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Service

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Proposed Action—Forest Plan Amendment 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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Amendment 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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Abstract: The Flathead National Forest has developed this proposed action, forest plan amendment, in accordance with the 2012 National Forest System land management planning rule (planning rule) adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Introduction

Proposed Action

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

Purpose of this Amendment

The purpose of the amendment is to incorporate relevant habitat-related direction from the NCDE GBCS 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 (referred to as plan components from this point forward) consistent across the national forests that are a part of the NCDE.

Need for the Amendment

Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) 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. In particular, 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 GBCS for the NCDE population for public review and input. When finalized, the GBCS would become the post-delisting management plan for the NCDE grizzly bears and their habitat. By incorporating the relevant habitat-related direction from the GBCS 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 this grizzly population. 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 NFS lands in the NCDE and contained in the GBCS to show that the amendment forests have adequate regulatory mechanisms in place to support a recovered grizzly bear population.

The Flathead NF (which also lies within the NCDE) is concurrently proposing to incorporate the relevant portions of the GBCS to their 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 (NEPA) effort for the amendment with the Helena, Kootenai, Lewis and 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.

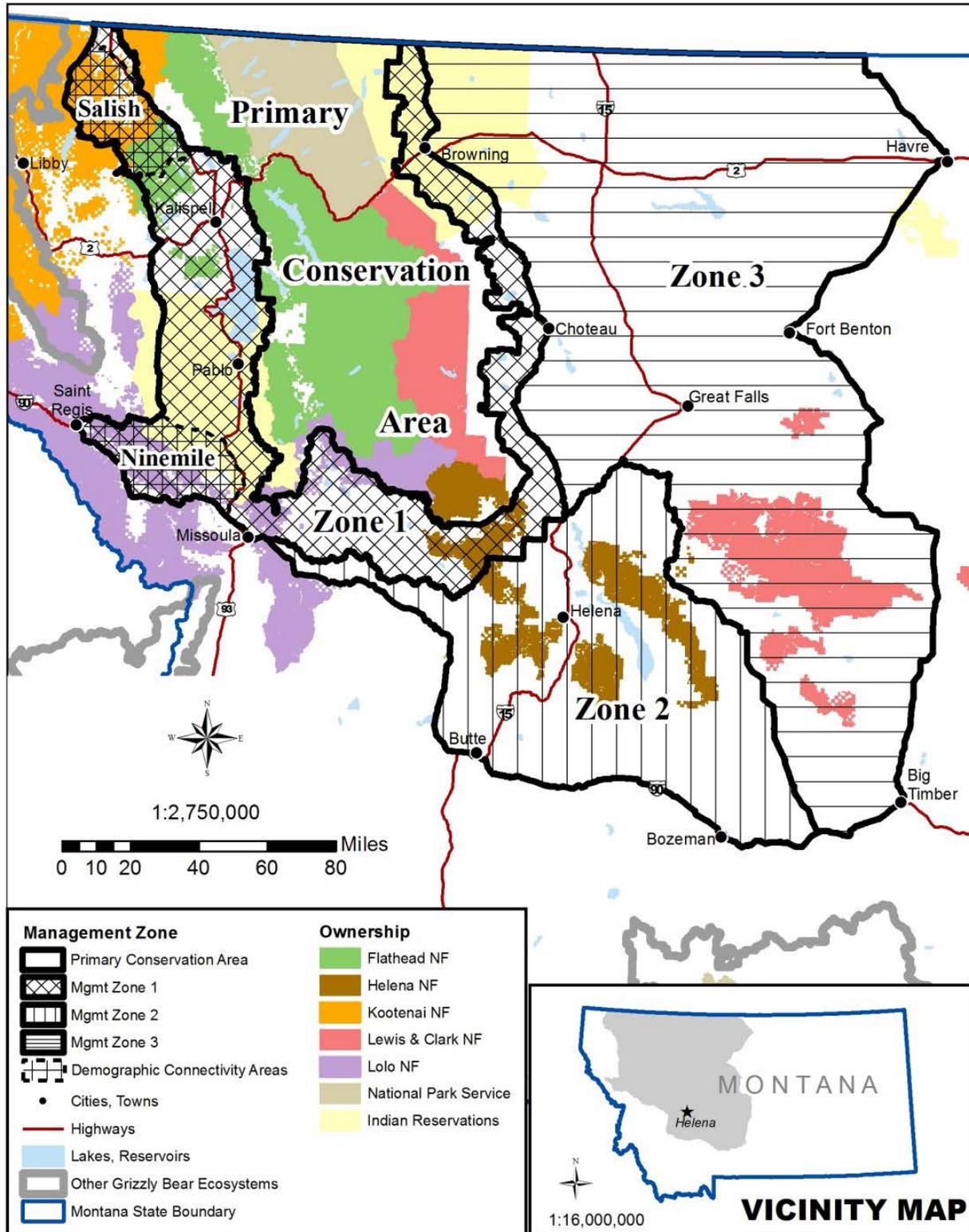


Figure 1. The Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem and Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones

Plan Components

Plan components guide future projects and activities and the 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, or 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.
- Geographic area (GA) specific desired conditions apply to areas outside the primary conservation area (PCA), as applicable to specific areas as designated on a map. GA desired conditions do not substitute for, nor repeat, NCDE-wide desired conditions. GA desired conditions allow 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 procedures 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 GBCS and its overall goal to support a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE.

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 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 219.57(b); Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, ch. 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 NF plan revision, will be disclosed in a draft environmental impact statement. The EIS will include 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, e.g., site-specific analysis in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 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 NCDE GBCS management zones. A list of abbreviations and a glossary that applies to the entire amendment follows the proposed plan components in Appendix A.

Helena National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Helena National Forest (NF), 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 Service (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 1) and a map of the GBCS management zones on the Helena NF (figure 2) that would be affected by this proposed action are provided at the end of this section.

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:

- type of direction (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring)
- level of direction (e.g., GA, = geographic area, and the name of the GA is also included);
- 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 (PCA), Zone 1 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 PCA and Zone 1, grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE.

Standards

NCDE-STD-WL-01. Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the PCA, Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA and the Ninemile DCA), Zone 2 or Zone 3 (see figure 1 and figure 2).

