

CHAPTER 1 – PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The USDA Forest Service is proposing to designate routes for public, motorized wheeled-vehicle travel on the Emmett Ranger District (RD) of the Boise National Forest (NF). The purpose of the project is to meet the requirements of the Travel Management Rule (issued November 9, 2005) through designating roads, trails, and areas for motorized vehicle use. Motor vehicle route designation decisions must be made locally, with public input, and in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments. This project does not address over-snow vehicle use.

The Forest Service has prepared this environmental assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 40 CFR 1500-1508), the National Forest Management Act (NFMA and its implementing regulations of 2008, including 36 CFR 219.2(c) and the transition provisions at 36 CFR 219.14), and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. Development of this EA and the analysis within is based upon the direction contained in the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Boise NF (Forest Plan) (USDA, Forest Service, 2003a). This EA summarizes the environmental impacts assessed to date that would result from the proposed action, alternatives to the proposed action, and a no-action alternative. Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the Emmett RD Office in Emmett, Idaho. Planning for this project was initiated in the fall of 2008.

1.2 DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

This EA incorporates by reference the project record (40 CFR §1502.21, 2007). The project record contains specialist reports and other technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusions in this EA.

Detailed information that supports the analyses presented in this document, unless specifically noted otherwise, is contained in the project planning record located at the Emmett RD Office.

This document consists of the following main chapters:

Chapter 1 – Purpose and Need for Action: Describes the Proposed Action, purpose and need of the action, decisions to be made, Forest Plan consistency, regulatory requirements and required coordination, public involvement, and identification of significant NEPA issues.

Chapter 2 – Alternatives: Includes project design features and/or mitigation measures, descriptions of the alternatives considered in detail, alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study, and a comparative summary of the environmental consequences of each alternative analyzed in detail.

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences: Describes the existing conditions of the resources within affected areas and the environmental impacts of the alternatives on those resources.

Chapter 4 – Consultation and Coordination: Provides a list of the primary preparers of this document; a list of agencies, organizations, and persons who were consulted or from whom scoping were received.

Two appendices follow the main chapters:

Appendix A – Detailed Description of All Alternatives Considered in Detail. This appendix lists all road segments considered in this project, and how each would be addressed in each of the alternatives considered in detail.

Appendix B – Cumulative Effects Tables and Maps. This appendix describes the past, present and foreseeable future actions considered in the cumulative effects analysis.

1.3 LOCATION AND PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION

The proposed Emmett RD “E” Area Motorized Wheeled Vehicle Travel Management project is located approximately 47 miles north of Boise, Idaho in both Boise and Valley Counties (Figure 1.1). The project area is composed of approximately 241,293 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands. The majority of the project area occurs within portions of the Middle Fork Payette and western portion of the South Fork Payette sub-basins. These acres include all areas on the Ranger District that currently lack a fully designated motorized road and trail system. These areas are identified as “E” travel management areas on the Boise NF Visitor/Travel Map. In addition, the project area includes an area identified as “D” travel management area immediately adjacent to the “E” areas¹. “E” travel management areas and the adjacent “D” travel management area will be referred to as “project area” from this point forward.

¹ In the late 1980s, the Boise National Forest established travel management areas with travel restrictions to enable safe travel, protect natural and cultural resources, separate motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities, and minimize user conflicts. The travel management areas refer to off-trail and off-road area, not designated Forest Service roads and trails. Currently, in “D” travel management areas use of motorized wheeled vehicles is allowed on designated Forest Service roads and trails only. In “E” travel management areas off-road and off-trail motorized wheeled vehicle use is discouraged, but not prohibited (Boise National Forest Visitor/Travel Map, 2000). Subsequently, the 2004 Off Highway Vehicle Travel Management Project prohibited indiscriminate cross country travel in “E” travel management areas but allowed motorized wheeled vehicle use on designated Forest Service roads and trails and established but unauthorized routes (USDA, Forest Service 2004).

