

## Inventoried Roadless Areas

### INTRODUCTION

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) are inventoried tracts of National Forest System land characterized as having an undeveloped character. On the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests, IRAs were initially identified during the Roadless Area Resource Evaluation of 1972 (also known as RARE I) and the RARE II of 1979. These inventories were updated and areas were re-evaluated for wilderness suitability as part of the initial forest planning efforts completed on these three National Forests in 1990, 1988, and 1987, respectively. As part of the current Forest Plan revision process on these Forests, the inventories were further reviewed, updated, and evaluated.

Future management of roadless areas is a controversial and polarized issue. On many National Forests, roadless area management has been a major point of contention in land management planning. Roadless areas are valued for many resource benefits including their undeveloped fisheries and wildlife habitat, biological diversity, and dispersed recreation opportunities. Controversy continues to accompany most proposals to harvest timber, build roads, or otherwise develop inventoried roadless areas. Public opinions regarding the use of these areas vary greatly, ranging from full commodity development to maintaining undeveloped character through wilderness designation.

Management direction for IRAs has also been proposed and analyzed on a national scale through a combination of several policy rules initiated during the Clinton administration. In response to the national controversy over roadless area management, the Interim Roads Rule (*Administration of the Forest Development Transportation System: Temporary Suspension of Road Construction and Reconstruction in Unroaded Areas; Interim Rule; 36 CFR Part 212; 64 Federal Register 7290; February 12, 1999*) suspended road construction and reconstruction in certain inventoried roadless areas for 18 months (March 1999 through August 2000). The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (*Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation; 36 CFR Part 294; 66 Federal Register 3244; January 12, 2001*) prohibited road construction and reconstruction in most inventoried roadless areas and outlined procedures to evaluate the quality and importance of roadless characteristics. The rule was originally scheduled to take effect on March 12, 2001; however, the Secretary of Agriculture extended the effective date until May 12, 2001, to permit the new Administration to review the rule.

On May 10, 2001, the Idaho District Court granted a preliminary injunction requested in *Kootenai Tribe of Idaho v. Veneman and State of Idaho v. U.S. Forest Service*, enjoining the Forest Service from implementing “all aspects of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.” The Court’s decision to grant a preliminary injunction was appealed and brought before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. On June 7, 2001, the Chief of the Forest Service and Secretary of Agriculture issued a letter concerning interim protection of inventoried roadless areas, stating that: “the Forest Service is committed to protecting and managing roadless areas as an important component of the National Forest System. The best way to achieve this objective is to ensure that we protect and sustain roadless values until they can be

appropriately considered through forest planning.” (Bosworth 2001). On December 12, 2002, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the May 10, 2001, ruling by the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho, which enjoined the Department from implementing the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The Forest Service is currently working with the USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment and the Department of Justice to review the decision.

As described in Chapter 1, one of the decisions made through Forest Planning is the identification of areas recommended for wilderness designation. The Forest Service can only make recommendations to Congress (via Forest Plans) for IRAs to become wilderness, and only Congress can designate wilderness through the legislative process. Recommendations and designations are often controversial, and actual designations may take numerous years to pass Congress. Congress may also change recommended wilderness boundaries based on public comments, political issues, or other factors.

In past Forest Planning efforts, the Forests of the Southwest Idaho Ecogroup (Ecogroup) evaluated almost 3,216,000 acres in 75 IRAs for possible recommendation for wilderness designation by Congress. Of this total, nearly 651,000 acres were recommended for wilderness designation; about 1,241,000 acres were assigned management prescriptions that at least partially preserved their undeveloped character; and 1,324,000 acres were assigned management prescriptions that allowed for development. In this Forest Plan revision process, a total of 78 IRAs comprising approximately 3,591,000 acres are evaluated for recommendation for wilderness designation. Of the 3,591,000 acres evaluated, approximately 3,234,000 acres lie within the Ecogroup Forests and represent almost 49 percent of the total area comprised by the three Forests. Portions of two additional IRAs that were not included in the wilderness recommendation evaluation also lie within the Ecogroup. These are relatively small portions of two IRAs for which the Salmon-Challis National Forest is the lead Forest for Wilderness evaluation, and they comprise about 8,000 acres.

While a management allocation may allow development activities such as timber sales in a roadless area, it does not require it. Such activities may be proposed, but must be further evaluated in site-specific NEPA analysis prior to approval and implementation. Existing wilderness areas are discussed in detail in the *Wilderness* section of this Chapter.

Analysis of Inventoried Roadless Areas is divided among three separate sections of the EIS and the associated appendices. This section of the EIS analyzes the effects of each alternative on IRAs collectively on each Forest. Wilderness recommendation evaluations for individual IRAs are presented in *Appendix C*. The effects of each alternative on wilderness characteristics and the disposition of each IRA under each alternative are also analyzed for each IRA in *Appendix C*. Evaluations of the roadless area characteristics are presented for each IRA in *Appendix H*.

## Roadless Inventory Criteria

Criteria for determining whether an area of National Forest System land qualifies as an Inventoried Roadless Area are provided in Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, which states:

“Roadless areas qualify for placement on the inventory of potential wilderness if, in addition to meeting the statutory definition of wilderness, they meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. They contain 5,000 acres or more.
2. They contain less than 5,000 acres but:
  - a. Due to physiography or vegetation, they are manageable in their natural condition.
  - b. They are self-contained ecosystems such as an island.
  - c. They are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, Administration-endorsed wilderness, or roadless areas in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.
3. They do not contain improved roads maintained for travel by standard passenger-type vehicles, except as permitted in areas east of the 100th meridian.”

Despite their name, Roadless areas *can* contain low-standard “roads”. As noted above under the third criteria, only roads that are improved and maintained are excluded from IRAs. As such, classified roads and other roads that were designed, constructed, and maintained for access or resource management needs are generally excluded from IRAs. However, a number of IRAs within the Ecogroup area contain user-created “roads” or “travelways” that were never designed, planned, physically constructed, or maintained. Many people think of these travelways as “roads” and are confused when the surrounding area is referred to as “roadless”. In this regard, the “Roadless” appellation is, in some cases, a somewhat confusing misnomer.

Inventoried Roadless Areas also generally do not contain structures, improvements, or obvious landscape alterations that would indicate the presence or influences of man. These might include overhead power transmission line corridors, airstrips, electronic communication installations, timber harvest units where logging activity is evident, and other forms of development. These types of facilities and cultured landform features are usually excluded from IRAs when defining IRA boundaries.

## Issues and Indicators

**Issue 1 Statement** – Forest Plan management strategies may affect the capability for development or the wilderness potential of existing Inventoried Roadless Areas.

**Background to Issue 1** – Public comments on how to manage the Ecogroup roadless areas were highly polarized between allowing development of IRAs or leaving them in an undeveloped or potential wilderness condition. Those in favor of development felt that leaving roadless areas undeveloped limits recreation access and reduces contributions to local economic stability.

Designation of additional areas as recommended wilderness further restricts potential uses and access. Other people felt that developing roadless areas represents a potential loss of undeveloped or candidate wilderness areas, primitive recreation experiences, and valuable wildlife, fish, and plant habitat.

To address these concerns, the analysis shows, by alternative, how the Forest Service proposes to manage the current Inventoried Roadless Areas within the Ecogroup area. Essentially, four different outcomes can potentially result from Management Prescription Categories (MPCs) assigned to IRAs. These are: (1) recommended wilderness, (2) maintain undeveloped character, (3) potential low levels of development, or (4) available for a full range of development. The social and economic trade-offs associated with the alternatives are assessed in the *Socio-economic Environment* section of Chapter 3, and in *Appendix C*.

**Issue 1 Indicators** - The following indicators will be used to measure the potential effects of management strategies on roadless areas of the three Forests by alternative. The indicators are intended to show relative differences between the alternatives, rather than to represent the actual acres or percentages of treatments that are expected to occur. Treatment areas would not equal MPC acres, but would be a much smaller portion based on management priorities, funding opportunities, and project-level planning decisions within the planning period.

- *Acres of IRAs assigned to management prescriptions (MPCs 2.4, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, or 8.0) that allow a full range of development opportunities* – This indicator reflects the potential area within IRAs that could be developed over the long-term by management activities under each alternative. This development might include such activities as timber harvest, road construction, rangeland improvement chainings, or developed recreation sites. The level of development would be expected to change the roadless status of the IRA.
- *Acres of IRAs assigned to management prescriptions (MPCs 3.1, 3.2, 4.1b, 4.1c) that have the potential for low levels of development* – This indicator reflects the potential area within IRAs that could receive relatively low levels of vegetation management by alternative. This management might include such activities as habitat restoration, timber salvage, or treatments to reduce the hazard of insect infestation or uncharacteristic wildfire. The level of development would not necessarily be sufficient to change the roadless status of the IRA.
- *Acres of IRAs assigned to management prescriptions (MPCs 2.1-Wild, 2.2, 4.1a) that maintain their undeveloped roadless character* – This indicator reflects the area within IRAs that would remain undeveloped by management activities under each alternative.
- *Acres of IRAs assigned to a management prescription (MPC 1.2) that recommends the area for wilderness designation* – This indicator reflects the area within IRAs that would be recommended for wilderness designation under each alternative. This area would also remain undeveloped by management activities.

For the cumulative effects analysis, acres of undeveloped IRAs and recommended wilderness are used in conjunction with existing wilderness acres to show the relative amount and distribution of areas potentially withdrawn from development at the Ecogroup and statewide levels. In that full information for the above indicators is not available for every National Forest in Idaho, the indicators are:

- Acres within IRAs that allow road construction and reconstruction.
- Acres within IRAs that do not allow road construction and reconstruction.
- Acres within IRAs recommended for wilderness designation.

Although these indicators do not reflect management prescriptions that would allow for timber harvest and other forms of development without constructing new roads, they do represent the majority of the potential for development.

**Issue 2 Statement** – Forest Plan management strategies for existing Inventoried Roadless Areas may affect the capability to treat forest health problems.

**Background to Issue 2** – A national issue that has risen to prominence since the DEIS has centered on the condition of much of the nation’s National Forests relative to susceptibility for uncharacteristic wildfires. The Forest Service’s National Fire Plan was developed in response to this growing issue. Although forest health problems occur within both developed and undeveloped areas in National Forests, much of the debate has focused on IRAs where the agency’s ability to treat problem areas may be hampered by reduced access and treatment options. Given the large proportion of National Forest System lands comprised by IRAs, concern exists that the overall effectiveness in addressing forest health problems would be greatly limited unless areas within IRAs can also be effectively treated.

A number of public comments suggested the need to be able to address forest health problems within IRAs through active management of forest stands within IRAs. This would involve using management actions including prescribed fire, mechanical vegetation treatments and, where needed for access, new road construction. They felt that insect, disease, and uncharacteristic wildfire threats could not be contained by only treating areas outside of IRAs and that active treatment capabilities should extend within IRAs as well. Other comments expressed that important resources within IRAs were less threatened when managed under a strategy that greatly limits new road construction and mechanical vegetation treatments. Those in favor of actively managing IRAs felt that leaving roadless areas unmanaged inhibits forest restoration capabilities as well as the ability to address forest health problems. Other people felt that active management in roadless areas represents a potential loss of valuable wildlife, fish, and plant habitat. They believe that undeveloped areas represent the best opportunity to protect species viability, scenic quality, habitat connectivity, biological diversity, aquatic strongholds and ecosystems, and primitive recreation opportunities.