NCDE-STD-WL 02. Within the NCDE PCA, Zone 1, and Zone 2, Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-WL 01. Within the NCDE PCA, Zone 1, and Zone 2, contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

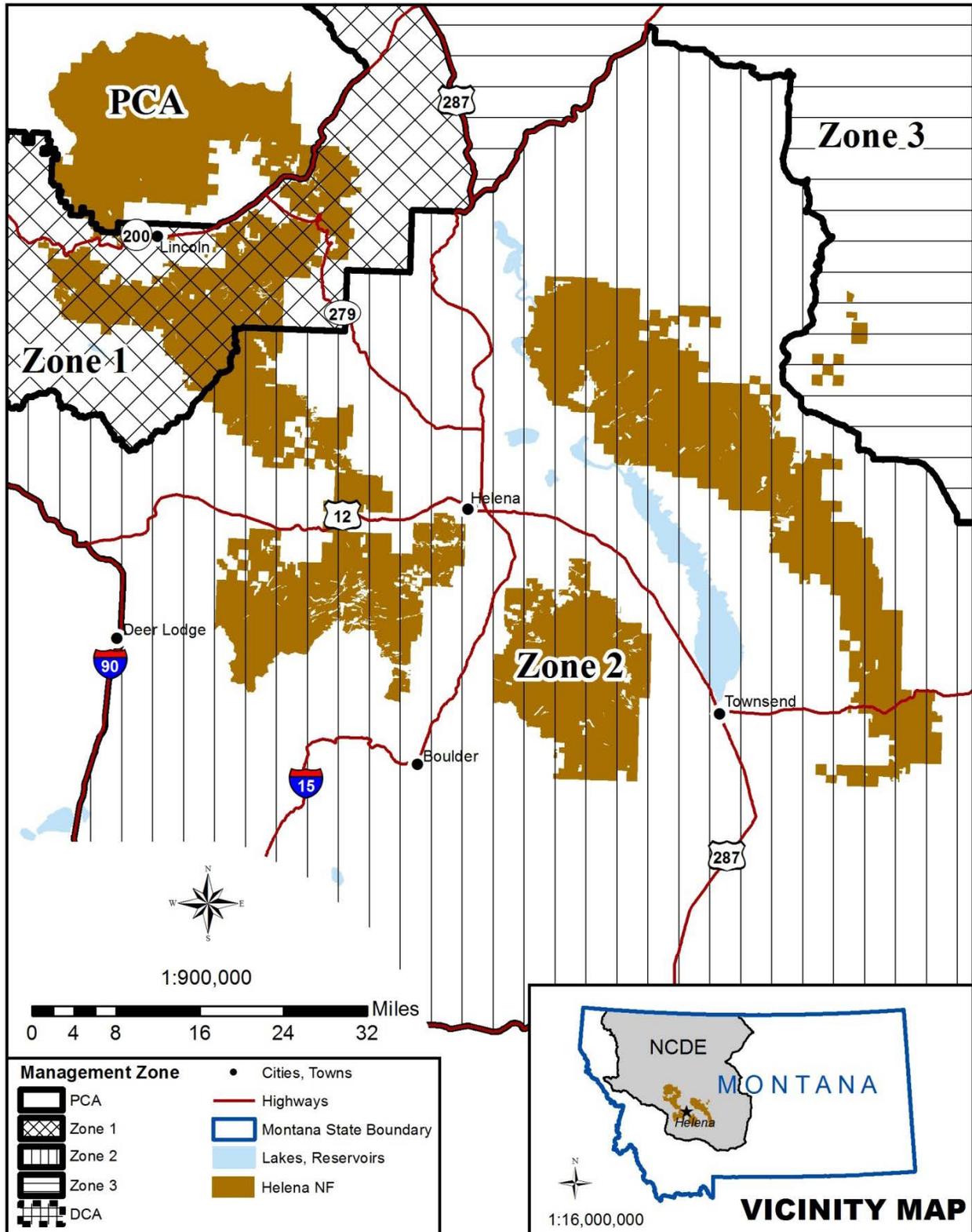


Figure 2. Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Helena National Forest

NCDE-GDL-WL-02. Within the NCDE PCA, Zone 1, 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 PCA and Zone 1, the use of clover in seed mixes on NFS lands should be discouraged. 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 PCA, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on National Forest System 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.

NCDE-DC-AR-02. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 National Forest System lands.

Standards

NCDE-STD-AR-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for OMRD or TMRD 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)” in the glossary)
- 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) because these types of permitted resource development are subject to existing rights and have a separate set of 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 (often <0.25 mile) 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, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- a change in a motorized route is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

NCDE-STD-AR-03. In each bear management subunit within the NCDE PCA, temporary changes in the OMRD, TMRD 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 OMRD, TMRD, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5% temporary increase in OMRD in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5%);
- 3% temporary increase in TMRD in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3%);
- 2% temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2%).

The following hypothetical example (displayed as Examples 1a and 1b) shows how temporary changes in OMRD, TMRD, and secure core would be implemented for a project.

Example-1a. Values in a bear management subunit for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core for project in years 11 through 14

	Baseline Value	Allowed Value for Project	yr 1	yr 2	yr 3	yr 4	yr 5	yr 6	yr 7	yr 8	yr 9	yr 10	project yr 11	project yr 12	project yr 13	project yr 14	yr 15	yr 16	yr 17
OMRD	19	24	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	31	31	31	31	19	19	19
TMRD	19	22	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	22	22	22	22	19	19	19
Secure Core	69	67	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	63	63	63	63	69	69	69

Example-1b. Using data from Example-1a to show the 10-year running averages for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core before, during, and after project completion

	Before	During				After		
	yr 1-10	yr 2-11	yr 3-12	yr 4-13	yr 5-14	yr 6-15	yr 7-16	yr 8-17
OMRD	19	20	21	23	24	24	24	24
TMRD	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20
Secure Core	69	69	68	67	67	67	67	67

It should be noted that in this hypothetical example, another project in this subunit would not be possible until year 24, unless that project did not require any changes in values for OMRD, TMRD, or Secure Core.

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.
- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights.

NCDE-STD-AR-04. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, the number of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season shall be limited to one increase to the baseline (see glossary) per decade per bear management unit (BMU) or one increase in overnight capacity per decade per BMU, with the following exceptions:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- the Forest Service adds a developed recreation site or increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but reduces the overnight capacity by an equal amount at another recreation site(s) in the same BMU, so that there is no net increase in overnight capacity in the BMU;
- the Forest Service increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but consolidates and/or eliminates dispersed camping of equal capacity within the same BMU;
- the Forest Service exchanges, buys or sells lands with developed recreation sites.

NCDE-STD-AR-06. Within the NCDE PCA, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, secure core and motorized route density values (OMRD and TMRD) 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, if changes are proposed that increase the number or capacity of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary), one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts should be incorporated into the proposal and should be in place before or concurrent with the implementation of the project.

Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-DC-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

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

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, logging operations should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement (e.g., restricting logging activities to the denning season or prohibiting logging activities during the spring in key spring grizzly bear habitat), as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Other forest 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 substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-02. Within the NCDE PCA, vegetation management activities should be designed 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.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-03. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

Grazing (GRZ)

Desired Condition

NCDE-DC-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support 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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, issuance of new permits shall incorporate measures needed to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as determined by site-specific analysis. New or re-authorized permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable AUMs when returning to use.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-04. Within the NCDE PCA, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months (AUMs) above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable AUMs 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.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-05. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes of weed control, 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 weed control efforts 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 due to such weed control efforts, 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 PCA, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out cattle grazing or moving the cattle to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02. Within the NCDE PCA, to reduce the potential risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, a sheep grazing permit in non-use status should be phased out. A sheep grazing allotment should be closed if an opportunity arises with a willing permittee.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify, if applicable, 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.

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.

Standard

NCDE-STD-SFP-01. Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) shall include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts (e.g., electric fencing), as determined by a site-specific analysis.

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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-MIN-01. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1, 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 existing rights. Stipulations or measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed, nor will additional stipulations or measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder’s agreement.

NCDE-STD-MIN-02. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1, new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a clause providing 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 PCA and Zone 1, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for leasable and locatable 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;
- Grizzly bear attractant storage and sanitation.

NCDE-STD-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1, in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new minerals Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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 PCA and Zone 1, if minerals activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to 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 (RHCAs) 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 PCA and Zone 1, if leasable and locatable mineral activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, 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 PCA and Zone 1, 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 PCA and Zone 1, in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new 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 PCA and Zone 1, 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 PCA and Zone 1, along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1, for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to substantially affect the grizzly bear or its habitat, 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 PCA. 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 PCA and Zone 1, carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral operators.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-06. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1, available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

Lincoln Geographic Area (GA)

Desired Condition

NCDE-Lincoln GA-DC-01. Within the Helena NF portion of NCDE Zone 1 (see figure 2), roads provide for public and administrative access to NFS lands while keeping disturbance and displacement of grizzly bears (during the non-denning season (see glossary)) at levels known to have been compatible with a stable to increasing grizzly bear population in the NCDE.

Standard

NCDE-Lincoln GA-STD-01. Within the Helena NF portion of NCDE Zone 1 (see figure 2), there shall be no net increase in miles of roads open to public motorized use on NFS lands above the baseline (see glossary). 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 (often < 0.25 miles) 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) because these types of permitted resource development are subject to existing rights and have a separate set of standards and guidelines;
- a change in an open road is necessary to address grizzly bear-human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change in an open road is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- motorized emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

Monitoring (MON)

NCDE-MON-01. Within the NCDE PCA, permanent changes in the level of secure core, OMRD (> 1 mi/mi²) and TMRD (> 2 mi/mi²) within each bear management subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-02. Within the NCDE PCA, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands within each BMU will be monitored. Developed recreation sites (e.g., ski areas, campgrounds, sites with cabins, huts, lodges, visitor centers, and trailheads) will be tracked and compared with the baseline. Administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-03. Within the NCDE PCA, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep AUMs within the PCA will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1, where it is determined there is potential for substantial 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 PCA, the 10-year running average for projects (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by Helena NF staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running average exceeds levels allowed by NCDE-STD-AR-03, the rationale will be documented in writing and submitted to the NCDE Coordinating Committee (see glossary).

Kootenai National Forest Proposed Amendment Direction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Kootenai National Forest (NF), 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 Service (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 1) and a map of the GBCS management zones on the Kootenai NF (figure 3) that would be affected by this proposed action are provided at the end of this section.

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:

- type of direction (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring)
- level of direction (e.g., GA, = geographic area, and the name of the GA is also included);
- 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 (PCA) and Zone 1 (including the Salish demographic connectivity area [DCA]), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE.

Standards

NCDE-STD-WL-01. Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the PCA, Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA and the Ninemile DCA), Zone 2 or Zone 3 (see figure 1 and figure 3).

NCDE-STD-WL-02. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-WL-01. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

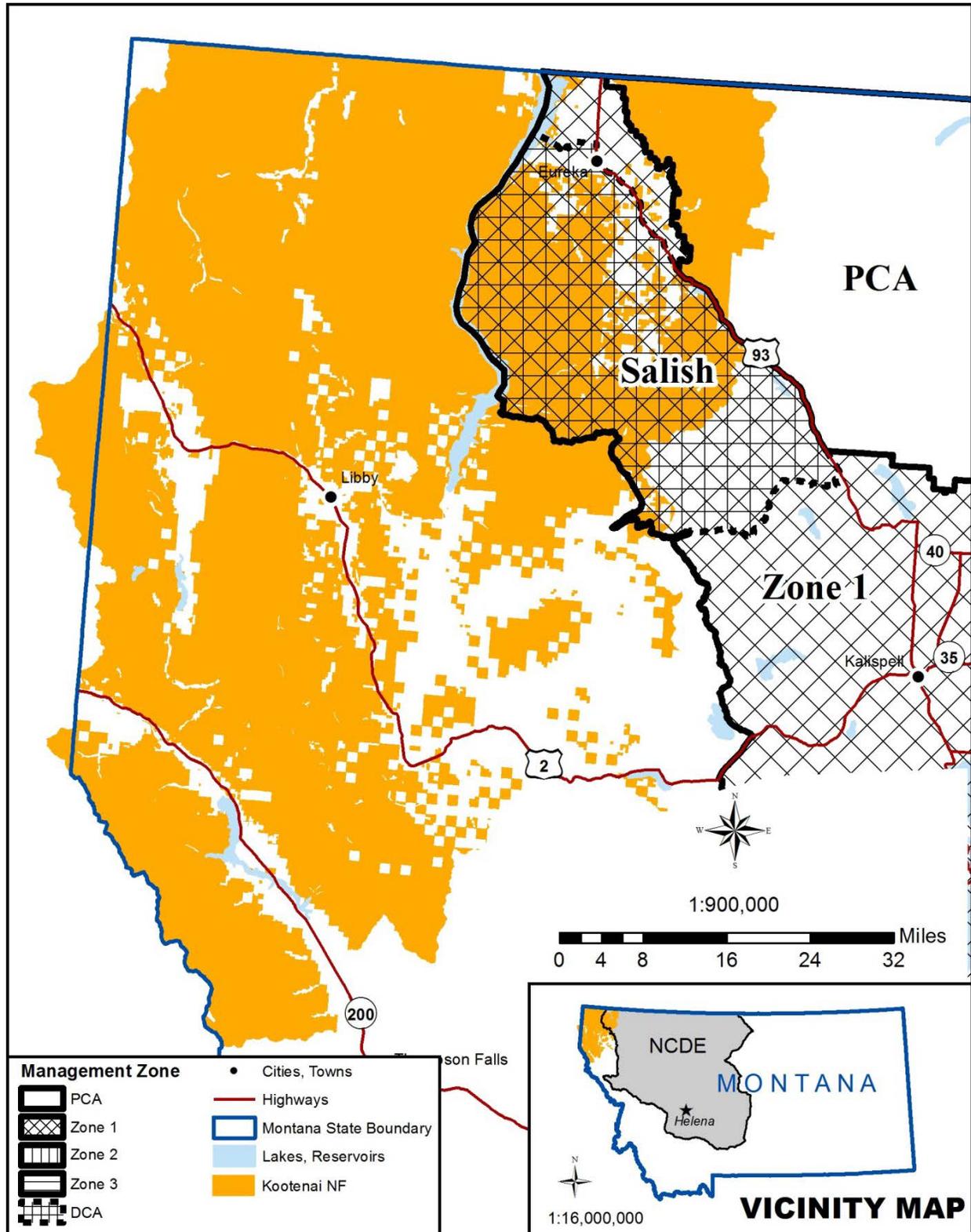


Figure 3. Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Kootenai National Forest

NCDE-GDL-WL-02. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), the use of clover in seed mixes on NFS lands should be discouraged. 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 PCA, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on National Forest System 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.