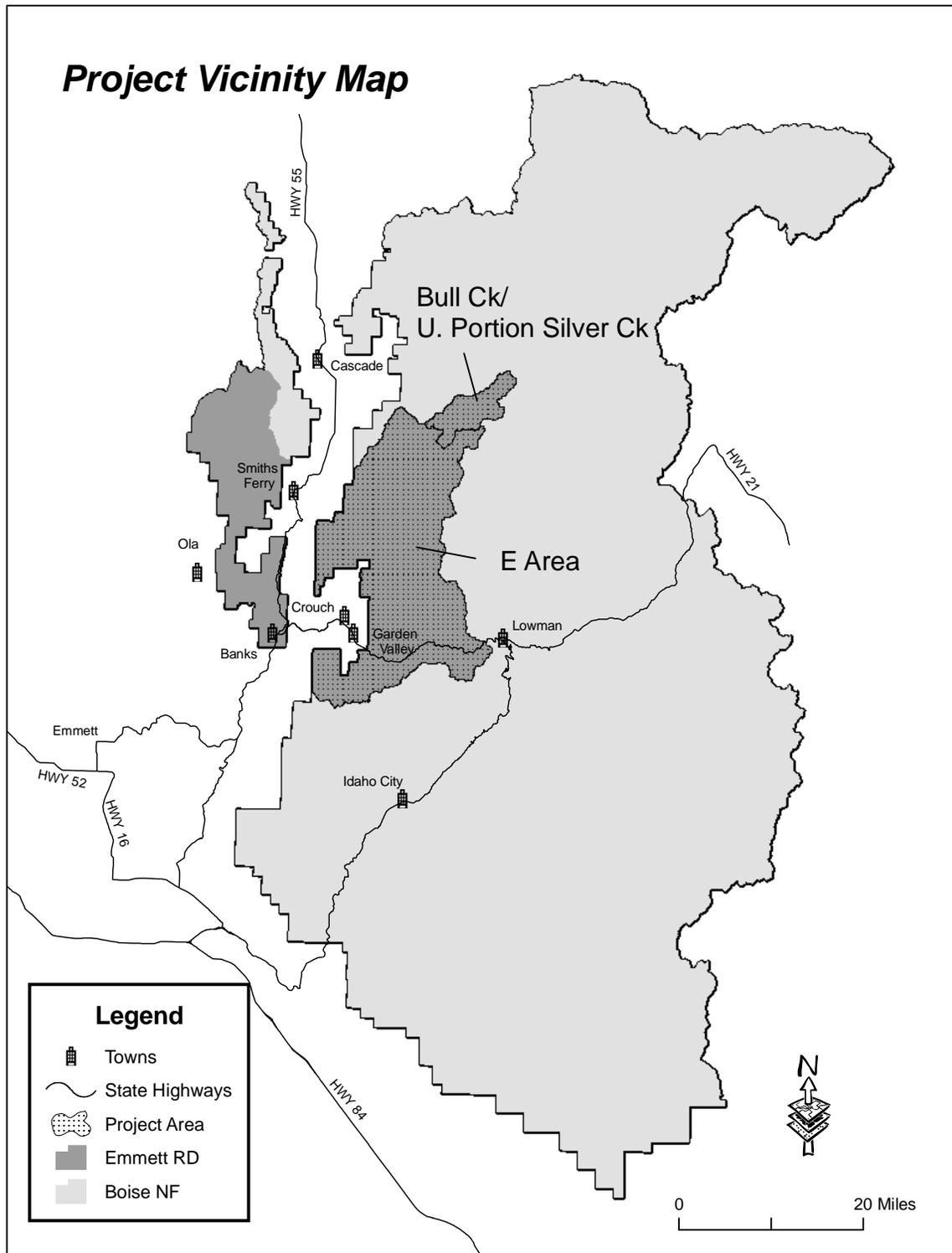


Figure 1.1 – Emmett RD “E” Area Motorized Wheeled Vehicle Travel Management Project Area Vicinity Map.