**Issue 2 Indicators** – The ability to address forest health problems involves two elements: the treatments and access that are available to managers in areas in need of treatment. These two elements vary depending on the MPCs that are assigned. In this analysis, MPCs assigned to IRAs under each alternative are compared from the perspective of treatments and access allowed by the assigned management prescriptions. The analysis focuses on the portions of IRAs where forest health problems and the need for treatments are likely to exist. These include areas having high or extreme uncharacteristic wildfire hazard ratings, high or extreme ratings for resistance to control, or high insect hazard ratings.

The following indicators will be used to measure the potential effects of management direction for IRAs to affect capabilities to address forest health problems by alternative.

- Acres within IRAs having high or extreme uncharacteristic wildfire hazard ratings, high or extreme ratings for resistance to control, or high insect hazard ratings assigned to prescriptions (MPCs 2.4, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.0) that would allow both a full range of treatments and access capabilities – This indicator reflects the level of areas within IRAs where the range of allowable vegetation treatment options is the largest and where access capabilities are the least restricted under each alternative.
- Acres within IRAs having high or extreme uncharacteristic wildfire hazard ratings, high or extreme ratings for resistance to control, or high insect hazard ratings assigned to prescriptions (MPCs 3.2, 4.1b, and 4.1c) that would limit access capabilities but allow a wide range of treatments – This indicator reflects the level of areas within IRAs where the range of allowable vegetation treatment options is still relatively extensive but where access capability are highly limited, with little or no new road construction allowed under each alternative.
- Acres within IRAs having high or extreme uncharacteristic wildfire hazard ratings, high or extreme ratings for resistance to control, or high insect hazard ratings assigned to prescriptions (MPCs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, and 4.1a) that would limit both the range of treatments available as well as access capabilities – This indicator reflects the level of areas within IRAs where the range of allowable vegetation treatment options is highly limited with little or no mechanical treatments, and where access capabilities are highly limited, with little or no new road construction allowed under each alternative.

For the cumulative effects analysis, the values for the above indicators are combined and presented for the entire Ecogroup area to provide a broader perspective.

**Issue 3 Statement** – Forest Plan management strategies for Inventoried Roadless Areas may or may not be consistent with the direction established under the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

**Background to Issue 3** – A large number of public comments supported the adoption of management direction to protect IRAs that would be consistent with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Conversely, other comments were strongly opposed to the adoption of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

This issue is addressed by the alternatives in that Alternative 6 was designed to encompass direction that was expected to result from the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Management direction for IRAs was specifically designed in this alternative to maintain the roadless and undeveloped character of each IRA. Similar management direction within IRAs is present, to varied extent, in all the other alternatives as well. The analysis shows, by alternative, the varied levels of management direction consistent with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule in each alternative.

**Issue 3 Indicators** - The following indicator will be used to measure each alternative's consistency with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule:

- Acres of IRAs assigned to management prescriptions (MPCs 1.2, 2.2, and 4.1a) that are consistent with direction established by the Roadless Area Conservation Rule – This indicator reflects the potential area within IRAs for management actions that would maintain conditions that would be consistent with those prescribed under the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Any activities would not be likely to change the roadless status of the IRA.
- Acres of IRAs assigned to management prescriptions (MPCs 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1b, 4.1c, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, or 8.0) that are not consistent with direction established by the Roadless Area Conservation Rule – This indicator reflects the potential area within IRAs for management actions that would not be permitted under the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. These management actions include a wide array of potential activities such as road construction, timber salvage, special uses developments, and treatments to reduce the hazard of insect hazard or uncharacteristic wildfire. The activities could potentially change the roadless status of the IRA.

**Issue 4 Statement** – Management strategies for recommended wilderness may affect recreation opportunities and experiences within recommended wilderness areas as well as the potential for wilderness designation of those areas.

**Background to Issue 4** – Public comments indicate that some people believe that allowing motorized uses within recommended wilderness is inconsistent with Forest Service stated management direction to maintain wilderness values, including opportunities for solitude and primitive experiences. Some feel that the noises created by motorized use as well as the use of mechanized equipment itself eliminates these opportunities and is thereby inconsistent with the management direction. Others also feel that allowing any form of mechanical transport including non-motorized forms such as mountain bicycling, creates the potential to establish a pattern of non-conforming use that builds a constituency for mechanized use of these areas, thereby threatening the chances for Wilderness designation.

On the other side of this issue, some suggest that areas that are not designated as Wilderness should not be managed as Wilderness, while others voiced concern that there were already too many restrictions regulating motorized use of the Forests.

This issue is addressed by the alternatives in that the use of mechanical transport within recommended wilderness is prohibited under Alternatives 4 and 6. Mechanical transport includes both motorized and non-motorized uses such as motorcycling, snowmobiling, mountain bicycling and other non-motorized mechanized equipment such as game carts, hang gliders, backcountry in-line skates, and skateboards. Prohibited uses were expanded to include mechanized uses because mechanized uses pose the same potential threat of establishing non-conforming use patterns that may threaten the chances for wilderness designation. The analysis shows, by alternative, the effects of this shift in these alternatives.

**Issue 4 Indicators** - The following indicators will be used to measure the potential effects of management direction on recreation opportunities and experiences within recommended wilderness areas, as well as the potential for wilderness designation of those areas on the three Forests by alternative. In that travel regulations for cross-country and trail use can differ, separate indicators are used to measure effects by alternative on mechanized use opportunities in recommended wilderness areas.

The following indicators are used to contrast the relative levels of both motorized and mechanized use opportunities offered by the alternatives for cross-country travel experiences.

- *Acres Open to Summer Cross-Country Motorized Uses.*
- *Acres Open to Summer Cross-Country Mechanized Uses.*
- *Acres Open to Winter Cross-Country Motorized Uses.*

The following indicators are used to contrast the relative levels of both motorized and mechanized use opportunities offered by the alternatives for on-trail experiences.

- *Miles of Summer Trail Open to Motorized Uses.*
- *Miles of Summer Trail Open to Mechanized Uses.*

The following indicators are used to contrast the relative levels of groomed snowmobile and cross-country ski trails under each of the alternatives. Groomed cross-country ski trails are included because they require the use of motorized equipment for grooming and may also be affected by management direction limiting motorized uses. This analysis assumes that there would be no new groomed trails and only closures of existing ones due to recommended wilderness management direction associated with Alternatives 4 and 6.

- *Miles of Groomed Snowmobile Trails.*
- *Miles of Groomed Cross-Country Ski Trails.*

For cumulative effects analysis, a broader perspective is appropriate and the following indicators will be used.

- *Percent of Forest Closed to Summer Cross-Country Motorized Uses.*
- *Percent of Forest Closed to Summer Cross-Country Mechanized Uses.*



- Percent of Forest Closed to Winter Cross-Country Motorized Uses.

The indicators listed above are used to display differences among the alternatives in relative levels of restrictions on the use of mechanical transport for cross-country travel anticipated for each Forest. Inherently, they also reflect the balance between areas allowing motorized and mechanized cross-country travel and areas that do not, beyond recommended wilderness areas.

The following indicators are used to display differences, among the alternatives, in relative levels of restrictions on the use of mechanical transport for on-trail experiences anticipated for each Forest. Inherently, they also reflect the balance between trails allowing motorized and mechanized travel and those that do not, beyond recommended wilderness areas.

- Percent of Summer Trail Miles Closed to Motorized Uses.
- Percent of Summer Trail Miles Closed to Mechanized Uses.

The following indicators are used to contrast the relative levels of groomed snowmobile and cross-country ski trails under each of the alternatives for each Forest to provide a broader scale beyond recommended wilderness areas. Groomed cross-country ski trails are included because they require the use of motorized equipment for grooming and may also be affected by management direction limiting motorized uses. The analysis assumes that there would be no new groomed trails and only closures of existing ones due to recommended wilderness management direction associated with Alternatives 4 and 6.

- Percent of Current Level of Groomed Snowmobile Trails.
- Percent of Current Level of Groomed Cross-Country Ski Trails.

## **Affected Area**

**Issue 1** - The affected area for direct and indirect effects to roadless and undeveloped areas are the IRAs of the three National Forests within the Ecogroup. In that evaluation for wilderness recommendation requires that an entire IRA be evaluated regardless of administrative boundaries, portions of six IRAs on adjacent, non-Ecogroup Forests are also included in the affected area. These areas represent the National Forest System lands where potential wilderness and undeveloped areas exist, as well as where land use allocations might alter or maintain those areas. The roadless and undeveloped public lands, as well as the designated wilderness areas, in both the Ecogroup Forests and the State of Idaho as a whole, best represent the affected area for cumulative effects. Because wilderness designations are made on a statewide basis, this expanded area is appropriate to analyze the potential cumulative effects to those lands.

**Issue 2** - The portions of IRAs within the Ecogroup area having high or extreme uncharacteristic wildfire hazard ratings, high or extreme ratings for resistance to control, or high insect hazard ratings comprise the affected area for assessing each alternative's capability to address forest health problems within IRAs. These areas represent the portions of IRAs where forest health problems are most likely to be present, as well as where assigned management prescriptions could determine treatments in those

areas. The combined portions of IRAs within the Ecogroup area having high or extreme uncharacteristic wildfire hazard ratings or high insect hazard ratings best represent the affected area for cumulative effects.

**Issue 3** - The IRAs of each of the three National Forests within the Ecogroup area comprise the affected area for determining consistency with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. These areas represent the National Forest System lands where the Roadless Area Conservation Rule would be applied, as well as where land use allocations might alter or maintain those areas. The combined IRAs within the Ecogroup area best represent the affected area for cumulative effects.

**Issue 4** – The affected area for direct and indirect effects on recreation opportunities is the area recommended for wilderness designation on the three National Forests within the Ecogroup. These areas represent the National Forest System lands where interim management direction associated with two of the alternatives would potentially change recreation opportunities and experiences. The affected area for cumulative effects is best represented by all the National Forest System lands within the Ecogroup area. This provides a broader context to analyze the balance between mechanized and non-mechanized opportunities and experiences associated with each alternative.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

Tabular data for IRA and recommended wilderness acreages displayed in this section reflect new area determination techniques and IRA boundary changes that have occurred since the current Forest Plans were written. As such, acreages vary from those listed in the current Forest Plans.

### Inventoried Roadless Areas

A total of 80 IRAs are distributed across the Ecogroup area, comprising approximately 3,242,000 acres of undeveloped area. Cumulatively, this acreage represents almost half of the Ecogroup Forest land base. Total IRA acreages and percent of each Forest within IRAs are shown in Table IRA-1.

**Table IRA-1. Ecogroup Inventoried Roadless Areas**

IRAs	Boise NF	Payette NF	Sawtooth NF
Number of IRAs	42	22	25
Estimated Acres of IRAs*	1,108,500	908,500	1,225,100
% Of Forest within IRAs	50%	40%	58%

\*Acreages include only Ecogroup portions of IRAs and are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

These areas provide a range of primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunities. These opportunities vary depending on such factors as size, shape, remoteness, and features of the area that are noted in the individual IRA descriptions in *Appendix C*. These factors also influence the current

levels of recreational use for these areas, which vary greatly. However, overall IRA recreation levels are relatively low compared to the use that is occurring in roaded and developed areas that offer much easier access and a greater variety of amenities and services, such as ski areas, campgrounds, boating facilities, and lodges.

The IRAs also provide an array of other resource benefits including their undeveloped fisheries and wildlife habitat, biological diversity, and sources for municipal and high-quality water. Many of these benefits are presented in the individual IRA descriptions in *Appendix C* as well as the IRA information contained in *Appendix H*. Maps showing the IRAs on each Forest can be found in the maps packet and *Appendix C* of this EIS.

Eight IRAs extend beyond Ecogroup Forest boundaries into the Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce National Forests. The portions of these IRAs on adjacent Forests amount to a total estimated 469,000 acres. When an IRA covers lands on more than one National Forest, a lead Forest determination is made for evaluation for wilderness designation. IRAs for which the Ecogroup Forests do not have the lead will be re-evaluated in separate planning processes. Shared IRAs and the lead Forest determination are displayed in Table IRA-2.