NCDE-DC-AR-02. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 National Forest System lands.

Standards

NCDE-STD-AR-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for OMRD or TMRD 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)” in the glossary)
- 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) because these types of permitted resource development are subject to existing rights and have a separate set of 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 (often <0.25 mile) 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, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- a change in a motorized route is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

NCDE-STD-AR-03. In each bear management subunit within the NCDE PCA, temporary changes in the OMRD, TMRD 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 OMRD, TMRD, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5% temporary increase in OMRD in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5%);
- 3% temporary increase in TMRD in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3%);
- 2% temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2%).

The following hypothetical example (displayed as Examples 1a and 1b) shows how temporary changes in OMRD, TMRD, and secure core would be implemented for a project.

Example-1a. Values in a bear management subunit for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core for project in years 11 through 14

	Baseline Value	Allowed Value for Project	yr 1	yr 2	yr 3	yr 4	yr 5	yr 6	yr 7	yr 8	yr 9	yr 10	project yr 11	project yr 12	project yr 13	project yr 14	yr 15	yr 16	yr 17
OMRD	19	24	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	31	31	31	31	19	19	19
TMRD	19	22	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	22	22	22	22	19	19	19
Secure Core	69	67	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	63	63	63	63	69	69	69

Example-1b. Using data from Example-1a to show the 10-year running averages for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core before, during, and after project completion

	Before	During				After		
	yr 1-10	yr 2-11	yr 3-12	yr 4-13	yr 5-14	yr 6-15	yr 7-16	yr 8-17
OMRD	19	20	21	23	24	24	24	24
TMRD	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20
Secure Core	69	69	68	67	67	67	67	67

It should be noted that in this hypothetical example, another project in this subunit would not be possible until year 24, unless that project did not require any changes in values for OMRD, TMRD, or Secure Core.

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.
- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights.

NCDE-STD-AR-04. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, the number of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season shall be limited to one increase to the baseline (see glossary) per decade per bear management unit (BMU) or one increase in overnight capacity per decade per BMU, with the following exceptions:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- the Forest Service adds a developed recreation site or increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but reduces the overnight capacity by an equal amount at another recreation site(s) in the same BMU, so that there is no net increase in overnight capacity in the BMU;
- the Forest Service increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but consolidates and/or eliminates dispersed camping of equal capacity within the same BMU;
- the Forest Service exchanges, buys or sells lands with developed recreation sites.

NCDE-STD-AR-06. Within the NCDE PCA, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, secure core and motorized route density values (OMRD and TMRD) 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, if changes are proposed that increase the number or capacity of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary), one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts should be incorporated into the proposal and should be in place before or concurrent with the implementation of the project.

Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-DC-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

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

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, logging operations should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement (e.g., restricting logging activities to the denning season or prohibiting logging activities during the spring in key spring grizzly bear habitat), as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Other forest 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 substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-02. Within the NCDE PCA, vegetation management activities should be designed 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.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-03. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

Grazing (GRZ)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-DC-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support 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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, issuance of new permits shall incorporate measures needed to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as determined by site-specific analysis. New or re-authorized permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable AUMs when returning to use.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-04. Within the NCDE PCA, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months (AUMs) above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable AUMs 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.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-05. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes of weed control, 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 weed control efforts 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 due to such weed control efforts, 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 PCA, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out cattle grazing or moving the cattle to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02. Within the NCDE PCA, to reduce the potential risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, a sheep grazing permit in non-use status should be phased out. A sheep grazing allotment should be closed if an opportunity arises with a willing permittee.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify, if applicable, 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.

Special Forest Products (SFP)

Desired Conditions

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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-SFP-01. Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) shall include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts (e.g., electric fencing), as determined by a site-specific analysis.

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

Desired Conditions

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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-MIN-01. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), 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 existing rights. Stipulations or measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed, nor will additional stipulations or measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder’s agreement.

NCDE-STD-MIN-02. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a clause providing 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for leasable and locatable 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;
- Grizzly bear attractant storage and sanitation.

NCDE-STD-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new minerals Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), if minerals activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to 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 (RHCAs) 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), if leasable and locatable mineral activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to substantially affect the grizzly bear or its habitat, 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 PCA. 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral operators.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-06. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA), available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

Tobacco Geographic Area (GA)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-Tobacco GA-DC-01. Within the Kootenai NF portion of NCDE Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA) (see figure 3), roads provide for public and administrative access to NFS lands while keeping disturbance and displacement of grizzly bears (during the non-denning season (see glossary)) at levels known to have been compatible with a stable to increasing grizzly bear population in the NCDE. The DCA provides habitat that can be used by female grizzly bears and allows for bear movement between grizzly bear ecosystems.

Standards

NCDE-Tobacco GA-STD-01. Within the Kootenai NF portion of NCDE Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA) (see figure 3), NFS lands shall be managed according to the Record of Decision for the Kootenai NF's Motorized Access Amendment within the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] Forest Service 2011), 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 (pages 62–63 in USDA Forest Service 2011).

NCDE-Tobacco GA-STD-02. Within the Kootenai NF portion of NCDE Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA) (see figure 3), NFS lands which lie outside the area covered by the BORZ Access Amendment (USDA Forest Service 2011) shall be managed according to Kootenai NF plan standards.

Monitoring (MON)

NCDE-MON-01. Within the NCDE PCA, permanent changes in the level of secure core, OMRD (> 1 mi/mi²) and TMRD (> 2 mi/mi²) within each bear management subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-02. Within the NCDE PCA, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands within each BMU will be monitored. Developed recreation sites (e.g., ski areas, campgrounds, sites with cabins, huts, lodges, visitor centers, and trailheads) will be tracked and compared with the baseline. Administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-03. Within the NCDE PCA, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep AUMs within the PCA will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the DCAs), where it is determined there is potential for substantial 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 PCA, the 10-year running average for projects (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by Kootenai NF staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running average allowed by NCDE-STD-AR-03, the rationale will be documented in writing and submitted to the NCDE Coordinating Committee (see glossary).