1.4 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2004, the Chief of the Forest Service cited four major threats to NFS lands. One of these threats included “unmanaged outdoor recreation.” To address this issue, the Forest Service developed a national strategy to evaluate recreational motor vehicle use on NFS lands. The strategy would work towards resolving issues such as damage to wetlands, wildlife habitat and fragile soils, disturbance to wildlife, spread of noxious weeds, and conflicts between recreationists. Following a national public comment process, this strategy was then formalized as new national travel management regulations and published as a “final rule” in the Federal Register in 2005². (Final directives, which provide Forest Service direction to field units, for the travel management regulations were published in the Federal Register on December 9, 2008 [73 Federal Register 74689-74703]).

The final rule, entitled, “Travel Management - Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use,” became effective in December 2005 and revises several regulations to require designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use on National Forests and National Grasslands. To meet the direction and intent of the final travel management rule, every National Forest and grassland unit is to develop or revise their travel management plan for motorized vehicle use by 2009 as needed to provide for motorized vehicle travel on designated routes and areas only.

Highlights of the Travel Management Rule are:

- Each National Forest or Ranger District is to designate those roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicles.
- Designation will include class of vehicle and, if appropriate, time of year for motor vehicle use.
- Once the designation process is complete, the rule will prohibit motor vehicle use off the designated system or use that is inconsistent with the designations.
- Designation decisions will be made locally, with public input and in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments.

To meet these new regulations, the Forest Service began the process to designate motorized routes and areas within the portions of the Emmett RD that were incompletely designated. These areas, identified as “E” Travel Management Areas on the Boise NF Visitor/Travel Map, are considered “incompletely designated” relative to the National Travel Management Rule, since motorized travel is currently allowed on both Forest Service designated routes, as well as established, but unauthorized routes.

Following the environmental analysis process, the Forest Service would produce a Motor Vehicle Use Map that would display all roads, trails, and areas designated for public motorized vehicle use, excluding over-snow vehicles, across the Emmett RD.

² 70 FR 68264 – 68291, November 9, 2005. A “rule” establishes enforceable regulations that have gone through a national public process.

1.5 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action would limit public motorized wheeled-vehicle travel to a system of designated roads, trails, and areas within the project area. The proposed action would change the existing motorized travel management situation from one of being “open for motorized use, unless specifically ordered closed and posted closed” to one of “closed for motorized vehicle use, unless specifically designated and mapped open”. Motorized wheeled-vehicle use off-road to access a campsite within 300 feet of a road designated for motorized use, or within 100 feet of a trail designated for motorized use, would continue.

The Proposed Action is described in detail in Section 2.3.2 and in Appendix A of this EA. The proposed action would designate approximately 416 miles out of the existing 557 miles of known and currently used motorized routes within the project area.³ This would include:

- Designating about 1 mile of known established but unauthorized routes for public motorized wheeled-vehicle travel open to all vehicles to provide access to dispersed campsites.
- Designating about 262 miles of the current 280 miles of authorized NFS roads open to all vehicles.
- Decommissioning 6 miles of authorized NFS roads currently open to all vehicles. In addition, about 3 miles of authorized NFS roads not currently accessible to motorized vehicles would be decommissioned and removed from the forest transportation system.
- Designating about 104 miles of NFS trails for vehicles 50” or less to provide off-highway vehicle (OHV) opportunities.
- Closing approximately 84 miles of existing NFS Maintenance Level 1 roads currently open to motorized travel but which represent dead-end routes.
- Designating about 50 miles of NFS trails open to motorcycle use only.

1.6 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

1.6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this action is to successfully and uniformly implement the Forest Service’s Travel Management Rule (36 CFR §261.13, 2007)⁴ within the project area. The Forest Service’s designation of motorized wheeled-vehicle routes is intended to provide a sustainable and manageable system of motorized routes while protecting resources and addressing social conflicts.

³ The Forest Service has identified about 522 miles of existing designated motorized routes and about 35 miles of existing unauthorized routes within the project area for a total of 557 miles.

⁴ “After National Forest System roads, National Forest System trails, and areas on National Forest System lands have been designated pursuant to 36 CFR 212.51 on an administrative unit or a Ranger District of the National Forest System, and these designations have been identified on a motor vehicle use map, it is prohibited to possess or operate a motor vehicle on National Forest System lands in that administrative unit or Ranger District other than in accordance with those designations...” (36 CFR 261.13).

