

Rulemaking for Colorado Roadless Areas Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Lead Agency:	USDA Forest Service
Cooperating Agency:	State of Colorado
Responsible Official:	Secretary of Agriculture
For Information, contact:	Ken Tu, Team Leader USDA Forest Service Colorado Roadless Rule (303) 275-5156 www.roadless.fs.fed.us

Abstract:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, in cooperation with the State of Colorado, proposes to promulgate a state-specific rule to manage roadless area values and characteristics on National Forest System (NFS) lands in Colorado. The proposal is responsive to a recognized need to balance local, State, and national interests in providing management direction for roadless areas on NFS lands in Colorado. This environmental impact statement (EIS) analyzes and displays expected physical, biological, and social-economic consequences of four alternatives of the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule. Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule), would establish a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado that would retain the inventoried roadless area boundaries and roadless area management provisions contained in the 2001 Roadless Rule, for management of roadless areas on NFS lands in Colorado. Alternative 2 (proposed Colorado Roadless Rule), would establish a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado that modifies the roadless area boundaries and roadless area management provisions from the existing 2001 Roadless Rule, primarily to provide for additional management flexibility in roadless areas. Additionally alternative 2 designates 562,200 acres of roadless areas as upper tier, which are areas receiving a higher level of protection. Alternative 3 (forest plans alternative-no action) would not establish a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado but would use management direction contained in the land management plans (forest plans) for each of the national forests in Colorado. Alternative 4 (provisions of alternative 2 with public proposed upper tier) would establish a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado with the same provisions as alternative 2 but would include 2,614,200 acres designated as upper tier.

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SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The Forest Service has prepared an environmental impact statement (EIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal laws and regulations. The EIS discloses the potential environmental consequences that may result from the proposed action and alternatives. This summary presents the pertinent information from the full EIS in abbreviated form.

Supporting documents for the EIS may be found in the EIS record, located at the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Regional Office, 740 Simms Street, Lakewood, CO. Some supporting documents, and the full EIS, are also available on the Web at www.roadless.fs.fed.us/colorado.

BACKGROUND

The Forest Service administers approximately 14,520,000 acres of publicly-owned lands in Colorado distributed among eight national forests and two national grasslands. These national forests and grasslands are characterized by a diverse array of landscapes, ecosystems, natural resources, and land use activities. Management of each national forest and grassland is governed by a land and resource management plan (forest plan), along with numerous land management laws, regulations, policies, and agency directives. Laws and regulations take precedence over management direction in the forest plans where conflicts in management direction exist.

In January 2001, a Roadless Area Conservation Rule (2001 Roadless Rule) was adopted into regulation at 36 CFR 294, following completion of a final EIS (USDA Forest Service 2000a). The 2001 Roadless Rule applied to national forests nationwide. It provided overarching protections for 58.5 million acres¹ of inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) (about 30 percent of NFS lands in the country) by prohibiting road construction and reconstruction and timber harvest in IRAs except under certain exceptional circumstances. The intent of the 2001 Roadless Rule was "to provide lasting protection for IRAs within the context of multiple-use management" (USDA Forest Service 2000a).

¹ *Approximately 9.3 million acres of roadless areas in Alaska's Tongass National Forest were exempted from the 2001 Roadless Rule.*

Inventoried Roadless Areas in Colorado (Alternative 1 & 3)

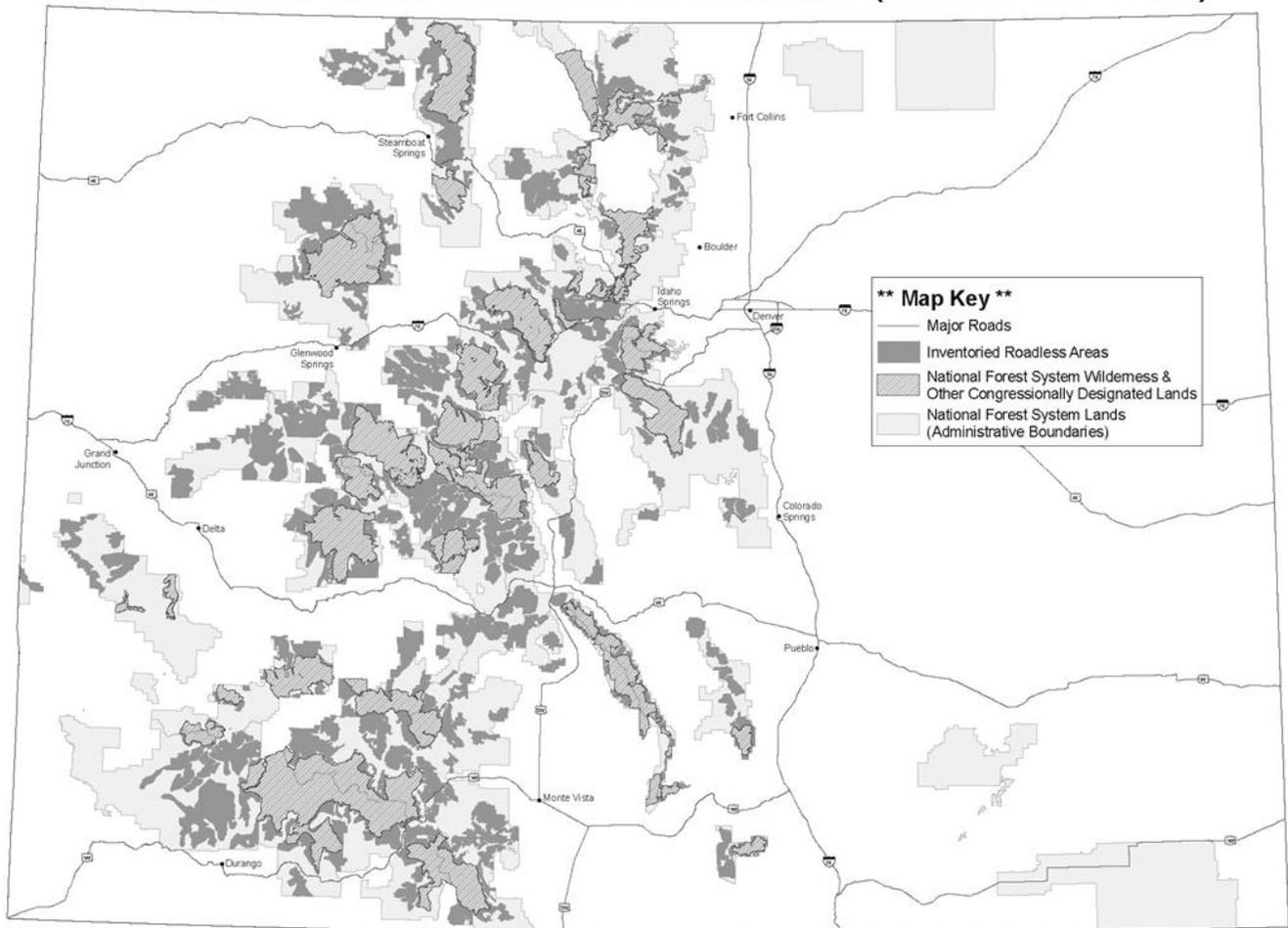


Figure 1. Inventoried roadless areas in Colorado

The 2001 Roadless Rule identified approximately 4,433,000 acres, or about 31 percent, of the National Forest System (NFS) lands in Colorado as IRAs. For this EIS, private land and congressionally designated land was removed from the inventory. Management of congressionally designated land is governed by laws that supersede any roadless area rule². Figure 1 displays the IRAs that are evaluated in this EIS, and are common to alternatives 1 and 3. There are 4,243,600 acres within the IRAs for these two alternatives. Maps are available in the full EIS and on the Web at www.roadless.fs.fed.us/colorado.