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 (NF), 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 Service (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 1) and a map of the GBCS management zones on the Lewis and Clark NF (figure 4) that would be affected by this proposed action are provided at the end of this section.

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:

- type of direction (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring)
- level of direction (e.g., GA, = geographic area, and the name of the GA is also included);
- 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 (PCA), 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 PCA, grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE.

Standards

NCDE-STD-WL-01. Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the PCA, Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA and the Ninemile DCA), Zone 2 or Zone 3 (see figure 1 and figure 4).

NCDE-STD-WL-02. Within the NCDE PCA, Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-WL-01. Within the NCDE PCA, contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

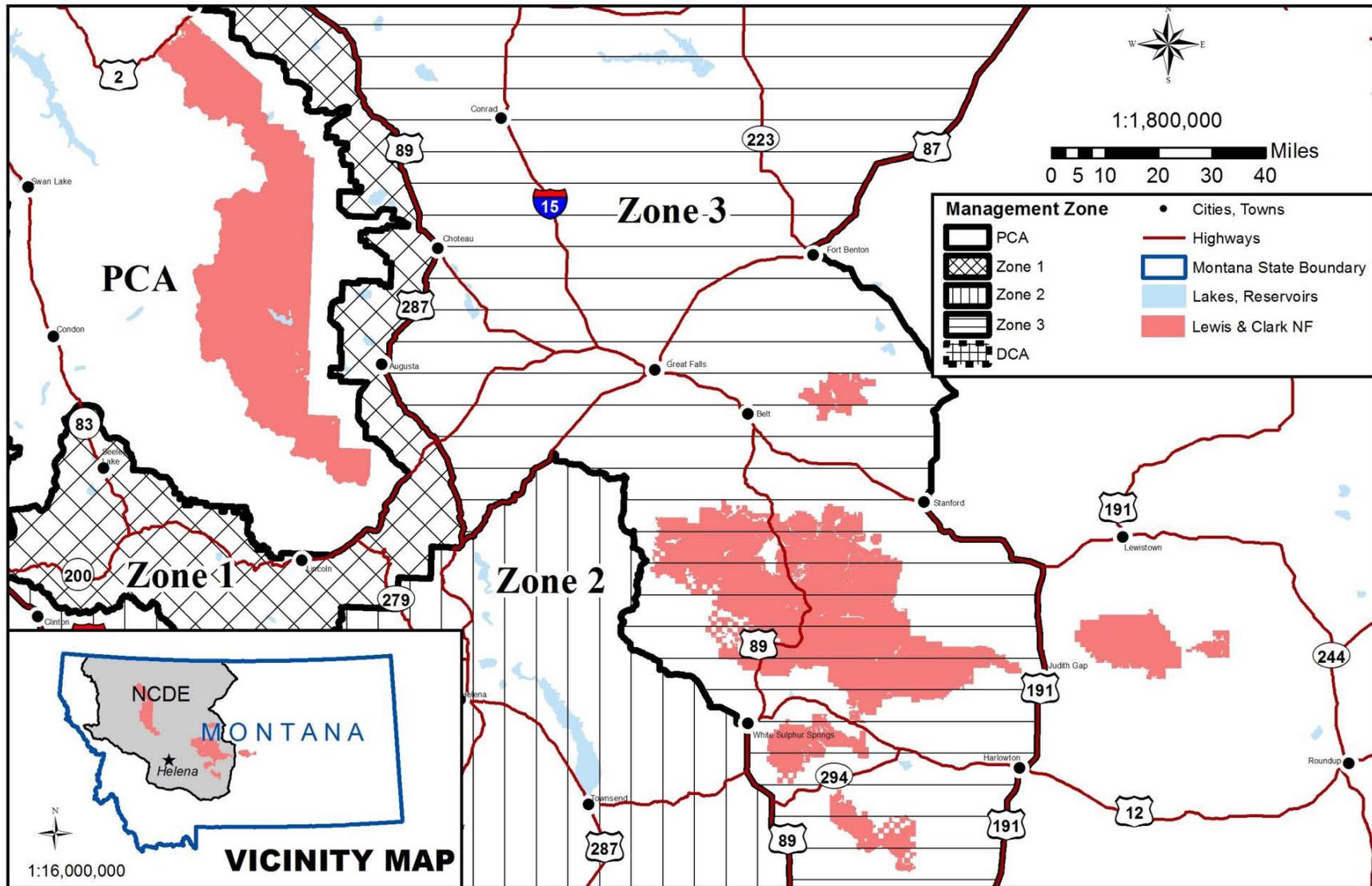


Figure 4. Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Lewis and Clark National Forest

NCDE-GDL-WL-02. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, the use of clover in seed mixes on NFS lands should be discouraged. 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 PCA, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on National Forest System 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.

NCDE-DC-AR-02. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 National Forest System lands.

Standards

NCDE-STD-AR-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for OMRD or TMRD 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)” in the glossary)
- 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) because these types of permitted resource development are subject to existing rights and have a separate set of 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 (often <0.25 mile) 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, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- a change in a motorized route is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

NCDE-STD-AR-03. In each bear management subunit within the NCDE PCA, temporary changes in the OMRD, TMRD 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 OMRD, TMRD, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5% temporary increase in OMRD in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5%);
- 3% temporary increase in TMRD in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3%);
- 2% temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2%).

The following hypothetical example (displayed as Examples 1a and 1b) shows how temporary changes in OMRD, TMRD, and secure core would be implemented for a project.

Example-1a. Values in a bear management subunit for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core for project in years 11 through 14

	Baseline Value	Allowed Value for Project	yr 1	yr 2	yr 3	yr 4	yr 5	yr 6	yr 7	yr 8	yr 9	yr 10	project yr 11	project yr 12	project yr 13	project yr 14	yr 15	yr 16	yr 17
OMRD	19	24	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	31	31	31	31	19	19	19
TMRD	19	22	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	22	22	22	22	19	19	19
Secure Core	69	67	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	63	63	63	63	69	69	69

Example-1b. Using data from Example-1a to show the 10-year running averages for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core before, during, and after project completion

	Before	During				After		
	yr 1-10	yr 2-11	yr 3-12	yr 4-13	yr 5-14	yr 6-15	yr 7-16	yr 8-17
OMRD	19	20	21	23	24	24	24	24
TMRD	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20
Secure Core	69	69	68	67	67	67	67	67

It should be noted that in this hypothetical example, another project in this subunit would not be possible until year 24, unless that project did not require any changes in values for OMRD, TMRD, or secure core.

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.
- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights.