1.6.2 Need

The Forest Service's Travel Management Rule provides an opportunity to substantially enhance the Forest Service's ability to inform, manage, and administer motorized wheeled-vehicle uses on the Emmett RD. In order to meet the intent of the Travel Management Rule, the Emmett Ranger District needs to designate the routes available for motorized wheeled travel.

In order to comply with the Forest Service's Travel Management Rule, motorized routes within the project area must be designated through a public involvement process. Currently, public motorized wheeled-vehicle travel within the project area on the Emmett RD consists of Forest Service authorized roads and trails as well as established unauthorized routes. Travel management policies, along with the ever-increasing amount of OHV use in Idaho (see Figure 1.2) has created an extensive network of unauthorized motorized routes. This existing network of routes and the associated use create problems that require agency action.

Allowing public motorized use on routes that are not part of the authorized Forest Service transportation system prevents the agency from effectively managing this use to minimize resource impacts and social conflicts and from achieving greater compliance with motorized travel restrictions.

Under the current travel management policy in these areas, the Forest Service can not inventory, display all the existing motorized routes, and inform the public of motorized/non-motorized opportunities. Because of this, forest visitors cannot benefit from available motorized opportunities or avoid areas where motorized routes exist. Finally, the existing Forest Special Order closures across the project area make it difficult for the public to comply with and the Forest Service to enforce the current travel management policy.



Established but unauthorized route off NFS road 693 (Photo taken in 2005). Under the project proposal, this route would not be designated for motorized use.

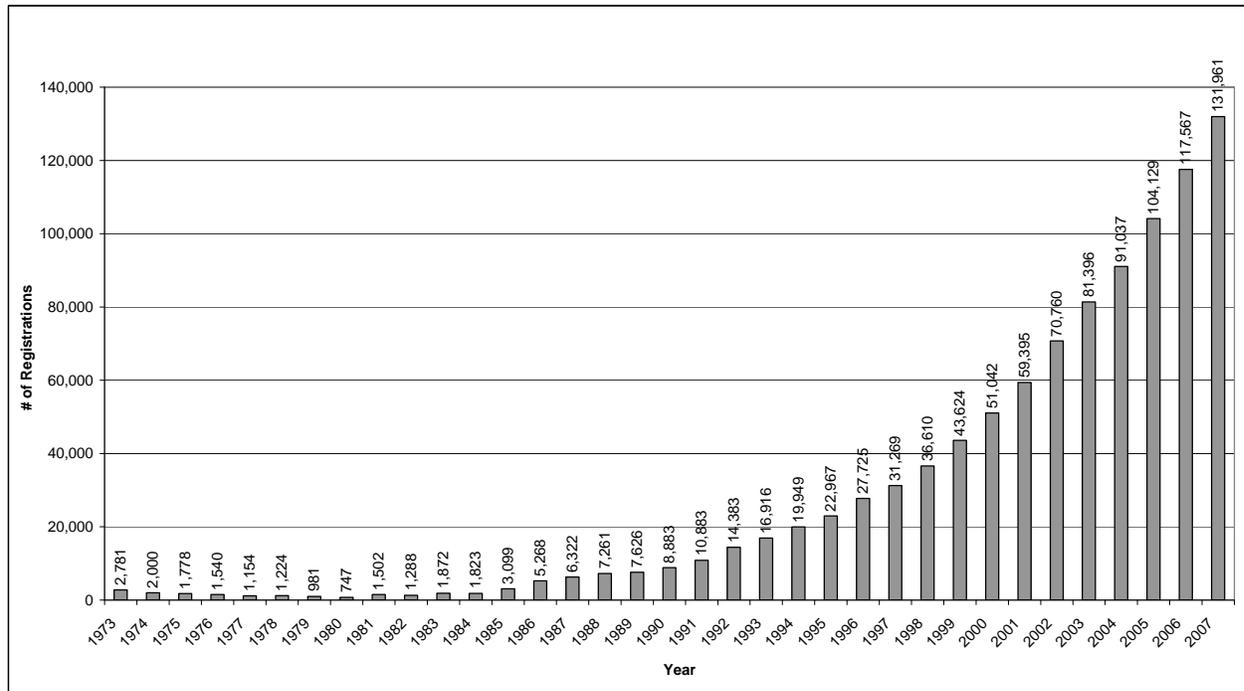


Figure 1.2 – Idaho Off-Highway Vehicle Registrations 1973 - 2007 (data provided by the Idaho Parks and Recreation).