**Table IRA-2. Externally Shared Inventoried Roadless Areas**

Roadless Area	Ecogroup Forest (Acres)	Other Forest (Acres)	Lead Forest
Rapid River	Payette (57,676)	Nez Perce (20,846)	Payette
Loon Creek	Sawtooth (3,157)	Salmon-Challis (106,373)	Salmon-Challis
Hanson Lakes	Sawtooth & Boise (57,567)	Salmon-Challis (13,533)	Sawtooth
Boulder-White Cloud	Sawtooth (322,732)	Salmon-Challis (140,089)	Sawtooth
Pioneer Mountains	Sawtooth (119,559)	Salmon-Challis (169,371)	Sawtooth
Railroad Ridge	Sawtooth (42,905)	Salmon-Challis (7,913)	Sawtooth
Blue Bunch	Boise (4,881)	Salmon-Challis (6,126)	Salmon-Challis
Red Mountain	Boise (110,350)	Salmon-Challis (4,895)	Boise

During processing of geographic information for the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, an estimated 37,000 acres of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area were mistakenly included in the Squaw Creek IRA, which is located completely on the Salmon-Challis National Forest. This area is not part of any inventoried roadless area and includes portions of Idaho State Highways 21 and 75 corridors, Stanley Lake, and other highly developed areas. This is an obvious cartographic error on the RACR maps and will be corrected in the future. Management of these lands is described in Management Areas 2 and 3 in Chapter III of the Sawtooth Forest Plan.

In addition to the IRAs shared with the Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce National Forests, eight IRAs straddle administrative boundaries between Ecogroup Forests. Lead Forests for these IRAs have also been determined and are displayed in Table IRA-3.

**Table IRA-3. Internally Shared Inventoried Roadless Areas**

Shared IRA	Lead Ecogroup Forest	Shared IRA	Lead Ecogroup Forest
Needles	Payette	Poison Creek	Boise
Caton Lake	Payette	Smoky Mountains	Sawtooth
Meadow Creek	Payette	Lime Creek	Sawtooth
Horse Heaven	Payette	Hanson Lakes	Sawtooth
Snowbank	Boise		

Unless otherwise noted, the analysis data presented in this portion of the EIS has been compiled on an administrative unit (National Forest) basis. In other words, data for shared Ecogroup IRAs is divided between the two National Forests that share the IRA and is presented separately for each National Forest in which the data characteristics occur. This approach differs from the data compiled in *Appendix C*, which presents information for each IRA compiled on an IRA basis.

Data in the analyses in this chapter will generally present only Ecogroup IRA acreages compiled by Forest and does not include data for the Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce portions of externally shared IRAs unless otherwise noted. Because management direction for the Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce portions of externally shared IRAs will not be completed until each of those Forests complete Forest Plan revision, any analyses that present data for the Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce portions of externally shared IRAs reflects current Forest Plan direction for those Forests. Entire IRAs, including Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce portions, are addressed in the wilderness evaluations presented in *Appendix C*.

### **Recommended Wilderness Areas**

A number of roadless areas were recommended for wilderness designation in the past planning process, and they have been managed to protect their wilderness characteristics. These areas and their acreages are shown in Table IRA-4. Acreage figures for recommended wilderness areas differ from acreages listed for the same areas in the previous Forest Plans due to different area calculation techniques.

**Table IRA-4. Wilderness Recommendations in the 1987-1990 Forest Plans for the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests**

Forest	IRA Name	Net Acres Recommended*
Boise	Needles	4,000
	Red Mountain	84,300
	Ten Mile/Black Warrior	77,100
	Hanson Lakes	13,500
	<b>Boise Total</b>	<b>179,000</b>
Payette	Secesh	115,400
	Needles	91,900
	<b>Payette Total</b>	<b>207,300</b>
Sawtooth	Hanson Lakes	18,500
	Boulder/White Clouds	186,100
	Pioneer Mountains	61,000
	<b>Sawtooth Total</b>	<b>265,600</b>

\*Acres listed in this table use the current GIS methodology of acreage calculation, which varies slightly from the acres published in the 1987-1990 Forest Plans. Acreages are rounded to nearest 100 acres. Forest totals may differ slightly due to rounding.

### **Current Mechanical Transport within Recommended Wilderness**

Management of much of the recommended wilderness within the Ecogroup has allowed the use of mechanical transport. Mechanical transport is a broad term that includes motorized recreation activities as well as some forms of non-motorized recreation activities. Motorized forms include snowmobiling, ATV use, motorcycle use, and any other form of motorized recreation activity. The major non-motorized use is mountain bicycling, but this category would also include other non-motorized mechanical transport such as game carts, hang gliders, backcountry in-line skates, and skateboards. For this analysis, the term “mechanical transport” will be used when referring to all forms of transportation that are inconsistent with Wilderness management. “Motorized” uses will refer strictly to motorized forms of mechanical transport, while “mechanized” uses will refer to non-motorized human-powered devices that transport people. Also for this analysis, a trail or area open to the use of any type of mechanical transport for any time during the year will be considered as open to that use. For example, ten miles of trail that are open to two-wheeled motorcycles during July through August would be considered the same as if there were no restrictions on the same 10 miles of trail.

Opportunities for the use of mechanical transport within recommended wilderness are complicated and vary across the Ecogroup area. In general, opportunities are more extensive for mechanized uses than for motorized uses due to impacts associated with motorized use and equipment. Both cross-country and trail opportunities can vary by type of vehicle and may range from totally open to seasonally restricted to totally closed. Much of the area recommended for wilderness designation by the current Forest Plans is available for some form of mechanical transport during at least a portion of the year. Table IRA-5 displays estimated values for the existing condition for mechanical transport uses within currently recommended wilderness areas.

**Table IRA-5. Mechanical Transport Opportunities Within Current Forest Plan Recommended Wilderness Areas<sup>1</sup>**

Mechanical Transport Use	Combined Recommended Wilderness		
	Boise NF	Payette NF	Sawtooth NF
Acres Open to <b>Summer Cross-Country Motorized Use<sup>2</sup></b>	900	200	0
Acres Open to <b>Summer Cross-Country Mechanized Use<sup>3</sup></b>	179,000	207,300	265,600
Acres Open to <b>Winter Cross-Country Motorized Use<sup>2</sup></b>	177,400	92,900	221,900
Miles of <b>Summer Trails Open to Motorized Use<sup>2</sup></b>	59	84	74
Miles of <b>Summer Trails Open to Mechanized Use<sup>3</sup></b>	91	197	243
Miles of Groomed <b>Snowmobile Trails</b>	0	0	0
Miles of Groomed <b>Cross-Country Ski Trails</b>	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Values reflect current travel regulations and administrative boundaries on each Forest.

<sup>2</sup> Includes any form of motorized use during all or any part of the year. Area estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

<sup>3</sup> Includes any form of mechanized use during all or any part of the year. Area estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

## Undeveloped Recreation Areas

Each of the past Forest Plans allocated areas to be maintained for undeveloped (Boise and Payette) or semi-primitive (Sawtooth) forms of recreation. Although these prescriptions vary slightly by Forest, development was generally limited to salvage harvest opportunities without any new road construction. For the most part, these areas were all or portions of some of the current IRAs. Total acreages for these areas are shown in Table IRA-6.

**Table IRA-6. Undeveloped and Semi-Primitive Recreation Areas in Current Forest Plans**

National Forest	Total Acres Managed for Undeveloped and Semi-Primitive Recreation
Boise	293,000
Payette	466,000
Sawtooth	335,000

## Recommended Wilderness Evaluation

The Roadless Area Inventory and Evaluation Protocol (11/12/96, 12/11/98) guided the evaluation process for Forest Plan revision. This process had two steps: 1) inventory, and 2) evaluation.

Roadless Area inventories on each of the three Forests were reviewed and updated as part of the Forest Plan revision process. During the re-inventory process, changes were made to the roadless area boundaries based on project-level development and examining boundaries for areas that may have been missed for inclusion. Roadless area boundaries were adjusted to reflect project developments such as timber harvest units, new road construction, and utility corridors; undeveloped areas missed in previous inventories; and areas that have changed, over time, affecting their eligibility for classification as roadless and undeveloped. Roadless acreages also changed due to the use of new technology (GIS) to determine acreages of defined areas.

The number of individual IRAs also changed from what existed during the initial round of Forest Plans. In two separate cases, two Ecogroup IRAs that were previously divided only by administrative boundaries were combined into one IRA. Some IRAs were divided into two separate IRAs when road omissions were corrected. Conversely, some IRAs were combined when the low-standard roads separating them were reviewed and determined to not be improved roads maintained for travel by standard passenger-type vehicles. Three new IRAs were also identified on the Boise National Forest and added to the inventory. Three IRAs were dropped from the inventory entirely when recent development and a bisecting utility line were considered. All changes are reflected in Table IRA-7.

The updated inventory was included in the Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2, (USDA Forest Service 2000). Further boundary refinements to a few IRAs to exclude known developments, amounting to approximately 2,800 total acres, were identified after publication of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. This area amounts to less than 0.2 percent of the inventoried roadless area on the Sawtooth National Forest. The Forests are currently waiting for the development of national direction regarding the formal IRA boundary modification process to reflect the refinements that were made after November 2000.

**Table IRA-7. Ecogroup Roadless Area Changes**

National Forest	Past Forest Plan IRA Acreage Estimates	Net Change Acres (All sources)	Current Estimated IRA Acres
Boise	1,206,471	-97,973	1,108,498
Payette	944,751	-36,295	908,456
Sawtooth	1,138,715	+86,422	1,225,137

Evaluation of each IRA was based on the area's capability, suitability, availability, and manageability characteristics, and the need for additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The evaluation provides a framework for determining whether these areas should be recommended for wilderness or are better suited for allocation to other management emphasis. *Appendix C* has more detailed descriptions of the areas, the analysis process, and changes made.

## Roadless Evaluation

As part of Forest Plan revision, a number of roadless characteristics were also evaluated. This evaluation was done for all roadless areas within the Ecogroup and is presented in *Appendix H*. This appendix differs from the *Appendix C* in that the evaluation in *Appendix H* focuses on characteristics not necessarily identified or necessary for wilderness suitability. *Appendix C* has a primary function of providing IRA information relative to determining wilderness suitability and wilderness recommendations. *Appendix H* evaluates a number of social and ecological characteristics or values that may be present in IRAs. Management activities have the ability to affect or diminish those values, and controversy surrounds the management of these areas. Considerable interest has been shown in providing some form of protection for roadless areas other than formal wilderness designation. The *Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement*, (USDA Forest Service 2000), was a reflection of that degree of interest and concern. Identification and analysis of values specific to individual IRAs are needed to provide a context for management decisions concerning individual roadless areas.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

### Effects Common to All Alternatives

#### Resource Protection Methods

**Laws, Regulations, and Policies** - Through the Wilderness Act of 1964, Congress created the National Wilderness Preservation System (Wilderness System) to provide protection for lands relatively untouched by human activity. Under this Act, the Department of Agriculture is directed to recommend "primitive" areas that should be added to wilderness areas created on national forest lands. To meet these requirements, the Forest Service conducted the "Roadless Area Review and Evaluation" (RARE I) in 1972. FSH 1909.12.7.1 directs national forests to "...identify and inventory all roadless, undeveloped areas that satisfy the definition of Wilderness found in section 2 (c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act." In this effort, roadless areas within the National Forest System were identified for possible inclusion into the Wilderness System. By October 1973, the RARE I inventory resulted in the Forest Service's selection of 274 roadless and undeveloped areas for study as possible wilderness. However, further selection of these lands was enjoined pending the Forest Service's completion of an EIS pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

In June of 1977, the Forest Service began its second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) in which all roadless areas within the National Forest System were inventoried and categorized as either "wilderness," "further planning," or "non-wilderness." Areas marked as "wilderness" were to be recommended to Congress for inclusion into the Wilderness System, while those designated for "further planning" were to be protected until the completion of additional evaluation in the Forest planning process. Areas designated as "non-wilderness" were to be released for other land and resource uses and activities.