NCDE-STD-AR-04. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, the number of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season shall be limited to one increase to the baseline (see glossary) per decade per bear management unit (BMU) or one increase in overnight capacity per decade per BMU, with the following exceptions:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- the Forest Service adds a developed recreation site or increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but reduces the overnight capacity by an equal amount at another recreation site(s) in the same BMU, so that there is no net increase in overnight capacity in the BMU;
- the Forest Service increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but consolidates and/or eliminates dispersed camping of equal capacity within the same BMU;
- the Forest Service exchanges, buys or sells lands with developed recreation sites.

NCDE-STD-AR-06. Within the NCDE PCA, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, secure core and motorized route density values (OMRD and TMRD) 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, if changes are proposed that increase the number or capacity of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary), one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts should be incorporated into the proposal and should be in place before or concurrent with the implementation of the project.

Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-DC-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

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

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, logging operations should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement (e.g., restricting logging activities to the denning season or prohibiting logging activities during the spring in key spring grizzly bear habitat), as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Other forest 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 substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-02. Within the NCDE PCA, vegetation management activities should be designed 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.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-03. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

Grazing (GRZ)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-DC-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support 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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, issuance of new permits shall incorporate measures needed to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as determined by site-specific analysis. New or re-authorized permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable AUMs when returning to use.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-04. Within the NCDE PCA, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months (AUMs) above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable AUMs 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.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-05. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes of weed control, 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 weed control efforts 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 due to such weed control efforts, 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 PCA, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out cattle grazing or moving the cattle to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02. Within the NCDE PCA, to reduce the potential risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, a sheep grazing permit in non-use status should be phased out. A sheep grazing allotment should be closed if an opportunity arises with a willing permittee.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify, if applicable, 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.

Special Forest Products (SFP)

Desired Conditions

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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-SFP-01. Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) shall include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts (e.g., electric fencing), as determined by a site-specific analysis.

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

Desired Conditions

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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-MIN-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 existing rights. Stipulations or measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed, nor will additional stipulations or measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder’s agreement.

NCDE-STD-MIN-02. Within the NCDE PCA, new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for leasable and locatable 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;
- Grizzly bear attractant storage and sanitation.

NCDE-STD-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA, in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new minerals Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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 PCA, if minerals activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to 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 (RHCAs) 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 PCA, if leasable and locatable mineral activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, 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 PCA, 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 PCA, in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new 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 PCA, 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 PCA, along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA, for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to substantially affect the grizzly bear or its habitat, 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 PCA. 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 PCA, carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral operators.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-06. Within the NCDE PCA, available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

Monitoring (MON)

NCDE-MON-01. Within the NCDE PCA, permanent changes in the level of secure core, OMRD (> 1 mi/mi²) and TMRD (> 2 mi/mi²) within each bear management subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-02. Within the NCDE PCA, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands within each BMU will be monitored. Developed recreation sites (e.g., ski areas, campgrounds, sites with cabins, huts, lodges, visitor centers, and trailheads) will be tracked and compared with the baseline. Administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-03. Within the NCDE PCA, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep AUMs within the PCA will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-04. Within the NCDE PCA, where it is determined there is potential for substantial 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 PCA, the 10-year running average for projects (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by Lewis and Clark NF staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running average allowed by NCDE-STD-AR-03, 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 (NF), 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 Service (NFS) lands. A map of the NCDE (figure 1) and a map of the GBCS management zones on the Lolo NF (figure 5) that would be affected by this proposed action are provided at the end of this section.

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:

- type of direction (where DC = desired condition, STD = standard, GDL = guideline, and MON = monitoring)
- level of direction (e.g., GA, = geographic area, and the name of the GA is also included);
- 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 (PCA), Zone 1 (including the Ninemile demographic connectivity area [DCA]), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands contributes to sustaining a recovered grizzly bear population in the NCDE.

Standards

NCDE-STD-WL-01. Grizzly bear habitat on NFS lands in the NCDE shall be delineated and managed as the PCA, Zone 1 (including the Salish DCA and the Ninemile DCA), Zone 2 or Zone 3 (see figure 1 and figure 5).

NCDE-STD-WL-02. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) shall apply to all NFS lands.

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-WL-01. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), contractors, permittees, lessees, operators, and their employees should be informed of Food/Wildlife Attractant Storage Special Order(s) prior to beginning work and annually thereafter, in order to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