1.6.3 Decisions to be Made

The District Ranger will serve as the responsible official for this project. After considering the environmental effects disclosed in this document, the District Ranger will make the following decisions for motorized wheeled-vehicle travel on the Emmett RD:

- What changes in the roads, trails, or areas designated for motorized use should occur within the project area?
- What type of motorized vehicles should be allowed on these roads and trails in the project area?
- In which season(s) should such motorized uses be allowed?

1.7 CONSISTENCY WITH LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

This EA has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 40 CFR §§1500-1508, 2007), the National Forest Management Act (36 CFR Part 219, 2007), and the 2003 Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

This EA is tiered to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and planning record supporting the 2003 revised Forest Plan, including documentation related to the Continuous Assessment and Planning (CAP) process described in Chapters III and IV of the Forest Plan. This documentation includes monitoring reports, implementation guides, and errata and

corrections to the 2003 FEIS and Forest Plan. Documented analyses in the Forest Plan FEIS have been referenced rather than repeated in some instances. Analyses pertaining to the FEIS for the 2003 Forest Plan are contained in the Forest Planning record located at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Boise, Idaho.

This EA is tiered to the 2004 EA for the Boise National Forest's Off-Highway Vehicle Travel Management Project (USDA, Forest Service, 2004). That decision prohibited cross-country travel and limited motorized wheeled travel in all the "E" Travel Management Areas on the Boise National Forest to established roads and trails only, with limited exceptions.

1.7.1 Forest Plan Management Direction

The project area lies within Forest Plan Management Areas (MAs):

- **MA 9** – Harris Creek (Forest Plan, p. III-192 – III-201);
- **MA 11** – Lower South Fork Payette River (Forest Plan, p. III-216 – III-229);
- **MA 14** – Lower Middle Fork Payette River (Forest Plan, p. III-254 – III-265);
- **MA 15** – Upper Middle Fork Payette River (Forest Plan, p. III-266 – III-277); and
- **MA 17** – North Fork Payette River (Forest Plan, p. III-290 – III-301).

Forest Plan Management Prescription Categories (MPCs) (Forest Plan, p. III-81 – III-90) that apply to the project area include:

- **MPC 2.2** – Research Natural Areas. The entire Eggers Creek Research Natural Area falls within the project area (Section 3.8);
- **MPC 3.2** – Active Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources;
- **MPC 4.1c** – Undeveloped Recreation: Maintain Unroaded Character with Allowance for Restoration Activities. Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) are included in this MPC. Portions of 6 IRAs fall within the project area (Section 3.11);
- **MPC 5.1** – Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Forested Landscapes; and
- **MPC 5.2** – Commodity Production Emphasis within Forested Landscapes.

The project area includes an approximately 20-mile segment of the Middle Fork Payette River, and an estimated 19-mile section of the South Fork Payette River considered "eligible" as a potential Wild and Scenic Rivers pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 USC 1271-1287, P.L. 90-542, 10/02/68) and the Forest Plan ROD (Forest Plan, p. 3-875; USDA, Forest Service, 2003d, p. ROD-24). MPC 2.1 (Wild and Scenic Rivers and Their Corridors) applies only to those areas that have been Congressionally "designated" as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational Rivers. Since these segments of the Middle Fork and South Fork Payette Rivers have not been designated by Congress, MPC 2.1 does not apply. Nevertheless, Forest Plan management direction for these "eligible" segments were developed, and are applicable, to help retain the free-flowing status, classification, and outstandingly remarkable values (Section 3.12).