The Forest Service completed its EIS on RARE II in January 1979. In July 1979, the State of California brought an action challenging the Forest Service's decision on the ground that the Final EIS was deficient. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld this challenge in October 1982. In February 1983, the Secretary of Agriculture announced that roadless areas previously studied for wilderness potential would be subject to evaluation. This required revisions of the Land and Resource Management Planning Regulations for National Forest System Lands. These regulations now require that roadless and undeveloped areas be identified, inventoried, and evaluated for wilderness designation by Congress as part of the forest plan revision process. This is reflected in 36 CFR 219.17(a) which states that "...roadless areas within the Nation Forest System shall be evaluated and considered for recommendation as potential Wilderness during the forest planning process." FSH 1909.12.7 also details the means by which the capability, availability, and need for potential wilderness areas is assessed.

As noted above, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, governing management activities within IRAs was issued in 2001 and is still under judicial review. The final outcome of the judicial review will represent agency policy regarding management of Inventoried Roadless Areas, and all Forest Plans will need to be consistent with that direction.

**Forest Plan Direction** – The management prescription for recommended wilderness land use allocations (MPC 1.2) is specifically designed to provide areas where wilderness characteristics are protected. This prescription is designed to meet Forest Service Manual and Handbook requirements and contains direction to manage the recreation settings to the standards established for recommended wilderness areas. Forest Plan standards and guidelines within the prescription, as well as Forest-wide and Management Area direction, will be applied to ensure that appropriate recreation settings and opportunities are provided for a wide range of uses and activities.

### **General Effects**

**Recreation** – Most forms of primitive dispersed recreation activities are compatible with maintaining wilderness characteristics and roadless character. However, when dispersed uses become highly concentrated, such as networks of heavily used motorized trails, wilderness characteristics and undeveloped character may be lost. Developed recreation sites, such as trailheads and campgrounds, represent development that is inconsistent with wilderness or roadless character. Developed recreation sites are usually excluded from IRAs.

**Timber Harvest** – The effects from timber harvest vary to some extent, depending on the intensity of timber removal and the method of timber removal. Regeneration harvests such as clearcuts, and associated roads and skid trails, create long-term changes to the landscape, resulting in developed settings that no longer have sufficient wilderness characteristics to qualify for consideration as recommended wilderness. Very light, widely dispersed timber harvest, such as a very light salvage harvest accomplished using helicopter yarding methods, can occur with minimal loss of undeveloped character. However, in almost all past cases, portions of IRAs that have undergone timber harvest no longer meet these criteria and were deleted from the Inventory.

**Roads and Trails** - Road construction and re-construction are usually associated with timber harvest, facility development, utility corridors, telecommunication sites, and mineral and energy development. Occasionally, roads are built or improved to meet recreation needs and activities. As noted above under *Roadless Inventory Criteria*, IRAs *can* contain low-standard roads. However, improved and maintained roads represent development that is inconsistent with either wilderness or undeveloped character and are generally excluded from IRAs.

Trails and new trail construction is usually compatible with maintaining wilderness characteristics and undeveloped character. However, as mentioned above, developing concentrated trail networks can result in the loss of wilderness characteristics and undeveloped character, especially when the trail network is comprised of motorized trails.

**Disturbance Events, Prescribed Fire, and Non-Native Plants** – Although all of these may have considerable effects on the resources within IRAs, their occurrences or presence do not generally affect an area’s undeveloped character or wilderness characteristics.

**Mineral and Energy Exploration and Development** – Exploration and development activities usually result in the loss of undeveloped character and wilderness characteristics. Mine sites are usually excluded from IRAs, especially those with extensive surface disturbance.

**Facilities and Structures** – These include a broad array of physical developments and structures, such as administrative facilities, communications developments, and dams and diversions authorized under special use authorizations. Facilities and structures are not consistent with undeveloped character or wilderness characteristics and are usually excluded from IRAs.

**Utility Developments** – These developments include pipelines and overhead powerlines that often produce visible, linear structures or ground features associated with the utility lines, or permanent structures, service roads, vegetation clearing, and ground-disturbance activities. In most cases, utility developments permanently alter landscape features and are not consistent with undeveloped character or wilderness characteristics. Usually utility lines are excluded from IRAs. In rare cases of buried pipelines in areas having brush or grass cover, the visible effects of the pipeline development over time and the area may regain much of an undeveloped character.

**Aquatic, Riparian, and Watershed Management** –Watershed and fisheries improvement actions can include construction of structures for stream bank stabilization (rock gabions, rock riprap, etc.), slope stabilization, and fish habitat improvement. Some structural improvements may be visually evident and may detract from the natural landscape but, generally, improvement structures are small and localized, and they have a negligible effect on undeveloped character or wilderness characteristics.

**Wildlife Management** –Wildlife management actions may result in a broad array of physical alterations including vegetation treatments (stand, structure, and composition cuts, browse species plantings, etc.), prescribed burning, and habitat improvement structures. Some vegetation treatments and structural improvements may be visually evident and potentially may create a “developed”

landscape, which would reduce IRA inventories. Generally, the physical impacts of wildlife habitat improvement structures are so small and limited that they have a negligible effect on undeveloped character or wilderness characteristics.

**Domestic Livestock Grazing** –Livestock grazing may be permitted within designated wilderness areas where grazing was established at the time the wilderness was designated. Livestock grazing activities are permitted in accordance with guidelines in the House of Representatives Report No. 96-1126. Corrals, fences, and water developments essential to sustain current permitted domestic livestock levels are generally allowed within designated wilderness although strong efforts are usually made to work with grazing permittees to reduce the physical and visual impacts stemming from this development. Livestock grazing itself usually has little or no effect on undeveloped character or wilderness characteristics. Minor structural range improvements, such as stock watering developments and fence lines, may still be consistent with undeveloped character and wilderness characteristics unless they create obvious, large areas of altered landscape or development. Nonstructural range improvements such as stock driveways, chained areas, and terracing, would be excluded from IRAs when readily visible and apparent.

#### **General Effects by Management Prescription Category**

Direct and indirect effects for all alternatives are based on assigned management prescriptions and their potential for development. These prescriptions are the same for all alternatives and are described below. Although acres by prescription are analyzed for the planning period (10-15 years) for purposes of comparison, it is highly doubtful that all potential development would occur during this time period. A 50- to 100-year timeframe is more reasonable in which to expect direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to occur. Similarly, it is possible that management prescriptions could change over this longer timeframe, depending on a number of biological, technological, social, and political variables. Such decisions would be made during future forest plan revision efforts.

**Externally Shared IRA Management Direction** – Current management direction for portions of IRAs on the Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce National Forests are carried over under all alternatives. Management direction for IRA portions on those Forests will be reviewed during their Forest Plan revisions. Accordingly, Wilderness recommendations for those portions are also carried over under all alternatives. Management direction in Alternatives 4 and 6 relating to the use of mechanical transport within recommended wilderness does not apply to these portions of adjacent Forests. Mechanical transport opportunities within recommended wilderness, as they currently exist for these areas, are the same in every alternative.

**Potential Effects on Externally Shared Recommended Wilderness Areas during Forest Plan Revisions on Adjacent National Forests** – Wilderness recommendations within portions of externally shared IRAs will not be complete until the Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce National Forests complete Forest Plan revisions as well. Under Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 6, and 7, two recommended wilderness areas, Boulder-White Cloud and Pioneer Mountains straddle the Sawtooth and Salmon-Challis administrative boundary. If it were determined during the Salmon-Challis Plan revision that their portions were not to be recommended for wilderness designation, it would leave the Sawtooth portions

of the Boulder-White Cloud at almost 323,000 acres and the Pioneer Mountains at almost 120,000 acres. The Sawtooth portions of these recommended wilderness areas would still be viable as recommended wilderness based on minimum size as well as criteria such as wilderness characteristics, special features, and physical configuration.

Under Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 6, and 7, Ecogroup portions of two shared IRAs, Red Mountain and Hanson Lakes, are recommended for wilderness designation. No portions of these IRAs on the Salmon-Challis National Forest were recommended under the current Salmon-Challis Forest Plan. The Boise and Sawtooth portions of these recommended wilderness areas are fully viable without the Salmon-Challis portions of these IRAs based on minimum size criteria as well as wilderness characteristics, special features, and physical configuration. Allocation outcomes for the Salmon-Challis portions of these IRAs will be reconsidered during the Salmon-Challis Forest Plan revision process, but any allocation decision should not affect the viability of the Red Mountain and Hanson Lakes recommended wilderness areas.

Under Alternative 4, the Payette portion of the Rapid River IRA is recommended for wilderness designation while the Nez Perce portion is not. No portion of the Rapid River IRA on the Nez Perce National Forest was recommended under the current Nez Perce Forest Plan. Given that the Payette portion is almost 68,000 acres in size, it's viability as a potential recommended wilderness is not dependent on allocation decisions for the Nez Perce portion based on minimum size criteria as well as wilderness characteristics, special features, and physical configuration. Allocation outcomes for the Nez Perce portion of this IRA will be reconsidered during the Nez Perce Forest Plan revision process, but any allocation decision should not affect the viability of the Rapid River recommended wilderness area under Alternative 4.

## **Direct and Indirect Effects by Alternative**

### **Analysis Details**

Information presented in the following analyses has been extracted from a more extensive technical report in the interest of brevity of the EIS. Analysis methodology is not detailed in the EIS and actual figures are, in most cases, rounded. The technical report is available upon request if full details regarding methodology and exact figures are desired.

### **Issue 1 - IRA Development Potential**

Disposition relative to the potential for development can be analyzed based on the management prescription categories (MPCs) assigned to each IRA. Potential outcomes for IRAs under assigned MPCs can be combined into four categories:

- Management prescriptions that allow a full range of development opportunities;
- Management prescriptions that have the potential for low levels of development;
- Management prescriptions that maintain undeveloped character; and
- Recommended for Wilderness designation.

The MPCs vary in the kinds of development that would be possible under each. However, it must be recognized that, under every MPC, road construction and reconstruction can occur where needed to provide access related to reserved or outstanding rights, or to respond to statute or treaty. As these conditions are common to every MPC, they are not considered in this analysis.

**Full Range of Development Prescriptions** – Potential development of Inventoried Roadless Areas is reflected in the management prescriptions that they are assigned under every alternative. The management prescriptions vary by alternative so potential development of each IRA can also vary by alternative. In any case, development that might be allowed under any management prescription would be likely to occur slowly over time and only after site-specific analysis and disclosure of the development's potential effects.

Individually and collectively, road building and other development activities can directly alter physical and biological characteristics of roadless areas, such as soil productivity, water quality, air quality, vegetation patterns, and habitat effectiveness. Indirectly, development activities can modify the primitive recreational character of an area through the sights and sounds of human presence. These disturbances cumulatively heighten the sensation of being in a developed area. Visitors seeking a primitive experience would choose not to visit such an area, and obvious signs of development would result in the Forest removing the area from its roadless inventory. Direct and indirect development effects would also reduce or eliminate the opportunity for Congress to consider the affected area for inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Management prescriptions that would allow a full range of development include MPCs 2.4, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.0. These prescriptions would allow road construction or reconstruction within IRAs as well as other development activities, such as scheduled timber harvest, which over the long term could develop substantial portions of the IRAs. The dominant feature of this disposition category relates to the potential intensities of management activities. These prescriptions emphasize specific types and intensities of management activities, including concentrated development such as mining sites (8.0), rangeland vegetation management (6.2, 6.1) forest vegetation management (5.2, 5.1, 2.4), recreation (4.3, 4.2). Under these prescriptions, development activities are likely to be more concentrated and extensive than other prescriptions.