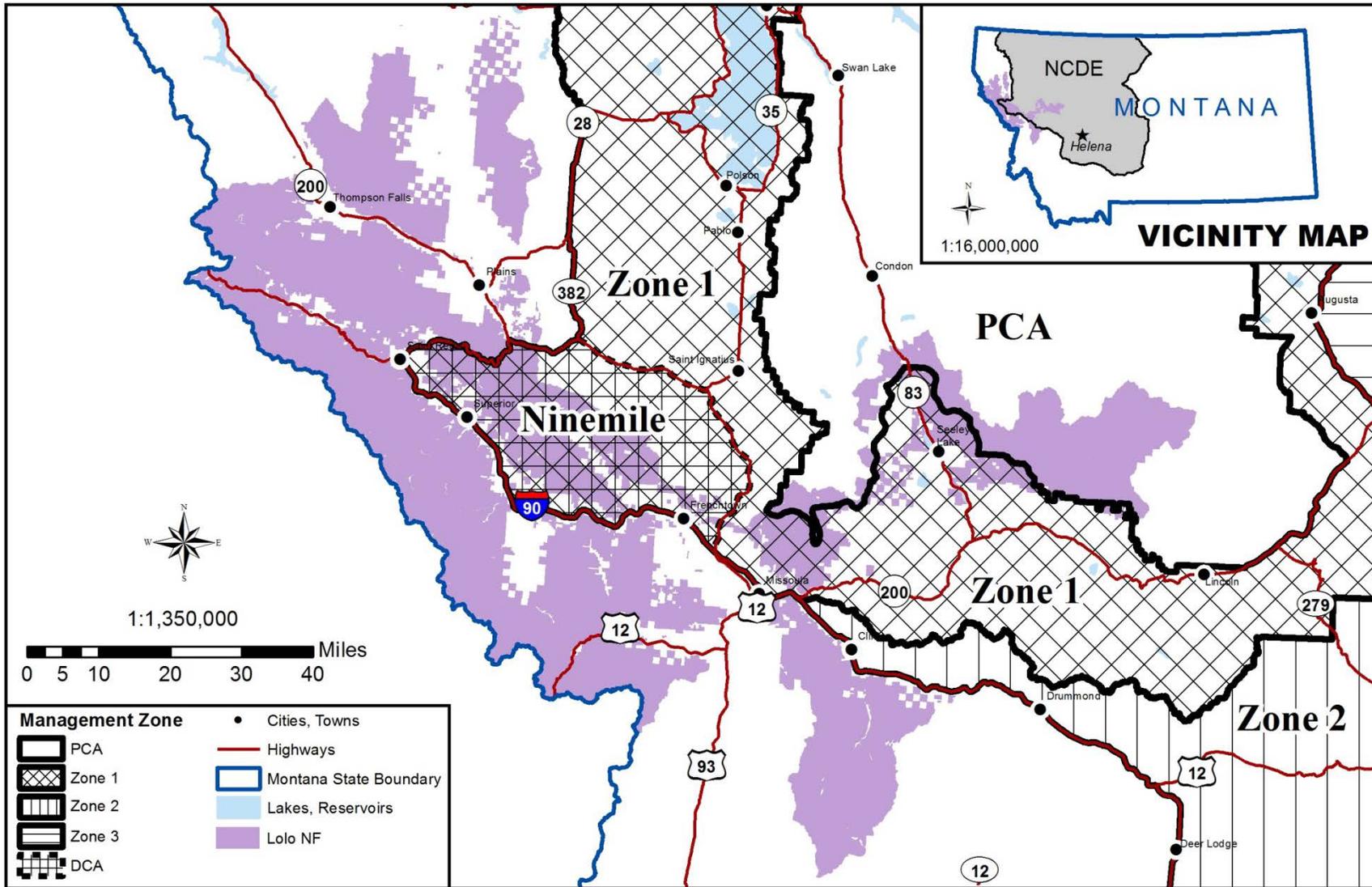


Figure 5. Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy management zones on the Lolo National Forest

NCDE-GDL-WL-02. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), the use of clover in seed mixes on NFS lands should be discouraged. 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 PCA, motorized access provides for multiple uses (such as harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products; hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities) on National Forest System 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.

NCDE-DC-AR-02. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 National Forest System lands.

Standards

NCDE-STD-AR-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, there shall be no net decrease to the baseline (see glossary) for secure core and no net increase to the baseline for OMRD or TMRD 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)” in the glossary)
- 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) because these types of permitted resource development are subject to existing rights and have a separate set of 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 (often <0.25 mile) 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, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change is made by an adjacent landowner that decreases secure core or increases motorized route densities on a particular national forest;
- a change in a motorized route is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

NCDE-STD-AR-03. In each bear management subunit within the NCDE PCA, temporary changes in the OMRD, TMRD 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 OMRD, TMRD, and secure core numeric parameters shall not exceed the following limits per bear management subunit:

- 5% temporary increase in OMRD in each subunit (i.e., OMRD baseline plus 5%);
- 3% temporary increase in TMRD in each subunit (i.e., TMRD baseline plus 3%);
- 2% temporary decrease in secure core in each subunit (i.e., secure core baseline minus 2%).

The following hypothetical example (displayed as Examples 1a and 1b) shows how temporary changes in OMRD, TMRD, and secure core would be implemented for a project.

Example-1a. Values in a bear management subunit for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core for project in years 11 through 14

	Baseline Value	Allowed Value for Project	yr 1	yr 2	yr 3	yr 4	yr 5	yr 6	yr 7	yr 8	yr 9	yr 10	project yr 11	project yr 12	project yr 13	project yr 14	yr 15	yr 16	yr 17
OMRD	19	24	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	31	31	31	31	19	19	19
TMRD	19	22	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	22	22	22	22	19	19	19
Secure Core	69	67	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	63	63	63	63	69	69	69

Example-1b. Using data from Example-1a to show the 10-year running averages for OMRD, TMRD, and secure core before, during, and after project completion

	Before	During				After		
	yr 1-10	yr 2-11	yr 3-12	yr 4-13	yr 5-14	yr 6-15	yr 7-16	yr 8-17
OMRD	19	20	21	23	24	24	24	24
TMRD	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20
Secure Core	69	69	68	67	67	67	67	67

It should be noted that in this hypothetical example, another project in this subunit would not be possible until year 24, unless that project did not require any changes in values for OMRD, TMRD, or Secure Core.

Exceptions to this standard include:

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.
- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights.

NCDE-STD-AR-04. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, the number of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season shall be limited to one increase to the baseline (see glossary) per decade per bear management unit (BMU) or one increase in overnight capacity per decade per BMU, with the following exceptions:

- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to comply with Federal laws (e.g., Federal Rehabilitation Act);
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is necessary to address grizzly bear–human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change in the number or overnight capacity of developed recreation sites is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- the Forest Service adds a developed recreation site or increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but reduces the overnight capacity by an equal amount at another recreation site(s) in the same BMU, so that there is no net increase in overnight capacity in the BMU;
- the Forest Service increases the overnight capacity of a developed recreation site, but consolidates and/or eliminates dispersed camping of equal capacity within the same BMU;
- the Forest Service exchanges, buys or sells lands with developed recreation sites.

NCDE-STD-AR-06. Within the NCDE PCA, new or re-authorized recreation permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;

- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, secure core and motorized route density values (OMRD and TMRD) 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 to this guideline include:

- contracts, permits, and leases which are subject to existing rights;
- prescribed burning (including slash disposal), best management practices to protect water quality, and required reforestation activities;
- emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2.

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 PCA, if changes are proposed that increase the number or capacity of developed recreation sites that are open during the non-denning season above the baseline (see glossary), one or more measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts should be incorporated into the proposal and should be in place before or concurrent with the implementation of the project.

Terrestrial Ecosystems Vegetation (VEG)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-DC-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

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

Guidelines

NCDE-GDL-VEG-01. Within the NCDE PCA, logging operations should be restricted in time and space if needed to reduce the potential for substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement (e.g., restricting logging activities to the denning season or prohibiting logging activities during the spring in key spring grizzly bear habitat), as determined by site-specific analysis. *Note:* Other forest 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 substantial grizzly bear disturbance/displacement.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-02. Within the NCDE PCA, vegetation management activities should be designed 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.

NCDE-GDL-VEG-03. Within the NCDE PCA, 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.

Grazing (GRZ)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-DC-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, the number, capacity of, and improvements on cattle and sheep grazing allotments support 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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-GRZ-01. Within the NCDE PCA, issuance of new permits shall incorporate measures needed to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, as determined by site-specific analysis. New or re-authorized permits shall include a clause providing 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 PCA, a grazing permit in non-use status shall not be allowed to increase allowable AUMs when returning to use.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, permits for livestock grazing shall include a provision that requires reporting livestock carcasses within 24 hours of discovery. Bone yards shall not be established on NFS lands.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-04. Within the NCDE PCA, there shall be no increase in the number of active sheep allotments or in permitted sheep animal unit months (AUMs) above the baseline (see glossary) on NFS lands. Allowable AUMs 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.