1.7.1.1 Forest Plan Goals and Objectives

The Proposed Action and action alternatives are designed to address the following Forest Plan goals and objectives:

- Goal FRGO01 – Provide and Maintain a safe, efficient Forest transportation system that meets resource management and access needs, while mitigating degrading resource effects (Forest Plan, III-58);
- Goal REGO04 – Manage recreation uses and facilities to mitigate degrading effects from recreation to other resources (Forest Plan, III-62);
- Goal REGO05 – Manage Motorized and non-motorized travel and travel-related facilities to:
 - a) Provide for public safety,
 - b) Meet resource objectives and access needs,
 - c) Mitigate road and trail damage, and
 - d) Minimize maintenance costs and user conflicts (Forest Plan, p. III-62);
- Objective FROB01 – Analyze road system needs and associated resource effects in accordance with the established agency policy direction for roads analysis (Forest Plan, III-58);
- Objective FROB04 – During fine-scale analyses, identify opportunities to reduce road related degrading effects to help achieve other resource objectives (Forest Plan, p. III-58);
- Objective FROB06 – Identify roads and facilities that are not needed for land and resource management, and evaluate for disposal or decommissioning (Forest Plan, p. III-59);
- Objective REOB20 – During fine scale analyses in areas where recreational trails are identified as a potential concern or problem contributing to degradation to other resources, evaluate, and document the location of the trail degradation and prioritize opportunities to mitigate effects (Forest Plan, p. III-63);
- Management Area(s) Recreation Objective(s) 0931, 1140, 1444, and 1559 - The Forest Plan specifies certain percentages of Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classifications within the management areas as objectives to achieve or maintain over the period covered by the Forest Plan (Forest Plan, p. III-200, III-226, III-264, and III-276);
- MA11 Facility and Roads Objective 1159 – Evaluate the transportation systems in Danskin and Wash Creek drainages to determine management of ATV use and identify ATV opportunities (Forest Plan, p. III-227);
- MA11 Special Feature Objective 1161 – Maintain public access to the firefighters memorial up Danskin Creek (Forest Plan, p. III-227);

- MA14 Recreation Objective 1437 – Identify and provide OHV opportunities on designated roads throughout the management area to enhance motorized recreation opportunities and experiences (Forest Plan, p. III-263);
- MA14 Recreation Objective 1439 – Coordinate with the Lowman RD to resolve inconsistent management of the Lightning Ridge Trail (Forest Plan, III-263);
- MA15 Recreation Objective 1540 – Provide opportunities for off-road motorized travel that are not detrimental to resources. Identify and develop off-road motorized use opportunities, where appropriate, on the west side of Silver Creek to enhance motorized recreation opportunities (Forest Plan, p. III-275);
- MA15 Recreation Objective 1555 – Access impacts from motorized uses across the management area. If the assessment determines a need, restrict motorized use to locations that reduce impacts to acceptable levels (Forest Plan, III-276) and
- MA15 Facility and Roads Objective 1573 – Evaluate closing or decommissioning Forest Road 6711 on the south side of Silver Creek to prevent motorized vehicles from crossing the creek (Forest Plan, p. III-277).

1.7.1.2 Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines

Many Forest Plan standards and guidelines (both Forestwide and at the management area level) are relevant to this project. A list of these standards and guidelines, along with project consistency analysis, can be found in the project record.

1.7.2 36 CFR §§ 212, 251, 261, and 296 Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use.

These regulations address travel management on NFS-managed public lands related to motor vehicle use, including the use of OHVs. The final rule requires designation of those roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicle use. Designations will be made by class of vehicle and, if appropriate, by the season of use. The final rule also prohibits the use of motor vehicles off the designated system, as well as use of motor vehicles on routes and in areas that are not consistent with the designations.

National direction for travel management, specifically off-road use of motor vehicles on federal lands, is provided by Executive Order (E.O.) 11644 (February 8, 1972) as amended by E.O. 11989 (May 24, 1977). These executive orders direct federal agencies to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands. Forest Service rules at 36 CFR Part 295 (2007) codify the requirements in E.O. 11644 and E.O. 11989.