Roadless area characteristics, as defined in the 2001 Roadless Rule preamble (66 FR 3244) and referred to in the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule, are summarized as follows: high quality or undisturbed soil, water, or air; sources of public drinking water; diversity of plant and animal communities; habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive species, and for those species dependent on large, undisturbed areas of land; primitive, semi-primitive motorized, and semi-primitive non-motorized classes of dispersed recreation; reference

² Congressionally designated areas include such lands as Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Protection Areas (described in EIS Appendix A, Table A-1)

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landscapes; natural-appearing landscapes with high scenic quality; traditional cultural properties and sacred sites; and, other locally identified unique characteristics.

In May 2005 Colorado enacted Senate Bill 05-243 (C.R.S. § 36-7-302) directing formation of a 13-person bipartisan taskforce to make recommendations to the Governor regarding the appropriate management of roadless areas on the national forests in Colorado. In November 2006, Colorado Governor Bill Owens petitioned the Secretary of Agriculture to undertake state-specific roadless rulemaking for Colorado. The State's petition was considered for rulemaking by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, section 553(e) of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the Department of Agriculture's rulemaking procedures at 7 CFR §1.28. In April 2007, newly-elected Governor Ritter resubmitted the petition with minor modifications (Colorado Office of the Governor 2007). In June 2007, the State and the U.S. Forest Service presented the petition with modifications to the Department's Roadless Area Conservation National Advisory Committee (RACNAC). The RACNAC provided recommendations on the State petition to the Secretary of Agriculture (USDA RACNAC 2007a). In August 2007, the Secretary of Agriculture accepted the State's petition and directed the Forest Service to work in cooperation with the State of Colorado to initiate rulemaking (USDA RACNAC 2007b).

The Forest Service published a proposed rule to establish direction for conserving roadless areas on NFS land in Colorado on July 25, 2008 (73 FR 43544). Throughout the process, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), State, and Forest Service repeatedly heard public comment requesting a reduction in the scope of the proposed exceptions for tree-cutting, sale or removal and road construction and reconstruction. Based on these public comments, the State requested the USDA to postpone further rulemaking efforts until the State considered revision of its petition.

The State held a comment period from August 3 to October 3, 2009. The State received approximately 22,000 comments, with most being form letters. The result was a revised petition submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture on April 6, 2010. Based on the petition, the State and the Forest Service developed regulatory language for a proposed Colorado Roadless Rule that would govern management of roadless areas on NFS lands in Colorado. Because of the changes in the boundaries of the Colorado Roadless Areas (CRAs) and the number of changes in the proposed rule, the Secretary of Agriculture initiated a public comment period on the revised proposed rule and this EIS.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The Department, the Forest Service, and the State of Colorado agree there is a need to provide management direction for the conservation of roadless area values and characteristics within roadless areas in Colorado. In the petition, the State of Colorado has indicated that there is a need to develop state-specific regulations for the management of Colorado's roadless areas for the following reasons:

1. Roadless areas are important because they are, among other things, sources of drinking water, important fish and wildlife habitat, semi-primitive or primitive recreation areas, and naturally appearing landscapes. There is a need to provide for the preservation of roadless area characteristics.

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2. As recognized in the 2001 Roadless Rule, tree-cutting, sale or removal, and road construction/reconstruction have the greatest likelihood of altering and fragmenting landscapes, resulting in immediate, long-term loss of roadless area values and characteristics and there is a need to generally prohibit these activities in roadless areas. Since the 2001 Roadless Rule was promulgated, some have argued that linear construction zones (LCZs) also need to be restricted.
3. In addition to the concerns articulated in the 2001 Rule, there is a need to accommodate State-specific situations and concerns in Colorado's roadless areas. These include the following:
 - a. reducing the risk of wildfire to communities and municipal water supply systems
 - b. permitting exploration and development of coal resources in the North Fork coal mining area
 - c. permitting of construction and maintenance of water conveyance structures
 - d. permitting access to current and future electrical power lines
 - e. accommodating existing permitted or allocated ski areas.
4. There is a need to ensure that Colorado roadless areas are accurately mapped.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Department, in cooperation with the State of Colorado, proposes to promulgate a state-specific rule to manage roadless areas and conserve roadless area characteristics on NFS lands in Colorado.

The Colorado Roadless Rule would establish a system of Colorado Roadless Areas (CRAs) with protections for management of these areas replacing the Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) for National Forest land in Colorado. CRAs would be identified on a set of maps maintained at the Forest Service national headquarters office, including records of adjustments to such maps pursuant to the final Colorado Roadless Rule. The CRAs upper tier acres, which are a subset of CRAs receiving a higher level of protection, would be identified on the same set of maps.

The proposed Colorado Roadless Rule would use the most accurate mapping information and adjust roadless area boundaries by:

- a. correcting mapping errors that primarily resulted from improvements in inventory data and mapping technology;
- b. excluding private land;
- c. excluding land substantially altered by roads and timber harvest activities;
- d. excluding ski areas under permit or allocated in forest plans to ski area development;
- e. excluding congressionally designated lands such as wilderness and other designations that take legal precedence over roadless area regulations; and
- f. including unroaded areas outside IRAs that contain roadless area characteristics.

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The CRAs would encompass approximately 4.19 million acres of NFS land in Colorado, distributed among 363 separate roadless areas (Appendix A). The proposed Colorado Roadless Rule provides for future adjustments to be made to CRA boundaries (Map Packet, Map 3), subject to a public review and comment, and applicable NEPA or rulemaking requirements. The Forest Service national headquarters office would maintain the official map of CRAs, which would be readily available to the public.

The Colorado Roadless Rule includes a management strategy for activities and land uses within CRAs that are tailored to meet the unique circumstances present in Colorado. Road construction and reconstruction, tree-cutting, sale or removal and linear construction zones are prohibited within the CRAs with limited exceptions. Chapter 2 describes the proposed rule in greater detail, along with other alternatives considered in this analysis.

Table 1. National forest administrative units in Colorado and associated forest plan approval date

National forests in Colorado	Date of approved forest plan
Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests	1997
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests	1983
Manti-La Sal National Forest ³	1986
Routt National Forest	1998
Pike-San Isabel National Forests	1984
Rio Grande National Forest	1996
San Juan National Forest	1983 (Revision in progress; draft revised plan 2007)
White River National Forest	2002

The proposed Colorado Roadless Rule establishes boundaries for Colorado roadless areas (CRAs) and associated provisions for managing those areas. The rule maintains many of the 2001 Roadless Rule prohibitions on road construction and reconstruction and tree-cutting activities in roadless areas; however, there are some important differences. The proposed rule differs from the 2001 Rule primarily by adding an upper tier with more restrictions than the 2001 Rule, by adding additional requirements to exceptions found in the 2001 Rule, and by providing a limited set of exceptions that are not found in the 2001 Rule.