**Low Levels of Development Prescriptions** – Management prescriptions that would be likely to allow low levels of development include MPCs 3.1, 3.2, 4.1b, and 4.1c. 4.1b and 4.1c do not allow any new road construction within IRAs, and 3.1 and 3.2 would allow little or no new road construction. However, these prescriptions do allow for some resource management activities that potentially could change undeveloped areas into developed ones. Under these MPCs, IRAs could receive relatively low levels of vegetation managements such as timber salvage. Mechanical restoration treatments, such as habitat restoration, or treatments to reduce the hazard of insect hazard or uncharacteristic wildfire, are allowed under 3.2 and 4.1c. The level of development might not necessarily be sufficient to change the “roadless” status of the IRA. The difference between these MPCs and those of the full range of development prescriptions lies in the likely level of concentration and intensity in management activities.

Development under 3.1, 3.2, 4.1b, and 4.1c, although a possibility, is likely to be much lower in intensity, concentration, and occurrence than under MPCs 2.4, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.0.

**Prescriptions That Maintain Undeveloped Character** – Management prescriptions that do not allow road construction or reconstruction, outside of designated wilderness, are 2.2, 4.1a, and 2.1 Wild river corridors. Although some limited management activities may occur in these areas, no lasting signs of development would be produced. Emphasis is generally on allowing natural processes to dominate, while maintaining at least a semi-primitive recreational setting. No change to inventoried roadless areas would occur.

**Recommended Wilderness** – Recommended wilderness areas are represented by MPC 1.2. These areas would be protected from development activities that might disqualify them from wilderness consideration until such time that Congress decides whether or not to officially designate them as wilderness areas. Natural processes dominate, and the recreational setting is predominantly primitive, although some motorized recreation may be allowed in designated areas. No change to inventoried roadless areas would occur.

Table IRA-8 displays a breakdown of the effects of assigned management prescriptions on roadless areas by lead Forest and alternative. This table shows the approximate acreages (rounded to the nearest 1000 acres) and the percent of total areas within IRAs that result in each disposition category.

**Full Range of Development Prescriptions** – The levels of prescriptions presenting a full range of development within IRAs are generally lowest under Alternative 6, with no acres assigned. This reflects the theme of Alternative 6, which emphasizes roadless area protection and allows no development within the IRAs. Alternative 4 on the Payette also has no acres assigned to these prescriptions. As would be expected, Alternative 5 offers the highest level of full range of development prescriptions, ranging from 612,500 acres on the Payette to 912,500 on the Sawtooth. For the Boise National Forest, Alternatives 7 and 4 are the second and third lowest with only about 23,900 and 95,100 acres, respectively, assigned to full range of development prescriptions. The remaining alternatives range from 369,800 to 608,100 acres for the Boise. Other than Alternative 5, the level of full range of development prescriptions is relatively low on the Payette, compared to the Boise and the Sawtooth. Levels on the Payette range from 2,700 acres under Alternative 7 to 139,300 acres under Alternative 3. Although the range of values for the Sawtooth is relatively high, this is somewhat misleading. Most of the MPC assignments in this category on the Sawtooth are 6.1 and 6.2, which are largely rangelands over which development would not be as concentrated or obvious as on the forested lands on the Boise and Payette. Values on the Sawtooth range from the second lowest of 55,200 acres under Alternative 4 to the second highest of 604,900 acres under Alternative 1B.

Table IRA-8. IRA Disposition Acres and Percent of Forest IRAs by Alternative<sup>1</sup>

Indicator	Alternative	Boise NF IRAs		Payette NF IRAs		Sawtooth NF IRAs	
		Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Areas assigned to management prescriptions that allow a <b>full range of development opportunities</b>	1B	608,100	55%	136,900	15%	604,900	49%
	2	369,800	33%	56,100	6%	363,300	30%
	3	404,900	37%	139,300	15%	445,400	36%
	4	95,100	9%	0	0%	55,200	5%
	5	853,600	77%	612,500	67%	912,500	74%
	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	7	23,900	2%	2,700	0%	121,200	10%
Areas assigned to management prescriptions that have the potential for <b>low levels of development</b>	1B	316,400	29%	549,700	61%	352,800	29%
	2	549,800	50%	627,400	69%	596,100	49%
	3	514,700	46%	526,700	58%	513,700	42%
	4	208,400	19%	25,500	3%	240,900	20%
	5	248,800	22%	68,700	8%	310,700	25%
	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	7	868,100	78%	628,300	69%	838,200	68%
Areas assigned to management prescriptions that <b>maintain undeveloped character</b>	1B	5,100	<1%	14,500	2%	1,900	<1%
	2	5,100	<1%	17,600	2%	1,900	<1%
	3	5,100	<1%	35,100	4%	2,100	<1%
	4	68,200	6%	13,700	2%	1,800	<1%
	5	6,100	1%	227,200	25%	1,900	<1%
	6	924,600	83%	701,200	77%	961,300	78%
	7	32,600	3%	70,200	8%	1,900	<1%
Areas <b>recommended for wilderness designation</b>	1B	179,000	16%	207,300	23%	265,600	22%
	2	183,900	17%	207,300	23%	263,900	22%
	3	183,900	17%	207,300	23%	263,900	22%
	4	736,800	66%	878,900	97%	927,200	76%
	5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	6	183,900	17%	207,300	23%	263,900	22%
	7	183,900	17%	207,300	23%	263,900	22%

<sup>1</sup>Acres are rounded to the nearest 100 acres. Forest totals by alternative or Forest may differ slightly due to rounding.

**Low Levels of Development Prescriptions** – The amounts of low level of development prescriptions are the lowest on all three Forests at 0 acres under Alternative 6. Again, this reflects the theme of Alternative 6, which emphasizes roadless area protection and allows no development within the IRAs. Alternative 4 is the second lowest for all three Forests, ranging from 25,500 acres on the Payette to 240,900 acres on the Sawtooth. The highest levels are found under Alternative 7 for all three Forests, ranging from 628,300 on the Payette to 868,100 on the Boise. The remaining alternatives range from 248,800 acres to 549,800 acres on the Boise; 68,700 to 627,400 on the Payette; and 310,700 to 596,100 on the Sawtooth.

**Prescriptions That Maintain Undeveloped Character** - For the Boise National Forest, acres assigned to prescriptions that would maintain the undeveloped character within IRAs range from a very low of 5,100 in Alternatives 1B, 2, and 3, to a high of 924,600 in Alternative 6, which emphasizes roadless area protection. Alternative 5 is also very low at 6,100 acres. Alternative 4 has an estimated 68,200 acres and Alternative 7 has 32,600 acres of undeveloped prescriptions assigned to areas within IRAs.

For the Payette National Forest, Alternatives 1B, 2, and 4 all have very low levels of undeveloped prescriptions, with less than 20,000 acres assigned. At 13,700, Alternative 4 is not as high as might be expected under this alternative, because most of the roadless areas under it were afforded additional protection through recommended wilderness prescriptions. Alternative 3 has a somewhat higher level of 35,100 acres. Alternative 5 has a relatively high level of 227,200 acres. This is higher than what might be expected but reflects a compensation for the lack of recommended wilderness under this alternative. Alternative 6 offers the highest figure of 701,200 acres, which is expected in an alternative that is designed to protect roadless areas.

For the Sawtooth National Forest, Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 all have very low levels of close to 2,000 acres assigned to prescriptions that would maintain undeveloped character within IRAs. Alternative 4 also has a relatively low level of assigned acres because most of the roadless areas under this alternative were afforded additional protection through a recommended wilderness prescription. Alternative 6 offers the highest level of 961,300 acres, which is what would be expected under that alternative.

**Recommended Wilderness** – For the Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests, Alternative 1B recommends the same areas that were originally recommended for wilderness in the original Forest Plans. Although some of the recommended wilderness boundaries were slightly modified under Alternatives 2, 3, 6, and 7, no additional areas are recommended. As such, the levels of recommended wilderness remain roughly the same in Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 6 and 7 for all three Forests. This level is roughly 655,000 for the Ecogroup as a whole. Alternative 5, which emphasizes commodity production, has no areas recommended for wilderness designation. This maximizes the amount of area available for potential development under Alternative 5. At the other end of the spectrum, Alternative 4, which emphasizes minimal human disturbance, recommends the highest amount of acres for recommended wilderness, totaling about 2,547,000 for the combined Forests.

**IRA Dispositions for Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce portions of Ecogroup-Lead IRAs** - Prescriptions for portions of Ecogroup-lead IRAs (Pioneer Mountains, Boulder-White Cloud, Railroad Ridge, Hanson Lakes, Red Mountain and Rapid River) were the same as the current Forest Plan across all alternatives. As a result their dispositions under the alternatives also remain static. Table IRA-9 displays these dispositions cumulatively by Forest. Management direction for these areas will be completed when each Forest completes Forest Plan revision.



**Table IRA-9. IRA Disposition Acres for Salmon-Challis and Nez Perce portions of Ecogroup-Lead IRAs \***

Forest	IRA Disposition Under All Alternatives			
	Acres assigned to MPCs that allow a <b>full range of development</b> opportunities	Acres assigned to MPCs that have the potential for <b>low levels of development</b>	Acres assigned to MPCs that <b>maintain undeveloped character</b>	Acres <b>recommended for wilderness</b> designation
<b>Salmon Challis</b>	0	249,000	0	87,000
<b>Nez Perce</b>	5,000	11,000	4,000	0

\* Forest totals by alternative may not add up to actual totals due to rounding.

### **Issue 2 - Forest Health Treatment Capability**

Uncharacteristic wildfire and insect infestation are two of the most prominent forest health problems within the Ecogroup area. To assess threats of uncharacteristic wildfire, analyses included in this Forest Plan revision process evaluated all areas within the Ecogroup relative to uncharacteristic wildfire hazard conditions. In this effort, vegetation within the Ecogroup was analyzed and assigned a rating for uncharacteristic wildfire hazard based on existing vegetation conditions. More details regarding each of these analyses and the ratings can be found in the *Vegetation Hazard* and *Fire Management* sections of this chapter. Most areas were rated as either, low, medium, high, or extreme for uncharacteristic fire hazard conditions. High or extreme ratings also represent areas that would be likely to receive a high priority for vegetation treatments to reduce the threats from wildfire. Similarly, insect hazard was also analyzed to assess the threats posed by insect infestations to forest health. This analysis is also presented in the *Vegetation Hazard* section of this chapter. High insect hazard ratings represent areas identified as high priorities for vegetation treatments to reduce the threats of insect infestations. An estimated 7 percent of the acres within Ecogroup IRAs have been identified as having high or extreme ratings for uncharacteristic wildfire hazard, while 13 percent of the IRA acreage has been identified as having high ratings for insect hazard. The estimated total acres of these areas are displayed in Table IRA-10. Vegetation patterns and conditions vary across subwatersheds. These acreage figures as well as the percentages cited above are based on overall ratings done at the subwatershed level rather than the acres of specific vegetation condition. As such, these figures are substantially larger than the actual acres of hazardous conditions within the IRAs and cannot be compared to figures of actual vegetation conditions done at a finer scale.