Regulations regarding travel management on NFS lands were modified in 2005 (36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, 295 “Travel Management – Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use”, Federal Register 2005: 70 FR 68264 (November 9, 2005)). The Travel Management Rule cannot be applied until the Forest Service decides the routes upon which motorized wheeled-vehicle travel is authorized. This EA is intended to facilitate that decision so the rule can be applied. (Final directives, which provide Forest Service direction to field units, for the

travel management regulations were published in the Federal Register on December 9, 2008 [73 Federal Register 74689-74703]).

1.7.3 Clean Water Act

The proposed action and alternatives are consistent with the Clean Water Act and its amendments. Effects to water quality and fisheries are disclosed in section 3.6 of this EA.

1.7.4 Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species, and Forest Watch Plants

The Endangered Species Act (ESA, 16 U.S.C. 35 §§ 1531 et seq. 1988) provides for the protection and conservation of threatened and endangered plant and animal species. All action alternatives were assessed to determine their effects on threatened and endangered plant and animal species. A Biological Assessment will be prepared and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed before making a decision on this project.

1.7.5 Migratory Bird Treaty Act

All alternatives would comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This project may however result in an “unintentional take” of individuals during proposed activities. However the project complies with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director’s Order 131 related to the applicability of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to federal agencies and requirements for permits for “take.” In addition, this project complies with Executive Order 13186 because the analysis meets agency obligations as defined under the January 16, 2001 Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designed to complement Executive Order 13186. Migratory bird species are analyzed and discussed in Chapter 3 of this EA (section 3.4). If new requirements or direction result from subsequent interagency memorandums of understanding pursuant to Executive Order 13186, this project would be evaluated to ensure that it is consistent.

1.7.6 National Forest Management Act (NFMA)

As documented in the project record, this project has been determined to be consistent with the goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines in the 2003 Forest Plan.

1.7.7 National Historic Preservation Act

The NHPA provides for the protection of prehistoric and historic resources. Archeological inventory did not reveal known sites that would be jeopardized by the designation of a system of motorized routes. The proposed action and alternatives were reviewed and determined to have no effect on any historic properties. Concurrence from the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will be obtained before a decision on this project is made.

1.7.8 Idaho Stream Alteration Act

All action alternatives would adhere to the requirements of the Idaho Stream Alterations Act and the 404 Permit Process of the U.S. Corps of Engineers. The goals of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 would be met.

1.7.9 Executive Order 12898 – Environment Justice

In accordance with Executive Order (EO) 12898 (59 FR 32, 1994), all action alternatives were assessed to determine whether they would have disproportionately high and adverse human health including social and economic effects, on minority or low-income human populations. No effects have been identified.

1.7.10 Executive Order 13443 – Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation.

On August 16, 2007, President George Bush signed an Executive Order directing appropriate federal agencies to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat. Section 3.4 of this EA discloses the effects of the alternatives on big game wildlife species. The proposed action and an additional action alternative have beneficial impacts on elk and deer, due to a reduction in disturbance and susceptibility to hunting mortality.

1.7.11 Inventoried Roadless Areas

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) possess social and ecological values and characteristics that are becoming scarce in our nation's increasingly developed landscape. Protecting air and water quality, biodiversity, and opportunities for personal renewal are highly valued qualities of roadless areas. Conserving IRAs leaves a legacy of natural areas for future generations. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (36 CFR §§294 et seq., 2007) limits or prohibits activities that would most negatively affect these values. These IRAs exist within Forest Plan MPC 4.1c which allows for motorized recreation opportunities (Forest Plan, p. III-87).

In October 2008, the US Department of Agriculture adopted a state-specific, final rule establishing management direction for designating roadless areas in Idaho (36 CFR 294; 73 Federal Register 61456-61496). The final rule designates 250 Idaho Roadless Areas, including the six within the project area, and establishes five management themes that provide prohibitions with exceptions or conditioned permissions governing road construction, timber cutting and discretionary mineral development. The final rule also notes that decisions concerning the future management of existing roads or trails in Idaho Roadless Areas shall be made during the applicable travel management process (36 CFR 294.26(a))

The "E" Travel Management Areas include all or portions of the six IRAs: Peace Rock, Bear Wallow, Deadwood, Bald Mountain, Grimes Pass and Hawley Mountain. The effects of the alternatives on these IRAs are disclosed in Section 3.11 of this EA. Slight and/or beneficial effects to IRAs would be anticipated under the proposed action and alternatives.