As requested by the Governor’s petition, the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule adjusts roadless area boundaries by: (a) adjusting some roadless area boundaries to correct mapping errors that primarily resulted from improvements in inventory data and mapping technology; (b) not including acres substantially altered by existing roads and past timber harvest activities; (c) not including ski areas currently under permit or allocated to ski area management areas adjoining operating ski areas in forest plans; (d) not including congressionally designated lands such as wilderness that take legal precedence over roadless area regulations; (e) including in CRAs some additional unroaded acreages that are outside IRAs.

The proposed CRAs encompass approximately 4.186 million acres, or about 29 percent, of NFS land in Colorado, distributed among 363 separate roadless areas (Figure 2). The scope of the

³ Only 27,000 acres of the 1.4 million-acres of the Manti-La Sal National Forest occur in Colorado; the rest are in Utah and not subject to the EIS.

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proposed action is primarily limited to tree-cutting, road construction and reconstruction, and the use of linear construction zones within roadless areas. Portions of the CRAs are designated as upper tier acres with fewer exceptions to the prohibitions. The proposed rule would not affect land use permits, contracts, or other legal instruments issued prior to the effective date of a rule. The scope of the proposed rule is programmatic in nature and intended to guide future actions proposed to occur within CRAs. This proposal does not authorize the implementation of any ground-disturbing activities, but rather it describes circumstances under which certain activities may be allowed or restricted within roadless areas in the future. Where conflicting management direction exists between forest plans and a Colorado Roadless Rule provision, the more restrictive direction would prevail.

Alternative 4 has the same CRA boundaries as alternative 2 and the same rule provisions. The difference is there are more acres within the CRAs that are designated as upper tier acres where there are fewer exceptions to the prohibitions (Figure 3).

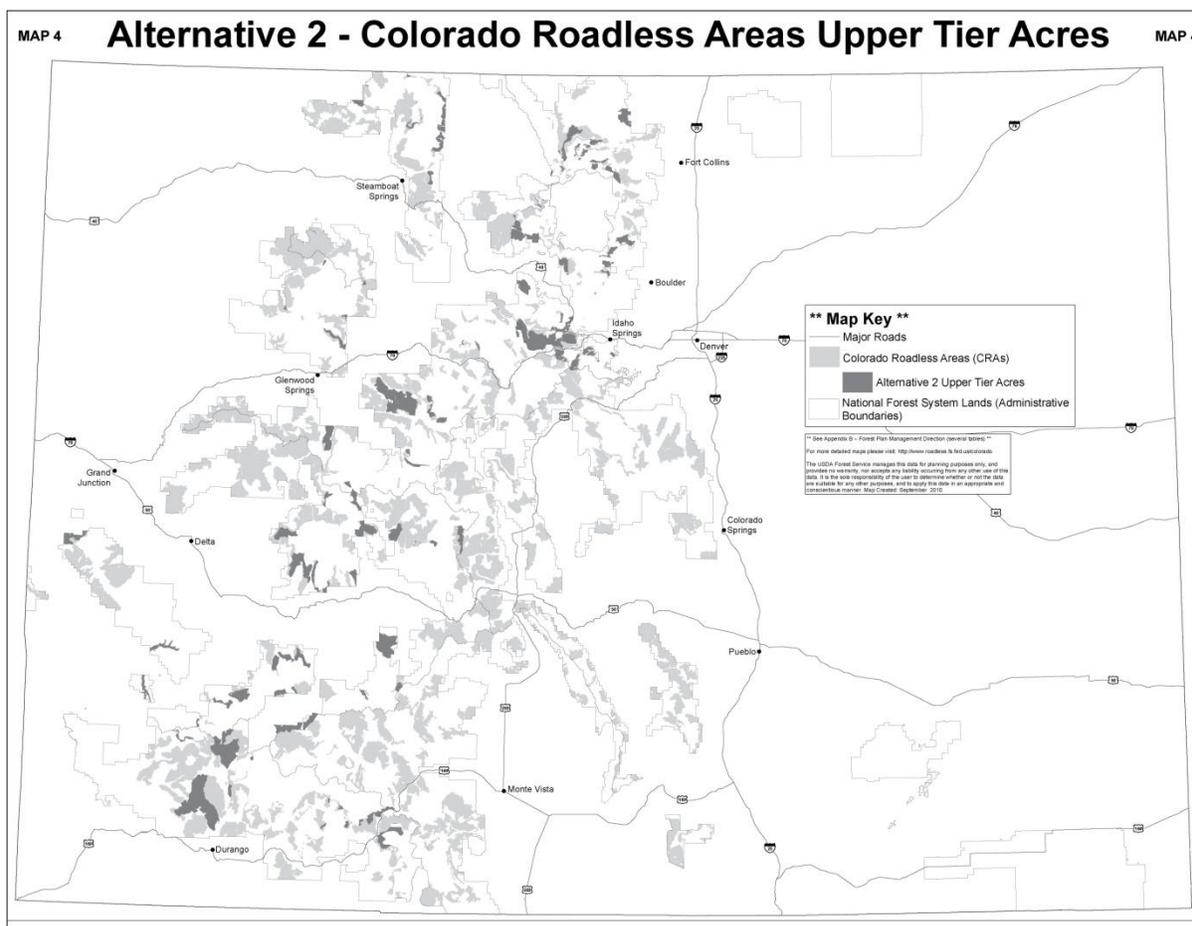


Figure 2. Alternative 2 Proposed Colorado roadless areas with Upper Tier Acres

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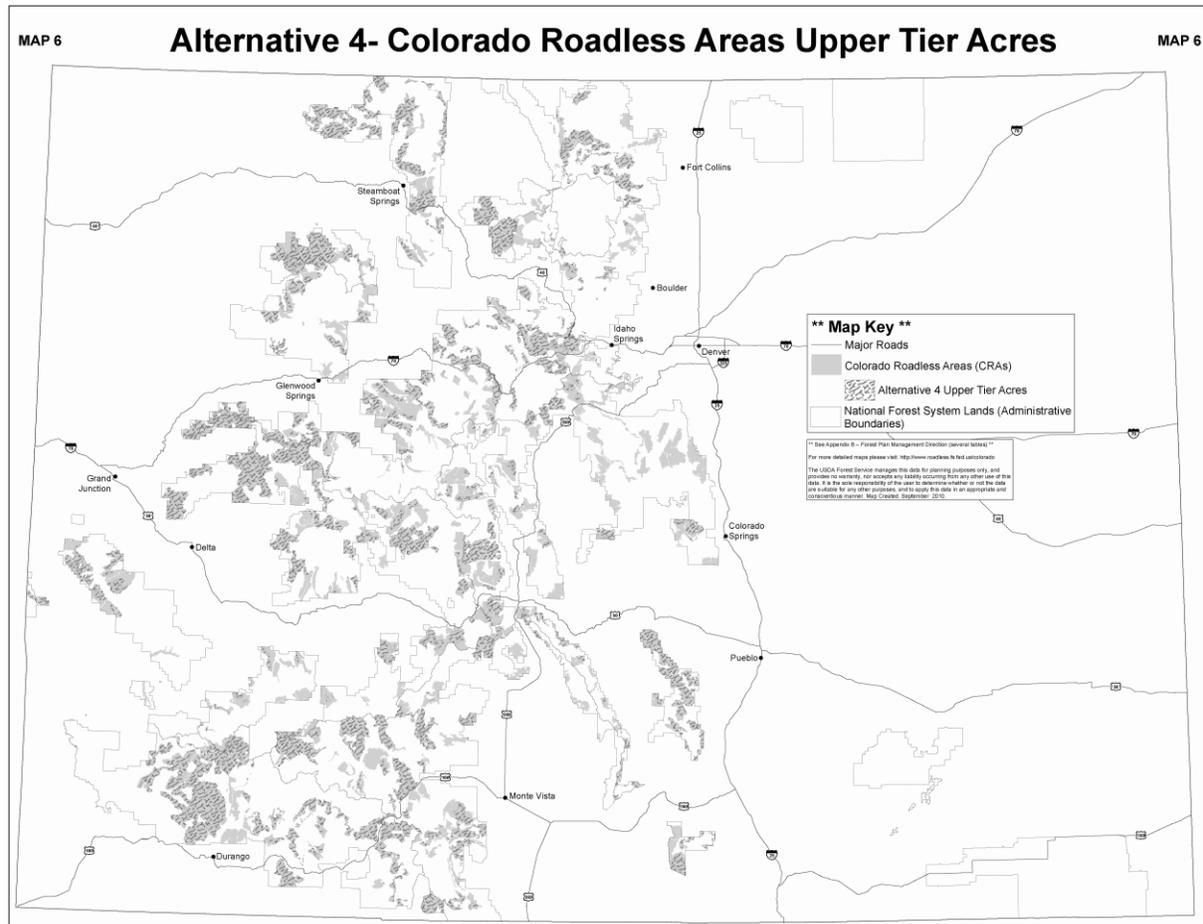


