non-motorized.

Management Area	Description	Recreation Use Guidance
Management		
9B Increased Water Yield	Management emphasis is on increased water yield and improved timing of flow through manipulation of forest vegetation. Semi-primitive recreation is the predominant recreation use. Motorized travel may be prohibited.	Semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded-natural and rural recreation opportunities can be provided. Provide recreation opportunities within ½ mile of designated roads.

**Table 1-3. Miles of Existing CDT Trail in Each Management Area.\***

Management Areas	Length of CDT Within MA
<b>GMUG MAs</b>	
1B - Downhill Skiing and Winter Sports	2.9
2A - Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunities	15.4
2B - Rural and Roaded-Natural Recreation Emphasis	0.2
6B - Livestock Grazing – Maintain Forage Composition	1.0
7A - Timber Management	7.6
8 (8B/8C) Wilderness Setting	3.6
9A* - Riparian Management	3.4
<b>PSICC MAs</b>	
1B-1 - Downhill Skiing and Winter Sports	0.3
1B-2 - Winter Sports Sites	0.0
2A - Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Opportunities	8.9
2B - Rural and Roaded-Natural Recreation Emphasis	15.5
3A - Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunities	8.3
4B - Wildlife Habitat for Management Indicator Species	5.4
5B - Big Game Winter Range	4.2
7A - Wood-Fiber Production and Utilization (sawlogs)	0.0
7D - Wood-Fiber Production and Utilization for Products	0.0
8B - Primitive Wilderness Opportunities	0.0
8C - Semi-Primitive Wilderness Opportunities	3.5
9A - Riparian Management	5.5
9B - Increased Water Yield	2.3

\*Note: Management Area 9A overlaps with other management areas.

## H. Public Involvement

Scoping for the current proposal was initiated with notification in local newspapers and a mailing to over 400 persons, either known to be interested in similar projects or who had asked to be informed of such projects or of the proposed project. Approximately fifty people attended three open houses that were held in November 2004 and March 2005.

Three public scoping meetings were held: Wednesday, November 3, 2004, 5:30 - 8:30 PM at the National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum; November 4, 2004, 5:30 - 8:30 PM at the Chaffee County Fairgrounds; and Wednesday, March 30, 2005 6:00-9:00 PM at the Twin Lakes Schoolhouse. The meeting format, with exhibits and opportunities to make written and oral comments, was intended to promote informal interaction. The attendees at the meetings were asked to visit four stations to learn more about the background, existing conditions, issues and

alternatives, and to provide their input to Forest Service representatives and the consulting team. Attendees provided their input directly on station display boards, to representatives or on comment sheets. Based on this evaluation and public input, the alternatives were refined and public issues were identified.

## **I. Issues Selected for Further Analysis**

Key issues are used in the development of an alternative. Non-key issues are those that are used in the analysis of effects for each alternative. All issues were identified during agency and public scoping, and provide the framework for the assessment described in Chapter 3. These include:

**Key Issue 1 – Recreation.** Motorized, mountain bike, and non-motorized recreational users, may result in conflicts. Safety concerns may occur on motorized roads and trails that permit multi-use, heavy use areas, and on narrow highway bridge crossings. Poor recreational experiences can result from the CDT located in areas without way-finding signage, high noise areas near highways, areas lacking alpine character that are not in close proximity to the Continental Divide, and locations with poor scenic quality. Remedying these deficiencies could increase visitation, trail use and access to sensitive areas along the trail. An improved trail system could increase recreational grazing by pack animals. Disturbance to the vegetative canopy and the location of trails and bridges will influence the visual character of an area. Viewsheds, not only of the new trail but from the user’s perspective, are an additional consideration.

**Key Issue 2 – Wilderness Management Areas.** Trail use within existing and proposed wilderness management areas must be carefully managed to avoid impacting wilderness values.

**Key Issue 3 – Economic and Social.** The CDT has never had high levels of visitation in the study area; however, proposed improvements and the resulting increase in visitation could provide economic benefits to adjacent communities. The costs of relocating and maintaining the CDT are a concern in the current fiscal climate.

**Issue 4 – Terrestrial Wildlife (including Sensitive Species).** A wide variety of wildlife species is found in the study area, including large mammals, birds, raptors, fish, reptiles and amphibians. New trails and increased visitation could affect wildlife, including Forest Service Management Indicator Species (MIS). Federally threatened and endangered and Forest Service Sensitive species could potentially occur in the study area. The creation of new trails within sensitive alpine habitats could affect sensitive species populations if not carefully located.

**Issue 5 – Vegetation (including Noxious Weeds and Sensitive Species).** The removal of vegetation to create new trails and the revegetation of closed trails must consider the sensitive nature of alpine, riparian and other habitats. Improvements to the trail system will result in greater visitation and a larger area of disturbance which could increase the potential for noxious weeds. Federally threatened and endangered and Forest Service Sensitive species could potentially occur in the study area. The creation of new trails within sensitive alpine habitats

could affect sensitive species populations if not carefully located. This EA will address the overall effects on sensitive plant populations.

**Issue 6 – Aquatic Habitat.** Trail construction and trail user activities, such as camping, can affect aquatic habitats by increasing sediment and contamination of these resources from improper disposal of human wastes. New trails should be designed to avoid negative impacts to existing streams and other water bodies.

**Issue 7 – Wetlands and Riparian Areas.** Trails can affect erosion of stream banks, sedimentation, and the quality of riparian and wetland areas. Stream crossings are often critical habitats for sensitive wildlife and botanical species.

**Issue 8 – Heritage Resources.** New trail construction and improved access to new areas could affect archeological and historic resources.

**Issue 9 – Hydrology and Soils.** The potential closure, rerouting or creation of new trails may alter water quality if trails modify riparian conditions or contribute to sedimentation, erosion or compaction.

## **J. Issues Not Selected for Detailed Analysis**

The following issues are not carried forward into the analysis for the reasons described below:

- **Prime and Unique Farmlands.** No prime or unique farmlands are present in the study area.
- **Air Quality.** No impacts to air quality will occur.
- **Hazardous Waste.** This project will not generate hazardous waste in study area.
- **Timber.** The project will have no effect on timber management in the study area.
- **Land Use.** Located only on Forest Service land or Forest Service acquired easements allowing public access, the project will have no effect on land uses or private property within the study area.
- **Safety.** Safety issues that were raised primarily centered on recreation in high alpine areas. Exposure to severe weather, lightning and other hazards can impact users. However, safety is a factor in every recreational activity and therefore will not be dealt with separately in this analysis. Trail users will continue to be informed and educated about safety hazards and ways of addressing those hazards. Other safety concerns will be addressed through design and management.
- **Environmental Justice.** Executive Order 12898, “General Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations,” requires all Federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their mission. None of the actions assessed in this EA would disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.

- **Wild and Scenic Rivers.** There are no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in the study area; therefore this issue has not been considered for analysis.
- **Inventoried Roadless Areas.** This project will not result in any new roads in the study area; therefore no effects to roadless areas are anticipated.
- **Other Special Management Areas.** There are no designated special management areas in the study area; therefore this issue has not been considered for analysis.