NCDE-STD-GRZ-05. Within the NCDE PCA, 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 PCA, temporary permits for grazing by small livestock for purposes of weed control, 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 weed control efforts 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 due to such weed control efforts, 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 PCA, where recurring grizzly bear–human conflicts occur on cattle allotments and an opportunity exists with a willing permittee, the Forest Service should consider phasing out cattle grazing or moving the cattle to a vacant allotment where there is less likelihood of grizzly bear–human conflicts.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-02. Within the NCDE PCA, to reduce the potential risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts, a sheep grazing permit in non-use status should be phased out. A sheep grazing allotment should be closed if an opportunity arises with a willing permittee.

NCDE-GDL-GRZ-03. Within the NCDE PCA, an allotment management plan and Plan of Operations should specify, if applicable, 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.

Special Forest Products (SFP)

Desired Conditions

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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-SFP-01. Special use permits for apiaries (beehives) shall include measures to reduce the risk of grizzly bear–human conflicts (e.g., electric fencing), as determined by a site-specific analysis.

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

Desired Conditions

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.

Standards

NCDE-STD-MIN-01. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), 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 existing rights. Stipulations or measures already included in existing leases, permits, or Plans of Operations on NFS lands shall not be changed, nor will additional stipulations or measures be added, without the lease, permit, or Plan of Operation holder’s agreement.

NCDE-STD-MIN-02. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), new or re-authorized permits, leases, and/or Plans of Operation shall include a clause providing 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases for leasable and locatable 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;
- Grizzly bear attractant storage and sanitation.

NCDE-STD-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), in addition to measures included in the Food/Wildlife Attractant Special Order(s), new minerals Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), if minerals activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, new Plans of Operation, permits, and/or leases 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, reasonable and appropriate measures shall be taken to 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 (RHCAs) 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), if leasable and locatable mineral activities have the potential to substantially affect grizzly bears or their habitat, 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), in addition to forest-wide guidelines, the following guidelines apply to new 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), along motorized routes, seismic corridors, and pipelines constructed for leasable energy activities, cover should be maintained at regular intervals in order to provide habitat connectivity for grizzly bears.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), for locatable and non-energy leasable minerals activities with the potential to substantially affect the grizzly bear or its habitat, 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 PCA. 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 PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), carrying of bear spray should be recommended to mineral operators.

NCDE-GDL-MIN-06. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), available resources at existing gravel pits should be used before constructing new pits.

Clark Fork Geographic Area (GA)

Desired Conditions

NCDE-Clark Fork GA-DC-01. Within the Lolo NF portion of NCDE Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA)(see figure 5), roads provide for public and administrative access to NFS lands while keeping disturbance and displacement of grizzly bears (during the non-denning season (see glossary)) at levels known to have been compatible with a stable to increasing grizzly bear population in the NCDE. The Ninemile DCA provides habitat that can be used by female grizzly bears and allows for bear movement between grizzly bear ecosystems.

Standards

NCDE-Clark Fork GA-STD-01. Within the Lolo NF portion of NCDE Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA) on the Lolo NF (see figure 5), there shall be no net increase in miles of roads open to public motorized use on NFS lands above the baseline (see glossary). 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 (often < 0.25 miles) 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) because these types of permitted resource development are subject to existing rights and have a separate set of standards and guidelines;
- a change in an open road is necessary to address grizzly bear-human conflicts, resource damage, or human safety concerns;
- a change in an open road is made that has been evaluated through the USFWS Section 7 consultation process and was shown to be acceptable while grizzly bears were listed as Threatened under the ESA;
- motorized use for emergency situations as defined by 36 CFR 215.2;
- temporary roads (see glossary).

Guidelines

Clark Fork GA-STD-NCDE/Ninemile DCA-01. Within the Lolo NF portion of the Ninemile DCA, 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 PCA, permanent changes in the level of secure core, OMRD (> 1 mi/mi²) and TMRD (> 2 mi/mi²) within each bear management subunit, will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-02. Within the NCDE PCA, the number and overnight capacity of developed recreation sites on NFS lands within each BMU will be monitored. Developed recreation sites (e.g., ski areas, campgrounds, sites with cabins, huts, lodges, visitor centers, and trailheads) will be tracked and compared with the baseline. Administrative sites (see glossary) will also be monitored. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-03. Within the NCDE PCA, the numbers of commercial livestock grazing allotments and the numbers of sheep AUMs within the PCA will be monitored and compared to the baseline. The information is to be reported biennially.

NCDE-MON-04. Within the NCDE PCA and Zone 1 (including the Ninemile DCA), where it is determined there is potential for substantial 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 PCA, the 10-year running average for projects (see “project (in grizzly bear habitat in the NCDE)” in the glossary) will be monitored by Lolo NF staff and documented for each project. If the 10-year running average allowed by NCDE-STD-AR-03, the rationale will be documented in writing and submitted to the NCDE Coordinating Committee (see glossary).

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 CFR 219.17(b)(2)).

The Helena, Lewis and Clark, and Lolo NF plans were written under the requirements of the 1982 Planning Rule. The Kootenai NF plan was written under the requirements of the 1982 Planning Rule, via the transition allowances of the 2000 Planning Rule. Thus, 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.

Finally, the Forest Service will conduct the amendment for the amendment forests concurrently with the Flathead NF 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 consistency, efficiency and transparency in the planning process.

Appendix A: Abbreviations and Glossary

Abbreviations

AUM	animal unit month
BMU	bear management unit
BORZ	bears outside recovery zone
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DCA	demographic connectivity area
GA	geographic area
GBCS	grizzly bear conservation strategy
NCDE	Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem
NF	National Forest
NFS	National Forest System
OMRD	open motorized route density
PCA	primary conservation area
RHCA	riparian habitat conservation area
TMRD	total motorized route density
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

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 National Forest Service 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 is defined as December 31, 2011, as modified by exceptions specified in the standards or guidelines. The baseline will be updated to reflect exceptions allowed under the standards and guidelines.

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 mi² [Mace and Roberts 2012]).

bear management unit an area about 400 m², 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).

capacity the number of people that an overnight developed recreation site is designed to accommodate.

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 National Forest System (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 215.2)

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.

motorized route a National Forest Service (NFS) road or NFS 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 110,636 sq. km. of 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 (GBCS), 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 GBCS. Member of the interagency group may include Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; U.S. Fish & 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 (PCA) 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 PCA would receive the most stringent protection. The PCA is the same area as the NCDE Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone identified in the Grizzly Bear 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 National Forest System 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.

- 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.
- 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.

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, Forest Service Manual 7705):

- 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.
- forest road or trail: A route wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest Service (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)
- 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.
- National Forest System: 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)
- 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.

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 (PCA) in the NCDE, where the intent is to maintain occupancy by grizzly bears, but at expected lower densities than inside the PCA. 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. Grizzly bear occupancy will not be actively discouraged in zone 3 and the management emphasis will be on conflict response.