Figure 3. Alternative 4 Proposed Colorado roadless areas with Upper Tier Acres

DECISION FRAMEWORK

The Secretary of Agriculture or a delegated designee will decide whether to promulgate the Colorado Roadless Rule as proposed or one of the other alternatives analyzed in this EIS. Promulgation of a rule involves establishing regulations, which would be issued under Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 294. The decision to be made involves a choice among the four alternatives analyzed in detail in this EIS, which means determining whether to:

1. Promulgate a state-specific rule to manage IRAs in Colorado pursuant to the provisions contained in the 2001 Roadless Rule (alternative 1); or
2. Promulgate a state-specific rule to manage Colorado's CRAs based on the State's petition (alternative 2) with portions of the CRAs identified as CRA upper tier acres; or
3. Take no action. No state-specific roadless rule would be promulgated. IRAs in Colorado would be managed in accordance with the forest plans in the eight national forests (alternative 3); or
4. Promulgate a state-specific rule to manage Colorado's CRAs based on the State's petition with portions of or entire CRAs identified as CRA upper tier acres different

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from those identified under alternative 2 (alternative 4); or

5. Some combination of the provisions and inventories in the above four alternatives.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Forest Service and the State of Colorado have solicited public involvement and comments on the development of a Colorado Roadless Rule. Below is a description of the public involvement efforts of the Forest Service and the State of Colorado.

Forest Service Public Involvement

The Forest Service, to date, has solicited public involvement in the following ways:

- On December 27, 2007, the Forest Service published a notice of intent in the Federal Register to prepare an EIS on roadless area conservation on NFS lands in Colorado (Fed. Reg. Vol. 72 No. 246, 72982). The Forest Service solicited comments from interested parties from December 27, 2007 through February 25, 2008. Approximately 88,000 comments were received.
- On July 25, 2008, the Forest Service published a proposed rule to establish state-specific management direction for conserving roadless areas in Colorado (73 FR 43544). A notice of availability for the DEIS was published in the *Federal Register* (73 FR 44991) and legal notice in the newspaper of record on August 1, 2008. The availability of the regulatory risk assessment for the proposed rule was published in the *Federal Register* on September 18, 2008 (73 FR 54125). All comment periods closed on October 23, 2008. In total, approximately 106,000 comments were received.
- The RACNAC held open public meetings in Washington, DC in June of 2007 and January, July and November of 2008. In addition a meeting was held in Salt Lake City, Utah in October of 2008. Public comments were accepted at these meetings, which helped the RACNAC develop their December 5, 2009 recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture.
- The Forest Service consulted with all potentially affected tribes regarding the proposed rule from October 2007 through October 2008. Tribal consultation on this proposed Colorado Roadless Rule is ongoing.

State of Colorado Public Involvement

In their petition process, the State of Colorado has, to date, solicited public involvement in the following ways:

- Senate Bill 05-243, signed into Colorado law on June 8, 2005, created and identified a 13-member bipartisan task force to make recommendations to the Governor regarding inventoried roadless areas on NFS lands in Colorado. The task force held nine public meetings throughout the State, held six deliberative meetings that were open to the public, and reviewed and considered over 40,000 public comments.
- The State of Colorado held a comment period from August 3 to October 3, 2009 on a State modified version of the July 2008 proposed Colorado Roadless Rule.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

There are two resident tribes in Colorado – Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute – who retain some of their traditional land base as reservations. These two tribes retain specific hunting rights and other aboriginal rights throughout their traditional territory including portions of the roadless areas in Colorado. Over a dozen other tribes located outside Colorado maintain tribal interests, including aboriginal and ceded territories, and inherent aboriginal rights within Colorado. In 1874, Congress approved an agreement between the United States and certain Ute Indians in Colorado, known as the "Brunot Agreement". Under this agreement, the Utes ceded certain land to the United States but reserved a right to hunt on those lands. These lands are predominately on the San Juan National Forest.

The Forest Service has ongoing consultation with all the potentially-affected tribes. Tribal consultation was initiated in October 2007 and no reply letters were received during the scoping period. However, tribal concerns that surfaced during other consultations are discussed in the EIS. Consultation with interested or affected tribes will continue throughout the analysis and decision-making process.

ISSUES

The NEPA implementing regulations at 40 CFR §1501.2 requires federal agencies to develop and evaluate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal that involves unresolved conflict concerning alternative uses of available resources. Public involvement was used to identify points of disagreement about the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule and to identify issues to use as a basis for developing and evaluating alternatives.

Comments that support the purpose of and need for the proposed action are not listed here as issues but are evaluated in this EIS as to how well each alternative addresses the purpose and need (refer to Purpose and Need section for details). For example, the alternatives are evaluated for the degree to which they meet the stated purpose and the need to conserve roadless area characteristics within the context of Colorado specific situations and concerns.

NEPA regulations require the agency to identify and eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not significant or that have been covered by prior environmental review, to narrow the scope of the analysis. Reasons for eliminating issues from detailed study include when the issues are:

- General opinions or position statements not specific to the proposed action
- Addressed by other laws, regulations, or policies
- Not relevant to the potential effects of the proposed action, or otherwise outside the scope of this analysis.

The following issues were eliminated from detailed study in this EIS because they are outside the scope of the decision to be made by the Secretary of Agriculture on the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule relative to other alternatives analyzed in this EIS (refer to sections on Decision Framework and Scope and Applicability of the Rule):

- National Park Service management issues

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- General conditions of public lands
- Conditions of roads and facilities on national forests
- Political motivations or integrity of government officials
- Public participation processes or procedures
- Funding priorities and government expenditures
- Alternative energy on national forests
- Wilderness protection or recommendations for wilderness designation
- Motorized vehicle use and routes or other travel management topics
- Access associated with livestock grazing permits and allotment management
- How the proposed Colorado Rule may set a precedent for management of roadless areas in other states.