**Table IRA-10. IRA Acres Having High or Extreme Uncharacteristic Fire Hazard or High Insect Hazard Conditions\***

Indicator	Boise NF	Payette NF	Sawtooth NF	Ecogroup Totals
Estimated acres of High or Extreme Uncharacteristic Wildfire Hazard within IRAs	97,200	117,000	17,500	231,800
Percent of total acres of High or Extreme Uncharacteristic Wildfire Hazard on Forest	33%	39%	83%	38%
Estimated acres of High Insect Hazard within IRAs	139,900	136,300	155,500	431,700
Percent of total acres of High Insect Hazard on Forest	52%	43%	76%	55%

\*Acresages include only Ecogroup portions of IRAs and are rounded to the nearest 100 acres. Sums of values may differ from totals slightly due to rounding.

Relative capabilities to treat fire and insect-related forest health problems within IRAs under each alternative can be analyzed based on the combination of assigned MPCs and areas within IRAs where these problems and the need for treatments are likely to exist. The relationship between MPCs and treatments and access differs slightly for insect hazard, so it is presented separately.

The opportunities for treatment presented by the MPCs can be grouped into three categories based on the types of treatments and access that each MPC allows. The three groups consist of:

- Prescriptions that would limit both the range of treatments available as well as access capabilities (MPCs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1a, and 4.1b);
- Prescriptions that would limit access capabilities but allow a wide range of treatments (MPCs 3.2 and 4.1c); and
- Prescriptions that would allow both a full range of treatments and access capabilities (MPCs 2.4, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.0).

The alternatives can be evaluated based on the total acres within IRAs having high or extreme uncharacteristic wildfire hazard ratings or high insect hazard ratings that are assigned to each of the above MPC-based categories. Estimates for these values are displayed in Tables IRA-11 and IRA-12.

As with Issue 1, the indicators are intended to show relative differences between alternatives, rather than to represent the actual acres of treatments that are expected to occur. Treatment areas would not equal MPC acres, but would be a much smaller level based on management priorities, funding opportunities, and project-level planning decisions within the planning period.

**Table IRA-11. IRA Acres of MPCs Assigned to Areas Within IRAs Having High or Extreme Ratings for Uncharacteristic Wildfire Hazard by Alternative\***

Forest	Forest Health Capability	Alt. 1B	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6	Alt. 7
<b>Boise</b>	Treatments and Access Limited	35,200	36,200	11,100	87,000	200	97,000	10,100
	Treatments Available; Access Limited	0	20,400	43,600	4,100	11,900	0	84,000
	Treatments and Access Available	62,000	40,600	42,500	6,100	85,100	200	3,200
<b>Payette</b>	Treatments and Access Limited	24,000	35,800	42,400	117,000	25,400	117,000	101,400
	Treatments Available; Access Limited	65,400	73,400	51,600	100	7,700	0	15,400
	Treatments and Access Available	27,600	7,800	23,000	0	84,000	0	200
<b>Sawtooth</b>	Treatments and Access Limited	2,300	2,400	2,600	15,100	0	17,500	3,300
	Treatments Available; Access Limited	7,200	10,100	8,000	2,500	3,700	0	13,400
	Treatments and Access Available	8,000	5,100	6,900	0	13,800	0	800

\* Actual Forest figures by alternative are rounded to the nearest 100 acres. Totals by alternative may differ slightly due to rounding.

In the case of insect hazard, a slight shift in MPC categories occurs because MPC 4.1b allows salvage treatments, which might be used to reduce insect hazard conditions. This moves 4.1b from the first category and into the second to create the following MPC groupings:

- Prescriptions that would limit both the range of treatments available as well as access capabilities (MPCs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, and 4.1a);
- Prescriptions that would limit access capabilities but allow a wide range of treatments (MPCs 3.2, 4.1b, and 4.1c); and
- Prescriptions that would allow both a full range of treatments and access capabilities (MPCs 2.4, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.0).

**Table IRA-12. IRA Acres of MPCs Assigned to Areas Within IRAs Having High Ratings for Insect Hazard by Alternative\***

Forest	Forest Health Capabilities	Alt. 1B	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6	Alt. 7
Boise	Treatments and Access Limited	59,700	61,700	18,600	127,700	400	139,600	36,800
	Treatments Available; Access Limited	0	37,600	75,900	7,500	28,400	200	97,400
	Treatments and Access Available	80,200	40,600	45,400	4,700	111,000	0	5,700
Payette	Treatments and Access Limited	100,000	100,400	44,600	134,800	28,400	136,300	110,300
	Treatments Available; Access Limited	7,500	24,900	66,900	1,400	11,500	0	25,800
	Treatments and Access Available	28,700	11,000	24,800	0	96,300	0	200
Sawtooth	Treatments and Access Limited	71,500	70,800	32,500	140,500	300	155,500	34,600
	Treatments Available; Access Limited	1,200	52,000	70,400	14,000	34,700	0	109,200
	Treatments and Access Available	82,800	32,700	52,600	1,000	120,500	0	11,700

\* Actual Forest figures by alternative are rounded to the nearest 100 acres. Totals by alternative may differ slightly due to rounding.

Generally, Alternative 6 would provide the highest level of limitations on treatment types and access within IRAs for all three Forests. Alternative 4 would provide the second highest level of limitations on management activities within IRAs. This is largely because MPCs 1.2 and 4.1a, which allow little or no mechanical treatments and no road building, are the predominant management prescriptions under those alternatives. All of the other alternatives offer a substantially wider range of treatment and access opportunities.

Areas where treatments and access opportunities are both available are the greatest under Alternative 5 for all three Forests. Alternative 1B ranks second in providing management strategies with the fewest treatment and access limitations. This would be expected since commodity production and active vegetation management themes are prominent under these alternatives. Generally, Alternatives 3 and 2 provide moderate to high levels of areas where both treatments and access are available due to the emphasis on restoration activities.

**Issue 3 - Roadless Area Conservation Rule Consistency**

Each alternative's level of consistency with the RACR can be analyzed based on the assigned MPCs. Some MPCs (1.2, 2.1, 2.2, and 4.1a) are consistent with management direction prescribed for IRAs under the current version of the RACR. Acres and percents of IRAs assigned to these management prescriptions are compiled and displayed in Table IRA-13 along with those of inconsistent management prescriptions.

Alternative 6 is the only Alternative that is fully consistent with the RACR for all three Forests. All other alternatives are inconsistent with the RACR to some extent. Although not fully consistent, Alternative 4 is close to being consistent on the Payette and Sawtooth and is also the second closest alternative on the Boise. Alternative 5 is the least consistent on the Boise and Sawtooth, while Alternative 1B slightly edges out Alternatives 2 and 5 as the least consistent on the Payette. Values for all three Forests under Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, and 7 are relatively similar on each Forest, ranging only from about 17 percent to 31 percent of the acres being consistent with the RACR.

**Table IRA-13. Roadless Area Conservation Rule Consistency\***

Forest	Alt. 1B	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6	Alt. 7
<b>IRA Acres Assigned to Management Prescriptions That Are Consistent with the RACR</b>							
Boise	184,000	188,900	188,900	805,000	6,100	1,108,500	216,500
Payette	221,800	224,900	242,500	883,000	227,200	908,500	277,500
Sawtooth	267,500	265,800	266,000	929,000	1,900	1,225,100	265,800
<b>IRA Acres Assigned to Management Prescriptions That Are Not Consistent with the RACR</b>							
Boise	924,500	919,600	919,600	303,600	1,102,400	0	892,000
Payette	686,600	683,500	666,000	25,500	681,200	0	631,000
Sawtooth	957,600	959,300	959,100	296,200	1,223,200	0	959,300
<b>% of IRA Acres Assigned to Management Prescriptions That Are Consistent with the RACR</b>							
Boise	17%	17%	17%	73%	1%	100%	20%
Payette	24%	25%	27%	97%	25%	100%	31%
Sawtooth	22%	22%	22%	76%	<1%	100%	22%
<b>% of IRA Acres Assigned to Management Prescriptions That Are Not Consistent with the RACR</b>							
Boise	83%	83%	83%	27%	99%	0%	80%
Payette	76%	75%	73%	3%	75%	0%	69%
Sawtooth	78%	78%	78%	24%	>99%	0%	78%

\* Actual Forest totals by alternative are rounded to the nearest 100 acres. Totals by alternative may differ slightly due to rounding.

In the above analysis, MPCs 3.1 and 4.1b were considered inconsistent with the RACR because of their allowance of salvage harvest. Salvage harvest is not a scheduled activity and may occur only infrequently. As a result, the on-the-ground results under Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, and 7 would likely be more consistent with the RACR than the above figures would indicate.

**Issue 4 - Use of Mechanical Transport within Recommended Wilderness**

This analysis only reflects the effects of programmatic decisions made in the Forest Plan revision process. It does not preclude or reflect potential site-specific travel management decisions that may be made in subsequent travel planning processes. Travel regulations for motorized uses can change substantially between summer and winter due to the change in types of vehicles and general accessibility. Mechanical transport opportunities are substantially greater in the winter than in the summer for all three Forests. For that reason, both summer and winter opportunities for cross-country travel are presented. Summer trail use must be distinguished from winter trail use because, in most cases, groomed winter trails are located on existing roads during winter snowpack conditions. Groomed cross-country ski trails are included in the analysis because grooming of ski trails requires the use of motorized equipment that would be prohibited under Alternatives 4 and 6. This could potentially affect cross-country ski trail-grooming capabilities at existing trail sites. Winter snowmobile trails that are simply designated but not groomed could also potentially be affected under Alternatives 4 and 6. However, they are not included in this analysis because they represent a much lower level of investment and established use.

Alternative 5 has no recommended wilderness so it would not be affected by any management direction that was applied specifically to recommended wilderness areas. In reality, the on-the-ground results under Alternative 5 would be the same as those of Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, and 7. Because Alternative 5 does not recommend any areas for wilderness designation on the Ecogroup Forests, the issue regarding protection of wilderness values and the establishment of non-conforming uses is largely moot.

Opportunities for the use of mechanical transport within recommended wilderness areas would remain as they currently are under Alternative 1B. Acres open to cross-country travels shifts somewhat under Alternatives 2, 3, and 7. However, the relatively small shifts under Alternative 1B and those under Alternatives 2, 3, and 7 result purely from slight differences in the boundaries of individual recommended wilderness areas and do not represent changed travel regulations on the ground. In reality, there would be no overall differences in opportunities between these alternatives. Motorized and mechanized use opportunities would be maintained as they currently exist. This would also mean that current, non-conforming uses would be allowed to continue and possibly contribute to their long-term establishment. As such, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation experiences within these recommended wilderness areas would remain at less than what could potentially be offered. This effect varies slightly with the differences in recommended wilderness boundaries between Alternative 1B and Alternatives 2, 3, and 7.

Prohibiting motorized uses within recommended wilderness would also present a direct, financial impact to the Forests. Some of the trails within recommended wilderness areas were constructed or improved using grants from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Under the grant program rules, conversion to non-motorized use would require repayment to the appropriate recreational program fund account an amount determined by investment amortization through use, project life expectancy, and depreciation or appreciation. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation has estimated the combined repayment for all three Forests to be \$1,086,000 for Alternative 4. The amount for Alternative 6 has not been estimated but it would be considerably less considering its much lower level of recommended wilderness.

In that the recommended wilderness areas vary by alternative, the current opportunities for the use of mechanical transport also vary by alternative. The acres and miles of mechanical transport opportunities for the recommended wilderness areas under each alternative, based on current travel regulations, are displayed in Table IRA-14. Recommended wilderness areas are the same under Alternatives 2, 3, 6, and 7, so the current condition is the same for recommended wilderness under each of those alternatives. The current situation for Alternative 1B differs from that of Alternatives 2, 3, 6, and 7 only because of small boundary differences.