1.8 TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Shoshone-Paiute tribal representatives were presented the Emmett RD "E" Area Motorized Wheeled Vehicle Travel Management Project's proposed activities at the November 13, 2008 and January 8, 2009 Wings and Roots meeting. Tribal Chairs of both the Nez Perce and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes were mailed project proposals on December 13, 2008. On March 9, 2009, the proposed action was presented to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. Additional consultation with the tribes will be conducted before a decision on this project is made, to ensure that tribal interests are considered.

1.9 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The proposed Project has been listed in the Boise NF Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) since January 2009. On February 19, 2009, Forest Service representatives presented specific proposed project activities to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries personnel at a scheduled level 1 meeting.

A scoping package describing the Proposed Action was mailed to about 78 individuals, agencies, and/or groups on December 17, 2008. Public meetings were held in Emmett, Idaho

on January 6, 2009, Garden Valley, Idaho on January 7, 2009, and Boise on January 8, 2009. In these public meetings, the Travel Management Rule requirements were summarized, the proposed action was presented, and attendees were invited to provide comment. In addition, scoping documents were sent to the Chairperson for the Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports Roundtable (FS MOU # 06-SU-11132424-118) on March 25, 2009. A total of 43 interested parties responded to the scoping. Respondents expressed a variety of concerns and opinions regarding the type of motorized vehicles to be allowed within the project area. The planning record contains all written comments received during scoping and discloses how the Interdisciplinary Team addressed those concerns.

1.10 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES RECOMMENDED FOR ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

To identify if concerns that were raised in scoping described unresolved conflicts with the Proposed Action, and thus suggested the need to develop alternatives to the Proposed Action, the ID team and Responsible Official evaluated concerns against the following:

1. Was the concern beyond the scope of the project or not relevant to the action proposed (e.g. identified cause-effect relationship would not result should the proposal be implemented)?
2. Was the concern addressed and resolved through application of Forest Plan standards and guidelines or best management practices?
3. Was the concern addressed and resolved through implementation of project-specific mitigation measures applied to the Proposed Action?
4. Was the concern addressed during processes or analyses routinely conducted by the ID team?
5. Concerns which remained were determined to be unresolved conflicts with the Proposed Action and were carried into alternative development.

Significant NEPA issues are listed below. These issues are the points of unresolved conflict with the Proposed Action identified during internal and external scoping efforts. Following each issue, indicators that will be used in the effects analysis in Chapter 3 to compare how the different alternatives affect that issue are identified.

1.10.1 Reduced Motorized Access Opportunities

Issue: Eliminating motorized use on established routes within “E” Travel Management Areas will reduce motorized access opportunities.

The Forest Service received several comments that the Proposed Action either eliminated favorite routes or resulting in a reduction in recreational access opportunities for motorized wheeled-vehicles. The Forest Service identified the comments that were route-specific and evaluated the concerns regarding recreational opportunity expressed by the commenters. Those routes that addressed the recreational opportunity issue and for which resource impacts could be addressed were included in an alternative to the Proposed Action.

Indicator: Miles open to motorized use by vehicle class.

1.10.2 Effects of Designating Routes on Wildlife, Water, Fisheries, and Non-Motorized Recreational Opportunities

Issue: Designating additional routes for motorized travel beyond what is currently designated would continue negative resource effects, and unnecessarily reduce the overall area potentially available for predominately non-motorized recreational pursuits.

The Forest Service received comments expressing a general concern about the amount of proposed motorized access within the project area and the overall effect this access would have to wildlife, aquatics, and non-motorized recreational opportunities.

Resource Condition Indicators:

- Miles of routes within Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs)
- Number of stream crossings
- Acres within 0.5 miles of open routes (wildlife vulnerability).
- Miles of non-motorized trails