The following issues were carried through the analysis process to evaluate differences in the consequences among the alternatives.

Issue – Potential effects to opportunities for community wildfire protection. Prohibiting road construction or reconstruction and tree-cutting, sale or removal can influence the effectiveness of efforts to reduce wildfire impacts to communities and water supply systems.

Issue – Potential loss of roadless area characteristics. The exceptions, in which road construction or reconstruction, use of LCZs, tree-cutting, sale or removal, and some other activities may occur in roadless areas under the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule, may result in a loss of roadless area characteristics.

Issue – Potential loss of opportunities to explore for and develop oil and gas resources. Prohibiting road construction or reconstruction to access oil and gas basins in roadless areas that have not been leased prior to the effective date of rulemaking may result in a loss of opportunities to explore for and develop oil and gas resources in those areas.

Issue – Potential reduction in native species diversity. The exceptions, under which road construction or reconstruction, use of LCZs, tree-cutting, sale or removal, and some other activities may occur in roadless areas under the Colorado Roadless Rule, may affect populations of wildlife, fish, and plants, including the potential for:

- An increase in the prevalence of invasive plants, animals, and other organisms that can out-compete and dominate diverse native plant and animal communities.
- A loss or reduction of wildlife or fish habitat or population viability, resulting from reductions in unfragmented interior habitat, migration corridor connections, and security and quality of habitat for some “at risk” species or important game species.
- A loss or reduction of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species habitat or populations.

Issue – Potential loss of opportunities to explore for and develop coal resources outside the North Fork coal area. Prohibiting construction/reconstruction of roads to access coal reserves in areas that have not been leased (prior to the effective date of rulemaking) and/or are located

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outside the North Fork coal mining area may result in a loss of opportunities to explore for and develop coal resources in those areas.

Issue - Potential reduction in soil and water quality. Wildfire effects can also reduce soil and water quality. The effects of wildlife could potentially be reduced by fuels treatments. On the other hand, the exceptions in which road construction or reconstruction, the use of LCZs, and tree-cutting, sale or removal may occur in roadless areas under the proposed rule may result in a decline in soil or water quality, including the potential for:

- Accelerated soil erosion or other soil impacts that can affect long-term productivity.
- Increases in stream sedimentation that can affect water quality and water uses off-site and downstream from the roadless areas.

Issue - Potential reduction in semi-primitive recreation and related values. The exceptions in which road construction or reconstruction, use of LCZs, tree-cutting, sale or removal, and some other activities may occur in roadless areas under the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule may result in a reduction in semi-primitive recreation opportunities away from the sights and sounds of human activities and built environments, including the potential for:

- A reduction in opportunities for solitude
- A reduction in scenic quality
- Reductions in scientific and heritage benefits that might be derived from preserving the undeveloped nature of roadless areas for future generations

Issue - Potential loss of opportunity to feasibly transport oil and gas resources using pipelines. Prohibiting oil and gas pipelines from going through roadless areas from lands outside roadless areas may result in a loss of opportunity to feasibly extract and transport oil and gas resources.

ALTERNATIVES

- **Alternative 1: Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (2001 Roadless Rule).** This alternative establishes a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado that retains IRA boundaries and roadless area management provisions for management of roadless areas on NFS land in Colorado contained in the 2001 Roadless Rule. If a decision is made to select this alternative, it would not revoke, suspend, or modify any permit, contract or other legal instrument authorizing the occupancy and use of NFS lands issued before the effective date of the final Rule.
- **Alternative 2: Proposed Action, Colorado Roadless Rule.** This alternative establishes a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado. It modifies Alternative 2 from the DEIS based on public comments and the revised petition submitted by the State of Colorado. It is based on the provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule, but provides prohibitions and specific exceptions relevant to the State of Colorado. There are 562,200 acres identified as CRA upper tier under this alternative. Upper tier acres have fewer exceptions to the prohibitions than the other CRA acres. If a decision is made to select this alternative, it would not revoke, suspend, or modify any permit, contract or other legal instrument authorizing the occupancy and use of NFS lands issued before the date of the final Rule.

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- **Alternative 3: No Action, Forest Plan Direction.** This alternative does not establish a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado and all lands in the IRAs and CRAs would be managed according to forest plan direction. The boundaries of the roadless areas shown in this alternative for information purposes are those in the most recent forest plans and are the same IRAs as those in alternative 1.
- **Alternative 4: Colorado Roadless Rule with Public Proposed Upper Tier.** This alternative establishes a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado. This alternative provides the same prohibitions and exceptions as alternative 2. The difference is that 2,614,200 acres are identified as CRAs upper tier acres in this alternative (over 2 million more acres in upper tier than alternative 2). If a decision is made to select this alternative, it would not revoke, suspend, or modify any permit, contract or other legal instrument authorizing the occupancy and use of NFS lands issued before the date of the final Rule.

Features Common to All Alternatives

The following features apply equally to all alternatives and are not repeated in the alternative descriptions.

- **Federal and State Requirements.** Management of NFS lands in Colorado are governed by a variety of federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, and the Forest Service Directive System. In addition, some State and local laws and regulations apply on NFS lands within the State. All alternatives in this analysis assume that these governing authorities are not affected.⁴
- **Forest Plans.** The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR 219 obligate the Forest Service to develop, amend, or revise forest plans. Direction set forth in forest plans for the national forests in Colorado would continue to govern project and activity decision-making on NFS lands, including roadless areas except where the direction contained in the chosen alternative is more restrictive.
- **Project Specific Environmental Analysis.** All future proposals for road construction and reconstruction, tree-cutting and removal, and other activities that are permissible under any alternative must undergo appropriate environmental analysis and decision-making processes pursuant to NEPA and its implementing regulations.
- **Reserved and Outstanding Rights.** Under all alternatives, the exercise of outstanding rights for access, occupancy, and use of NFS lands within designated roadless areas would not be affected. These include those that exist by law, treaty rights or other authority.
- **Existing Land Use Authorizations.** All of the alternatives allow for the continuation, transfer, or renewal of valid and existing land use authorizations (in permits, contracts, and other written instruments) for activities in roadless areas, for those authorizations that exist at the time the applicable roadless rule becomes effective. For clarification,

⁴ One example of a federal statute is the General Mining Law of 1872, which would allow for road construction and use within roadless areas as needed for the exploration and development of valid claims of locatable (“hard rock”) minerals.

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“existing” authorizations under the alternatives that establish a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado (alternatives 1, 2 and 4) would be those that currently exist or are issued prior to adoption of the final rule. Most land use authorizations are discretionary and authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture or his designated Forest Service official. Examples include but are not limited to the following land uses:

- Use of existing roads and trails, including motorized travel on roads and trails
- Livestock grazing
- Recreational activities, including but not limited to hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, mountain biking, and skiing.

Management of congressionally designated areas is governed by legislated direction that overrides rulemaking direction for management of roadless areas. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, 185,000 acres of congressionally designated areas are not included in roadless areas under any alternative.