**Table IRA-14. Opportunities for Mechanical Transport Uses Within Recommended Wilderness Areas by Alternative Under Current Travel Regulations**

Indicator	Alternatives <sup>1</sup>	Boise NF	Payette NF	Sawtooth NF
Acres Open to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country <b>Motorized</b> Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B	900	200	0
	2, 3, 6, & 7	200	200	0
	4	95,200	100,500	157,700
Acres Open to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country <b>Mechanized</b> Uses <sup>3</sup>	1B	179,000	207,300	265,600
	2, 3, 6, & 7	183,900	207,300	263,900
	4	736,500	883,000	927,200
Acres Open to <b>Winter</b> Cross-Country <b>Motorized</b> Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B	177,400	92,900	221,900
	2, 3, 6, & 7	182,300	92,900	220,200
	4	685,500	547,300	671,100
Miles of <b>Summer</b> Trail Open to <b>Motorized</b> Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B	59	84	74
	2, 3, 6, & 7	62	84	70
	4	358	480	479
Miles of <b>Summer</b> Trail Open to <b>Mechanized</b> Uses <sup>3</sup>	1B	91	197	243
	2, 3, 6, & 7	98	197	239
	4	487	847	856
Miles of Groomed <b>Snowmobile</b> Trails	1B	0	0	0
	2, 3, 6, & 7	0	0	0
	4	0	7	2
Miles of Groomed <b>Cross-Country Ski</b> Trails	1B	0	0	0
	2, 3, 6, & 7	0	0	0
	4	0	0	10

<sup>1</sup> There is no recommended wilderness in Alternative 5. As a result, it does not appear in the above data.

<sup>2</sup> Includes any form of motorized use during all or any part of the year. Area estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

<sup>3</sup> Includes any form of mechanized use during all or any part of the year. Area estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

Estimates for opportunities for the use of mechanical transport within recommended wilderness areas under each alternative are displayed in Table IRA-15. This table reflects the outcome of revised Forest Plan management direction for recommended wilderness under Alternatives 4 and 6. Because mechanized transport within recommended wilderness is prohibited under Alternatives 4 and 6, the results for those alternatives would be the same. The results for Alternative 1B differ from those of Alternatives 2, 3, and 7 only because of small recommended wilderness boundary differences between those alternatives.

Under Alternatives 4 and 6, the use of mechanical transport is categorically prohibited within recommended wilderness. These alternatives would reduce both motorized and mechanized recreation opportunities substantially, including all motorized and mountain bike use, across the Ecogroup recommended wilderness areas. This effect is larger in scale under Alternative 4 than 6 due to the much greater area of recommended wilderness in Alternative 4. The reduction is greater for cross-country travel in the winter than in the summer because of the substantially larger areas currently open to cross-country travel in the winter. Conversely, Alternatives 4 and 6 would discontinue non-conforming uses and would increase opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation experiences within these areas.

Approximately 200 acres currently open to cross-country summer motorized travel on both the Boise and Payette would be converted to non-motorized access under Alternative 6. With the expanded recommended wilderness areas in Alternative 4, the reduction in summer cross-country travel ranges from 95,200 acres on the Boise, to 157,700 on the Sawtooth, with 100,500 acres estimated for the Payette. Winter cross-country travel reductions would range from 92,900 to 220,200 acres under Alternative 6, and from 547,300 to 685,500 acres under Alternative 4.



**Table IRA-15. Opportunities for the Use of Mechanical Transport Within Recommended Wilderness Areas Under Revised Forest Plan Direction**

Indicator	Alternatives <sup>1</sup>	Boise NF	Payette NF	Sawtooth NF
Acres Open to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country <b>Motorized</b> Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B	900	200	0
	2, 3, & 7	200	200	0
	4 & 6	0	0	0
Acres Open to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country <b>Mechanized</b> Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B	179,000	207,300	265,600
	2, 3, & 7	183,900	207,300	263,900
	4 & 6	0	0	0
Acres Open to <b>Winter</b> Cross-Country <b>Motorized</b> Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B	177,400	92,900	221,900
	2, 3, & 7	182,300	92,900	220,200
	4 & 6	0	0	0
Miles of <b>Summer</b> Trail Open to <b>Motorized</b> Uses	1B	59	84	74
	2, 3, & 7	62	84	70
	4 & 6	0	0	0
Miles of <b>Summer</b> Trail Open to <b>Mechanized</b> Uses	1B	91	197	243
	2, 3, & 7	98	197	239
	4 & 6	0	0	0
Miles of Groomed <b>Snowmobile</b> Trails	1B	0	0	0
	2, 3, & 7	0	0	0
	4 & 6	0	0	0
Miles of Groomed <b>Cross-Country Ski</b> Trails	1B	0	0	0
	2, 3, & 7	0	0	0
	4 & 6	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> There is no recommended wilderness in Alternative 5. As a result, it does not appear in the above data.

<sup>2</sup> Area estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

Reductions in cross-country summer mechanized travel opportunities would range from 183,900 acres on the Boise to 263,900 acres on the Sawtooth under Alternative 6. The reduction would be 207,300 acres on the Payette. With the expanded recommended wilderness in Alternative 4, the reduction in summer cross-country travel ranges from 736,500 acres on the Boise, to 927,200 on the Sawtooth. The reduction on the Payette would be 883,000 acres.

Estimated effects on both summer and winter trail opportunities only reflect the trail miles within recommended wilderness areas. Actual effects under Alternatives 4 and 6 would be the result of considerations made for each trail segment that would be affected. Actual implementation results might vary somewhat in that, in some cases, trail segments outside of the recommended wilderness areas might also be affected. In some cases, use conflicts within recommended wilderness would probably be resolved by adjustments to recommended wilderness boundaries where trails are located along the recommended wilderness peripheries, barely within recommended wilderness, or trail locations could be adjusted to just outside of recommended wilderness with no net loss of trail. The results of this analysis

should then be viewed as the relative levels of change, by alternative, to motorized and mechanized opportunities.

Motorized summer trails available to recreationists within recommended wilderness would be reduced on all three Forests under Alternative 6, ranging from 62 to 84 total miles. Reductions under Alternative 4 would be even greater, ranging from 358 to 480 total miles. In that there are greater numbers of summer trails open to mechanized uses than motorized uses, the scale of reduced opportunities would be greater for mechanized uses. Under Alternative 6, reductions in miles of mechanized use trails would range from 98 to 239 miles. Reductions under Alternative 4 would be even greater, ranging from 487 to 856 total miles.

Generally, the effects on winter trail uses are substantially lower than the effects on summer trail uses. This is largely because there are very few groomed trails within recommended wilderness under any alternative. There would be reductions of 7 and 2 miles of groomed snowmobile trails on the Payette and Sawtooth respectively under Alternative 4. Reductions of groomed cross-country ski trails would be limited to 10 miles on the Sawtooth. In reality, most if not all of the impacts to cross-country ski trails would probably be resolved by adjustments to recommended wilderness boundaries because these trails are located along the recommended wilderness peripheries, barely within recommended wilderness.

Current travel regulations are continued for the Salmon-Challis portions under all alternatives. The prohibition on mechanical transport in recommended wilderness under Alternatives 4 and 6 does not apply to the Salmon-Challis portions of recommended wilderness. Under the current travel regulations, the Salmon-Challis portions of the Boulder-White Cloud and Pioneer Mountains recommended wilderness areas is open to motorized and mechanized uses only on roads and trails specially designated for those uses. Currently, this consists of about 5 miles of designated primitive road within the Wildhorse Creek drainage in the Pioneer Mountains portion.

## Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are assessed for the Ecogroup area, and, to the extent possible, for federal lands within Idaho. Statewide data regarding development capabilities within IRAs are not available. However, statewide information regarding IRAs where management direction allows or does not allow road construction and re-construction are available. This information does not address timber harvest or other potential development but does provide some sense of potential development from road construction on a statewide basis. Table IRA-16 shows a breakdown of road development potential within Ecogroup IRAs and for other National Forests in Idaho.

**Issue 1 – Potential Disposition of IRAs** - Based on the MPC assignments within IRAs under each alternative, acres within the Ecogroup IRAs can be distributed among three categories:

- Acres within IRAs with management prescriptions that allow road construction and reconstruction (MPCs 2.4, 3.2, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 8.0);
- Acres within IRAs with management prescriptions that do not allow road construction and reconstruction (MPCs 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1a, 4.1b, and 4.1c); and
- Acres within IRAs recommended for Wilderness designation (MPC 1.2)

**Table IRA-16. Road Development Potential Within Ecogroup and Other Idaho National Forest IRAs by Alternative\***

Indicator	Alternative	Southwest Idaho Ecogroup IRAs		Other Idaho National Forests	Total for Idaho National Forest IRAs	
		Acres	%		Acres	%
Acres within IRAs with management prescriptions that allow road construction and reconstruction	1B	1,350,000	42	4,187,000	5,537,000	59
	2	1,179,000	36		5,366,000	58
	3	1,854,000	57		6,041,000	65
	4	269,000	8		4,456,000	48
	5	2,447,000	75		6,634,000	71
	6	0	0		4,187,000	44
	7	665,000	21		4,852,000	51
Acres within IRAs with management prescriptions that do not allow road construction and reconstruction	1B	1,240,000	38	1,279,000	2,519,000	27
	2	1,408,000	43		2,687,000	29
	3	733,000	23		2,012,000	22
	4	426,000	13		1,705,000	18
	5	795,000	25		2,074,000	22
	6	2,587,000	80		3,866,000	41
	7	1,922,000	59		3,201,000	34
Acres within IRAs recommended for Wilderness designation	1B	652,000	20	734,000	1,386,000	15
	2	655,000	20		1,389,000	15
	3	655,000	20		1,389,000	15
	4	2,547,000	79		3,281,000	35
	5	0	0		734,000	8
	6	655,000	20		1,389,000	15
	7	655,000	20		1,389,000	15

\*All acreage estimates are rounded to the nearest 1,000 acres. Totals may differ slightly due to rounding.

MPC 3.1 technically allows road construction and reconstruction where needed to address immediate response situations where, if the action is not taken, unacceptable impacts to hydrologic, aquatic, riparian or terrestrial resources, or health and safety, would result. Given this, it is anticipated that road construction and reconstruction would be extremely rare, so 3.1 is included with those MPCs that do not allow road construction and reconstruction.

**Potential Road Development** – Acres within IRAs for the combined Forests that potentially allow road construction are the lowest in Alternative 6 and highest in Alternative 5, ranging from 0 to 2,447,000 acres. When combined with the totals of other Idaho National Forests, this range represents from 44 to 71 percent of all the IRAs on National Forests in Idaho. Alternative 4 would allow the second lowest level of potential road building, with 269,000 acres for the three Forests, while Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, and 7 all offer moderate levels, ranging from 665,000 to 1,854,000 acres.

**Maintained as Unroaded** – Alternative 6 would maintain the highest level at 2,587,000 acres of MPCs that maintain the unroaded character of IRAs. Alternative 4 maintains the least at 426,000 acres due to the strong shift in that alternative to recommended wilderness. This range between Alternatives 6

and 4 represents from 41 to 18 percent of all the IRAs on National Forests in Idaho, respectively. Alternative 3 is the second lowest at 733,000 acres. Alternatives 1B, 2, 5 and 7 all offer moderate levels, ranging from 795,000 acres in Alternative 5 to 1,922,000 acres under Alternative 7.