All alternatives identify specific areas to be managed as roadless areas. For purposes of this analysis, alternatives 1 and 3 have the same IRA boundaries. Alternatives 2 and 4 propose modifications of those roadless area boundaries and are referred to as CRAs. The area analyzed for environmental effects is the same for all alternatives. Analysis for each alternative considers both those areas within each alternative’s roadless inventory and managed as roadless according to that alternative; and those areas outside each alternative’s roadless inventory that is managed according to each respective forest plan. Under alternative 3, all areas are managed according to the forest plan.

Alternative 1: Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule

This alternative establishes a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado that retains IRA boundaries⁵ and roadless area management provisions contained in the 2001 Roadless Rule for management of roadless areas on NFS land in Colorado. The newly identified roadless acres (409,500) are not within the IRAs and would be managed according to forest plan direction under this alternative.

Alternative 1 would allow roads to be constructed or reconstructed in roadless areas under certain circumstances, such as those needed for:

- Protect public health and safety
- Emergency environmental response under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)
- Reserved and outstanding rights, existing land use authorizations
- Road-related resource damage
- Certain federal highway projects
- Road traffic safety
- Reasonable access to leaseable minerals in existing lease areas.

⁵ *Congressionally designated acres as well as mapping errors associated with private lands and Wilderness have been eliminated from the IRA boundaries; 4.24 million acres in IRAs.*

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Alternative 1 allows tree-cutting, sale, or removal in IRAs under certain conditions, such as:

- To maintain or improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat
- To maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure, such as to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects
- Where it is incidental to the implementation of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this subpart
- Where needed for personal or administrative uses provided for in 36 CFR Part 223- Sale and Disposal of National Forest System Timber
- Within portions of IRAs where roadless area characteristics have been substantially altered by the construction of a NFS road and subsequent timber harvest.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action – Colorado Roadless Rule

Under alternative 2, the Colorado Roadless Rule, approximately 4.19 million acres of NFS lands in Colorado would be identified as CRAs. The Colorado Roadless Rule establishes general prohibitions on road construction and reconstruction, LCZs, and tree-cutting, sale or removal within CRAs, while permitting those activities under certain exceptions to address State and local land management needs. Under this alternative, substantially altered acres within the IRAs have been removed from the CRA inventory and would be managed following forest plan direction. An additional 409,500 roadless acres were added to the inventory.

This alternative designates 562,200 acres as CRA upper tier acres⁶. These areas were identified in forest plans, or during forest plan revision processes, as areas where tree-cutting and road building restrictions would be appropriate.

Alternative 2 generally prohibits the cutting, sale, or removal of trees within CRAs with limited exceptions. The Responsible Official must first determine the activity is consistent with the applicable forest plan, and one or more of the roadless area characteristics would be maintained or improved over the long-term (except for where tree-cutting is incidental or for personal or administrative uses). Tree-cutting is allowed in the upper tier only for the following two exceptions:

- Purposes incidental to management activities that are not otherwise prohibited by this proposed Rule;
- Personal or administrative use, as provided for in 36 CFR 223- Sale and Disposal of National Forest System Timber.

For the standard tier acres (CRA acres not designated as upper tier acres, also referred to as “non-upper tier acres”), the above exceptions apply as do these:

- The Regional Forester determines tree-cutting is needed to reduce the wildfire hazard to an at-risk community or municipal water supply system when within the first ½ mile of the community protection zone or within the next one-mile of the community protection zone where proposed projects are within an area identified in a Community Wildfire

⁶ Colorado Roadless Areas upper tier acres refer to areas identified in a set of maps maintained at the national headquarters office of the Forest Service, including records regarding any adjustments or modifications to such maps. Further detail on the upper tier acres are found in Appendix Table B-8.

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Protection Plan (CWPP). Projects would focus on small diameter trees to create fuel breaks that modify fire behavior while retaining large trees to the maximum extent practical as appropriate to the forest type;

- The Regional Forester determines tree-cutting is needed outside of the community protection zone where there is a significant risk that a wildland fire disturbance event could adversely affect a municipal water supply system or the maintenance of the system. Projects would focus on cutting and removing generally small diameter trees to create fuel breaks that modify fire behavior while retaining large trees to the maximum extent practical as appropriate to the forest type;
- Tree-cutting is needed to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure and processes; or
- To improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat in coordination with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources including the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

Roads may only be constructed in CRAs if the responsible official determines that certain limited circumstances exist. Before allowing road construction, the official must consider a no-road option and a temporary road option. All temporary roads constructed in CRAs would be decommissioned and the affected landscape restored when the road is no longer needed. Within a native cutthroat trout catchment or identified recovery watershed, the responsible official must determine that road construction would not diminish, over the long-term, conditions in the water influence zone and in the native cutthroat habitat.

The exceptions in alternative 2 that would allow roads to be constructed or reconstructed in CRAs are those needed to:

- Exercise reserved and outstanding rights, or as provided for in statute and treaty; this is the only exception for road construction applicable to the upper tier acres within the CRAs;
- Repair road-related resource damage;
- Improve road traffic safety; or
- The Regional Forester determines a road is needed for the construction, reconstruction, or maintenance of water conveyance structures operated pursuant to a pre-existing water court decree.

The exceptions in alternative 2 that would allow temporary roads to be constructed or reconstructed in CRAs are:

- For public health and safety;
- When the Regional Forester determines a temporary road is needed to facilitate tree-cutting, sale or removal to reduce the wildfire hazard to an at-risk community or municipal water supply system within the first one-half mile of a community protection zone;
- When the Regional Forester determines a temporary road is needed to facilitate tree-cutting to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure and processes within the first one-half mile of the community protection zone;

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- For exploration or development of an existing oil and gas lease that otherwise does not prohibit road construction or reconstruction; or
- For coal exploration and coal-related activities in the 20,000 acre North Fork coal mining area.

Roads constructed in CRAs under all circumstances would be closed to public motorized use. Those roads may be used for authorized or administrative purposes, including emergencies and law enforcement purposes.

Alternative 2 generally prohibits the use of linear construction zones within CRAs. Exceptions to the prohibitions are when the Regional Forester determines motorized access without a linear construction zone is not technically feasible; that within a native cutthroat trout catchment or identified recovery watershed, a linear construction zone would not diminish, over the long-term, conditions in the water influence zone and in the native cutthroat habitat; a linear construction zone is consistent with the applicable land management plan direction; and one of the following exceptions applies:

- The construction, reconstruction, or maintenance of water conveyance structures operated pursuant to a pre-existing water court decree
- The construction, reconstruction, or maintenance of existing or future authorized electrical power lines or telecommunication lines, if there is no opportunity for the lines to be implemented outside a CRA without causing substantially greater environmental damage.
- Where the Regional Forester determines a linear construction zone is needed to allow for the construction or reconstruction of a pipeline associated with an oil and gas lease that allows surface use within a CRA or the construction or reconstruction of a pipeline needed to connect to existing infrastructure within a CRA from outside a CRA where such a connection would cause substantially less environmental damage than alternative routes. The construction of pipelines for the purposes of transporting oil or natural gas through a CRA where the source(s) and destination(s) of the pipeline are located exclusively outside of a CRA shall not be authorized.