**Recommended Wilderness** – For the Ecogroup, recommended wilderness acres would be 0 in Alternative 5, 652,000 in Alternative 1B, 655,000 in Alternatives 2, 3, 6, and 7, and 2,547,000 in Alternative 4. Combined with all Idaho National Forests, Alternative 5 would yield a total 734,000 acres of recommended wilderness, representing 8 percent of all IRAs in Idaho. With contributions of a little more than 650,000 acres, Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 6, and 7 represent about 15 percent of Idaho IRAs. Alternative 4 would contribute the highest level of a total 2,547,000 to a statewide total of 3,281,000 acres or 35 percent of Idaho IRAs.

To indicate the potential for National Forest wilderness within the State of Idaho, the Ecogroup recommended wilderness acres are combined with recommended wilderness acres from all other Idaho sources in Table IRA-17. The Ecogroup acres are expressed in a range that represents the range of alternatives in this analysis. Recommended wilderness acres were then combined with designated wilderness acres from the Ecogroup and other designated wilderness areas in Idaho.

**Table IRA-17. Designated and Recommended Wilderness Within the Ecogroup and other Idaho National Forests and Federal Agencies\***

Indicator	Southwest Idaho Ecogroup	Other Idaho National Forests and Federal Agencies	Total Idaho Acres
Acres of Designated Wilderness	1,050,000	2,947,000	3,997,000
Acres of Recommended Wilderness	0 – 2,547,000	1,706,000	1,706,000 – 4,253,000
Total Potential Wilderness Acres	1,050,000 – 3,597,000	4,653,000	5,703,000 – 8,250,000

\* All acreages are rounded to the nearest 1,000 acres.

Another cumulative source of potential federal wilderness in Idaho is roadless land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). From this land base, the BLM has inventoried 67 Wilderness Study Areas in Idaho, comprising an estimated 1,797,000 acres. The agency has recommended that Congress designate 27 of those study areas, comprising an estimated 972,000 acres, as wilderness. The remaining 825,000 acres would be released for other uses. In addition, approximately 43,000 acres of Craters of the Moon National Monument that lie in Idaho are designated wilderness.

Assuming 100 percent of the other National Forest and BLM recommended wilderness areas were designated, these contributions bring the total cumulative amount of potential federally administered wilderness in Idaho to a range of 5,703,000 to 8,250,000 acres, depending on which Ecogroup alternative is selected for implementation. These potential wilderness levels represent a 43 to 106 percent increase over current designated federal wilderness acres in Idaho; and they represent an estimated 28 to 40 percent of the total National Forest System lands in Idaho and 11 to 15 percent of the total land area of Idaho.

### **Issue 2 - Forest Health Problem Treatment Capability**

Aggregated treatment and access values for the entire Ecogroup are displayed in Tables IRA-18 and IRA-19.

Relationships between the alternatives and these indicators are largely the same when aggregated for the Ecogroup as a whole. Again, Alternative 6 would provide the highest level of limitations on treatment types and access within IRAs for all three Forests. Alternative 4 would provide the second highest level of limitations on management activities within IRAs. All of the other alternatives offer a substantially wider range of treatment and access opportunities.

**Table IRA-18. Combined Ecogroup Acres of MPCs Assigned to Areas Within IRAs Having High or Extreme Ratings for Uncharacteristic Wildfire Hazard by Alternative\***

<b>Forest Health Capability</b>	<b>Alt. 1B</b>	<b>Alt. 2</b>	<b>Alt. 3</b>	<b>Alt. 4</b>	<b>Alt. 5</b>	<b>Alt. 6</b>	<b>Alt. 7</b>
Treatments and Access Limited	61,500	74,400	56,200	219,000	25,600	231,600	114,800
Treatments Available; Access Limited	72,600	103,800	103,200	6,700	23,300	0	112,800
Treatments and Access Available	97,600	53,500	72,400	6,100	182,900	200	4,200

\*Actual Forest figures by alternative are rounded to the nearest 100 acres. Totals by alternative may differ slightly due to rounding.

**Table IRA-19. Combined Ecogroup Acres of MPCs Assigned to Areas Within IRAs Having High Ratings for Insect Hazard by Alternative\***

Forest Health Capability	Alt. 1B	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4	Alt. 5	Alt. 6	Alt. 7
Treatments and Access Limited	231,300	232,900	95,700	403,000	29,200	431,400	181,700
Treatments Available; Access Limited	8,700	114,600	213,200	23,000	74,600	300	232,300
Treatments and Access Available	191,700	84,300	122,800	5,600	327,800	0	17,700

\* Actual Forest figures by alternative are rounded to the nearest 100 acres. Totals by alternative may differ slightly due to rounding.

Areas where treatments and access opportunities are both available are the greatest under Alternative 5 for all three Forests. Alternative 1B ranks second in providing management strategies with the fewest treatment and access limitations. Generally, Alternatives 3 and 2 also provide relatively high levels of areas where both treatments and access are available. Alternative 7 provides a relatively low level of areas where both treatments and access are available, ranking second lowest for uncharacteristic wildfire hazard/resistance to control and third lowest for insect hazard.

#### **Issue 4 - Use of Mechanical Transport**

Recommended wilderness management direction under Alternatives 4 and 6 would result in differences between some of the alternatives in opportunities for the use of mechanical transport on all three Forests. Estimates for acreages of cross-country travel zones and miles of trails that would be open to both motorized and mechanized uses are displayed in Table IRA-20.

**Table IRA-20. Forest-wide Opportunities for Mechanical Transport Uses Under Revised Forest Plan Direction<sup>1</sup>**

Indicator	Alternatives	Boise NF <sup>1</sup>	Payette NF <sup>1</sup>	Sawtooth NF <sup>1</sup>
Acres Open to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country Motorized Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	523,800	509,200	787,200
	4	428,600	408,700	628,900
	6	523,600	509,000	782,200
Acres Open to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country Mechanized Uses <sup>3</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	2,200,020	1,531,600	1,893,400
	4	1,465,614	648,700	966,200
	6	2,200,020	1,324,300	1,629,500
Acres Open to <b>Winter</b> Cross-Country Motorized Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	1,851,300	1,076,500	1,526,200
	4	1,165,700	529,200	852,800
	6	1,667,400	983,600	1,305,200
Miles of <b>Summer</b> Trail Open to Motorized Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	881	622	1,088
	4	523	142	609
	6	819	538	1,018

Indicator	Alternatives	Boise NF <sup>1</sup>	Payette NF <sup>1</sup>	Sawtooth NF <sup>1</sup>
Miles of <b>Summer</b> Trail Open to <b>Mechanized</b> Uses <sup>3</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	1,090	1,108	1,762
	4	603	261	906
	6	992	911	1,523
Miles of Groomed <b>Snowmobile</b> Trails	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	771	237	233
	4	771	230	231
	6	771	237	233
Miles of Groomed <b>Cross-Country Ski</b> Trails	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	28	0	80
	4	28	0	70
	6	28	0	80

<sup>1</sup> Data is compiled on an administrative unit basis and does not include portions of recommended wilderness on the Salmon-Challis National Forests.

<sup>2</sup> Includes any form of motorized use during all or any part of the year. Area estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

<sup>3</sup> Includes any form of mechanized use during all or any part of the year. Area estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

Results under Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 5, and 7 reflect the current travel regulations on all three Forests because travel regulations within recommended wilderness would not shift under these alternatives. Alternatives 4 and 6 represent shifts from the current travel regulations in that mechanical transport is prohibited within recommended wilderness areas. As a result both motorized and mechanized uses would be lower under Alternatives 4 and 6. Alternative 4 would present a greater departure from current conditions than Alternative 6 due to the far greater level of recommended wilderness under Alternative 4. When considered on a whole, Forest scale rather than a recommended wilderness area scale, these effects are somewhat offset by existing travel opportunities in areas outside of recommended wilderness areas.

The percent of each National Forest that is closed to both on- and off-trail mechanical transport uses varies by alternative. Comparing these figures for each alternative provides a sense of the overall balance that would exist between the levels of mechanized and non-mechanized experiences under each alternative. These figures are displayed in Table IRA-21. This analysis only reflects the effects of programmatic decisions made in the Forest Plan revision process. It does not preclude or reflect potential site-specific travel management decisions that may be made in subsequent travel planning processes.



**Table IRA-21. Percent of National Forest System Land and Trails Closed to Mechanized Transport Uses**

Indicator	Alternatives	Boise NF	Payette NF	Sawtooth NF
Percent of Forest Closed to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country Motorized Uses <sup>1</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	76%	78%	63%
	4	81%	82%	70%
	6	76%	78%	63%

Indicator	Alternatives	Boise NF	Payette NF	Sawtooth NF
Percent of Forest Closed to <b>Summer</b> Cross-Country Mechanized Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	>1%	33%	10%
	4	33%	72%	54%
	6	>1%	42%	23%
Percent of Forest Closed to <b>Winter</b> Cross-Country Motorized Uses <sup>1</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	16%	53%	28%
	4	47%	77%	60%
	6	24%	57%	38%
Percent of <b>Summer</b> Trail Miles Closed to <b>Motorized</b> Uses <sup>1</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	20%	65%	45%
	4	52%	92%	69%
	6	25%	70%	49%
Percent of <b>Summer</b> Trail Miles Closed to <b>Mechanized</b> Uses <sup>2</sup>	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	1%	38%	11%
	4	45%	85%	54%
	6	10%	49%	23%
Percent of Current Level of Groomed <b>Snowmobile</b> Trails	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	100%	100%	100%
	4	100%	97%	99%
	6	100%	100%	100%
Percent of Current Level of Groomed <b>Cross-Country Ski</b> Trails	1B, 2, 3, 5, & 7	100%	N/A	100%
	4	100%	N/A	88%
	6	100%	N/A	100%

<sup>1</sup> Includes any form of motorized use during all or any part of the year.

<sup>2</sup> Includes any form of mechanized use during all or any part of the year.

Values for percentages of Forests closed to cross-country motorized use are substantially higher in the summer than the winter. This is largely due to the fact that over-snow motorized use has a much lower level of ground disturbance than summer motorized vehicles potentially have. As a result, winter motorized travel is generally less restricted.

Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 5, and 7 would result in the lowest level of restrictions on cross-country motorized uses ranging from 63 to 78 percent of the Ecogroup Forests in the summer and 16 to 53 percent in the winter. Alternative 4 would result in the greatest restrictions ranging from 70 to 82 percent in the summer and 47 to 77 percent in the winter. Alternative 6 would result in moderate levels of restrictions ranging from 63 to 78 percent in the summer and 24 to 57 percent in the winter.

Similarly, cross-country mechanized opportunities would be the lowest under Alternative 4 for each Forest, with restricted areas ranging from 33 to 72 percent. Relatively small increases above the current level would occur under Alternative 6 on the Payette and Sawtooth, but would still be less than 1 percent on the Boise.

Alternatives 1B, 2, 3, 5, and 7 would also result in the lowest level of restrictions on motorized trail use, ranging from 20 to 65 percent of the summer trails closed to motorized use. Alternative 4 would be the most restrictive, ranging from 52 to 92 percent of each Forest's trails. Alternative 6 would again be moderately restrictive, ranging from 25 to 70 percent of each Forest's trails.

Opportunities for mechanized trail use would be the lowest under Alternative 4 for each Forest, with restricted trail levels ranging from 45 to 85 percent of the current trail systems. Relatively small increases above the current level of trail restrictions would occur under Alternative 6 on all three Forests, ranging from 10 to 49 percent of the trail systems.

There would be relatively little effect on groomed snowmobile and cross-country ski trails. This is largely due to the fact that there are very few of these trails located within recommended wilderness areas. In reality, it would be likely that there would be little or no effect on the cross-country ski trails that are within recommended wilderness areas under Alternative 4. They are located barely inside of recommended wilderness boundaries, running along their peripheries. Either minor adjustments to recommended wilderness boundaries would be made to exclude the trails or the trails would be relocated where possible. There would likely be no loss of groomed cross-country ski trails under any alternative.