Alternative 3: Forest Plans

Alternative 3 does not establish a state-specific roadless rule for Colorado and all lands would be managed according to direction in the forest plans for the eight national forests in Colorado. This alternative serves as the required baseline (per regulations at 40 CFR 1502.14) for comparison of alternatives. This alternative displays roadless areas in each forest plan or its associated records of decision which currently coincide with the 2001 Roadless Rule IRAs as described in alternative 1. As with alternative 1, the roadless areas under alternative 3 cover 4.24 million acres.

Forest plan direction that applies to the management of all lands within the IRAs and the CRAs includes forest plan goals (desired conditions), objectives, forest-wide standards and guidelines, management area standards and guidelines, and descriptions of suitable uses. In each forest plan, roadless areas overlap a number of different land management allocations.

Forest plans may be updated through an amendment or revision process to reflect changed conditions or specific public or management needs. The revision process includes a review and

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update of the roadless area inventory of potential wilderness areas for evaluation as recommended wilderness. In addition, project-level amendments to forest plans may be made to make a specific project consistent with the forest plan. Subsequent forest plan amendments and revisions may result in changes to roadless area boundaries or management direction. In the past few years, the trend has been to allocate more roadless areas to management prescriptions that conserve roadless area characteristics.

Alternative 3 follows forest plan direction regarding road construction and reconstruction and applicable Forest Service directives and regulations. The directives and regulations discourage construction of new permanent roads and require responsible officials to minimize the miles of permanent roads to those determined to be necessary. Furthermore, the directives encourage use of temporary roads when needed for single-use projects and authorizations.

Alternative 3 differs from the other three alternatives in that it does not include a general prohibition on road construction or reconstruction in the roadless areas. Road construction in these roadless areas is prohibited or limited only where there is specific forest plan direction. Forest plan direction for road construction and reconstruction generally falls into one of four categories:

- **Road construction is prohibited** except where needed for reserved and outstanding rights or other exemptions mandated by law, regulation, or policy
- **Road construction is generally restricted** based on a desired condition or a guideline; not a mandatory restriction
- **Road construction is limited** under certain circumstances, such as those related to the purpose for the road, road density standards, or protection of natural resources
- **Road construction is allowed** for any multiple-use management need, where consistent with law, regulation, or policy.

Appendix B of the EIS contains more details about road construction and tree-cutting permissions and prohibitions under forest plan direction for each national forest. A map of Alternative 3 in the EIS map packet shows how forest plan direction applies to each IRA. Further details on how forest plan direction applies to the IRAs are contained in the EIS record.

Under alternative 3, there is no general prohibition on tree-cutting, sale, or removal within the IRAs. Tree-cutting, sale, or removal would be allowed in IRAs anywhere those activities are not specifically prohibited or limited by forest-wide or management area direction in the applicable forest plan.

Like road construction and reconstruction, forest plan direction for tree-cutting, sale or removal generally falls into one of four categories:

- **Tree-cutting, sale, or removal is prohibited** except where needed for reserved and outstanding rights, or for other exemptions mandated by law, regulation, or policy
- **Tree-cutting, sale, or removal is generally restricted** based on desired conditions or guidelines; non-mandatory direction
- **Tree-cutting, sale, or removal is limited** to certain circumstances, such as those related to the purpose of the activity or protection of natural resources
- **Tree-cutting, sale, or removal is allowed** as needed to meet multiple-use management

purposes.

Although management direction in the forest plans regarding tree-cutting differs by national forest, some direction is common among plans. Common to all forest plans, tree-cutting for non-timber purposes such as hazardous fuel reduction or wildlife habitat improvement may occur on NFS lands that are considered unsuitable for timber production. Also common to all forest plans, tree-cutting for timber production purposes is limited to NFS land identified as suitable for timber production.

Forest Service planning regulations allow forest plans to be amended or revised such that the permissions or prohibitions on road construction or tree-cutting are subject to change over time. These changes in forest plan direction may occur as long-term programmatic amendments or shorter-term project-specific amendments, or as forest plan revisions.

Alternative 4: Colorado Roadless Rule with Public Proposed Upper Tier Acres

Alternative 4 has the same general prohibitions on tree-cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction, and LCZs within CRAs, while permitting those activities under the same exceptions as alternative 2. Identical to alternative 2, substantially altered acres within the IRAs have been removed from the CRA inventory and would be managed following forest plan direction, and 409,500 roadless acres have been added to the inventory.

The only difference between alternative 4 and alternative 2 is that alternative 4 designates 2,614,200 acres as CRA upper tier acres.⁷ Under this alternative, roads would be allowed on a portion of the CRA upper tier acres that contain existing oil and gas leases.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study

Federal agencies are required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations to explore and evaluate all reasonable alternatives to a proposed action and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14).

Three alternatives were submitted in response to information from scoping and comments on the DEIS and were considered and eliminated from detailed study. Below is a description of each of the three alternatives and the reasons why the alternative was eliminated from detailed study:

- An alternative that provides the roadless area conservation provisions from alternative 1, together with the CRA boundaries from alternative 2.

This alternative is similar to alternative 1. The provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule do allow for updating of the Inventoried Roadless Area maps⁸. This alternative is within the range of the alternatives and could be selected as alternative 1 modified because it falls within the range of the alternatives analyzed in this EIS and to eliminate redundancy in the analysis.

⁷ Further details on the CRA upper tier acres in Alternative 4 are found in Appendix C and Map 6 in the map packet.

⁸ In §294.11 Definitions for Inventoried Roadless Area is: “Areas identified in a set of inventoried roadless area maps, contained in Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2, dated November 2000, which are held at the National headquarters office of the Forest Service, or any subsequent update or revision of those maps.”

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- An alternative that allows for more commercial use such as increased timber harvesting.

Alternative 3 allows for increased levels of commercial use. Another alternative that allows for increased levels of commercial use compared to alternative 2, but less than alternative 3, while meeting the purpose and need of protecting roadless area characteristics would not result in differences that can be meaningfully analyzed.

- An alternative that offers reduced road densities, creation of new roadless areas, and more protective management than any of the alternatives analyzed in the DEIS.

Reducing road densities is outside the scope of this rule-making and decision framework and is best decided during travel management analysis. In addition, alternatives 2 and 4 allow for additions to CRAs, if needed. Alternatives 2 and 4, in response to public comments, have identified CRAs or portions of CRAs that are proposed to be managed as upper tier acres. On upper tier acres, more limited exceptions to the tree-cutting and road construction prohibitions are allowed. Additional protections would not meet the purpose and need to accommodate state-specific situations and concerns.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section compares the estimated environmental consequences of each alternative in summary form (Table 2). These environmental consequences are described in detail in chapter 3 of the full EIS, and are summarized at the end of chapter 2 of the full EIS. The comparison table focuses on the key differences among the alternatives and the most likely consequences.

Comparisons are based on the purpose and need for the proposed Colorado Roadless Rule as well as the issues associated with this proposed action, as previously described. Because the proposed rulemaking and its alternatives are broad, programmatic, and do not involve any proposed site-specific actions, the consequences are appropriately broad and qualitative rather than quantitative.

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Table 2. Comparison of alternatives by environmental consequences (refer to chapter 3 for details)⁹

Issue or Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Proposed Action Colorado Roadless Rule	Alternative 3 No Action Forest Plans	Alternative 4 Colorado Roadless Rule
Fire and Fuels	1,800 acres in the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities to reduce hazardous fuels each year (900 acres within IRAs). Least flexibility to conduct hazardous fuel reduction and reduce fire risk to communities and municipal water supply systems.	5,900 acres in the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities to reduce hazardous fuels each year (5,300 acres within CRAs). Medium flexibility to conduct hazardous fuel reduction and reduce fire risk to communities and municipal water supply systems. Unable to conduct hazardous fuels reduction on 12% of 0.5 mile CPZ and 13% of 1.5 mile CPZ due to upper tier acre prohibitions.	13,100 acres in the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities to reduce hazardous fuels each year. Greatest flexibility to conduct hazardous fuel reduction and reduce fire risk to communities and municipal water supply systems.	2,200 acres in the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities to reduce hazardous fuels each year (1,600 acres within CRAs). Within the CRAs that are not upper tier acres, the flexibility to conduct hazardous fuel reduction and reduce fire risk to communities and municipal water supply systems is identical to alternative 2. Unable to conduct hazardous fuels reduction on 48% of 0.5 mile CPZ and 52% of 1.5 mile CPZ due to upper tier acre prohibitions.
Ecosystem Composition, Structure and Processes	500 acres per year in the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities (300 acres within IRAs) for forest health purposes. Fewest opportunities to maintain and restore ecosystem characteristics, including resilience to insect and disease outbreaks and climate induced stressors.	1,000 acres per year in the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities for forest health purpose (400 acres within CRAs). More opportunities than alternatives 1 and 4, but fewer opportunities than alternative 3 to maintain and restore ecosystem characteristics, including resilience to insect and disease outbreaks and climate induced stressors. Unable to treat upper tier	3,500 acres per year within the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities for forest health purposes. Greatest opportunities to maintain and restore ecosystem characteristics, including resilience to insect and disease outbreaks and climate induced stressors.	800 acres per year in the analysis area have projected tree-cutting activities for forest health purposes (200 acres within CRAs). More opportunities to maintain and restore ecosystem characteristics, including resilience to insect and disease outbreaks and climate induced stressors than alternative 1 but less than alternative 3 and alternative

⁹ The analysis area is all acres within either the IRAs or the CRAs, or acres that are common between the two and are within both the IRAs and the CRAs. This totals 4,653,100 acres. Table 3-1 explains this in more detail.

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Issue or Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Proposed Action Colorado Roadless Rule	Alternative 3 No Action Forest Plans	Alternative 4 Colorado Roadless Rule
Aquatic Species and Habitat	Least risk for adverse impacts on aquatic species. Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	acres. More risk than alternatives 1 and 4, less than alternative 3 for adverse impacts on aquatic species. Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	Greatest risk of adverse impacts on aquatic species. Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	2 due to upper tier acres. Less risk for adverse impacts on aquatic species than alternatives 2 and 3; greater risk than alternative 1. Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.
Threatened Endangered or Sensitive Plants	No adverse impacts to threatened or endangered plants because no road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal is projected to occur where threatened or endangered plants exist. Least risk to adverse impacts to sensitive plants Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	No adverse impacts to threatened or endangered plants because no road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal is projected to occur where threatened or endangered plants exist. More risk of adverse impacts to sensitive plants than alternatives 1 or 4; less than alternative 3. Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	No adverse impacts to threatened or endangered plants because no road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal is projected to occur where threatened or endangered plants exist. Greatest risk of adverse impacts to sensitive plants. Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	No adverse impacts to threatened or endangered plants because no road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal is projected to occur where threatened or endangered plants exist. More risk of adverse impacts to sensitive plants than alternative 1; less than alternatives 2 or 3. Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.
Economics	Average annual jobs associated with – Oil/gas drilling = 489 jobs Oil/gas production = 360 jobs Coal production = 1,033 jobs Average annual labor income associated with – Oil/gas drilling = \$25.3 million Oil/gas production = \$24.6 million Coal production = \$75.2	Average annual jobs associated with – Oil/gas drilling = 489 jobs Oil/gas production = 360 jobs Coal production = 1,912 jobs Average annual labor income associated with – Oil/gas drilling = \$25.3 million Oil/gas production = \$24.6 million Coal production = \$139.1	Average annual jobs associated with – Oil/gas drilling = 553 jobs Oil/gas production = 406 jobs Coal production = 1,912 jobs Average annual labor income associated with – Oil/gas drilling = \$28.6 million Oil/gas production = \$27.8 million Coal production = \$139.1	Average annual jobs associated with – Oil/gas drilling = 489 jobs Oil/gas production = 360 jobs Coal production = 1,912 jobs Average annual labor income associated with – Oil/gas drilling = \$25.3 million Oil/gas production = \$24.6 million Coal production = \$139.1

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Issue or Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Proposed Action Colorado Roadless Rule	Alternative 3 No Action Forest Plans	Alternative 4 Colorado Roadless Rule
	million	million	million	million
	Average annual value of production associated w/ –	Average annual value of production associated w/ –	Average annual value of production associated w/ –	Average annual value of production associated w/ –
	Oil/gas drilling = \$156.9 million	Oil/gas drilling = \$156.9 million	Oil/gas drilling = \$177.6 million	Oil/gas drilling = \$156.9 million
	Oil/gas production = \$269.4 million	Oil/gas production = \$269.4 million	Oil/gas production = \$303.9 million	Oil/gas production = \$269.4 million
	Coal production = \$305.9 million	Coal production = \$566.2 million	Coal production = \$566.2 million	Coal production = \$566.2 million
	No difference expected between alternatives at the State level in recreation, tourism, or wood products due to the lack of project specific data needed for analysis, and the ability to substitute sites and resources at the larger, State-wide scale.			
Soils	No major difference among alternatives related to the risk of soil impacts. Alternatives 1 and 4 would have the least risk of adverse effects, and alternative 2 would have a slightly higher risk, followed by alternative 3. However, these differences are insignificant because they would be small in magnitude and spread over a wide geographic area. Most of the potential effects would be mitigated by site-specific mitigation measures. The risk of post-fire soil erosion may be higher under alternative 1 and lowest under alternative 3 as a result of projected levels of fuel treatments.			
Developed Ski Areas	Least opportunities for ski area development and expansion. 6,600 acres within the IRA boundaries and under permit prior to the effective date of rulemaking would allow for road construction and tree-cutting, sale or removal. Forest Plan allocations for ski areas outside of existing permit areas (1,700 acres) would prohibit road construction.	Greater opportunity for ski area development and expansion. Forest Plan allocations for ski areas outside of existing permit areas (1,700 acres) would allow road construction and tree-cutting more than alternative 1.	Forest plans can be amended or revised to expand ski area allocations beyond the current allocation.	Same as alternative 2.
Scenic Quality	Least risk to scenic resources.	More risk to scenic resources than alternatives 1 and 4. Upper tier acres same as alternative 1.	Greatest risk to scenic resources.	Same as alternative 2 within CRA boundaries that are not upper tier; upper tier areas same as alternative 1.

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Issue or Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Proposed Action Colorado Roadless Rule	Alternative 3 No Action Forest Plans	Alternative 4 Colorado Roadless Rule
Social Values	<p>No disproportionate negative impact on minority or low-income groups as defined in the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Reports.</p> <p>Preference towards preservation of non-development social values.</p>	<p>No disproportionate negative impact on minority or low-income groups as defined in the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Reports.</p> <p>Slightly less than alternative 1 preference towards non-development social values.</p>	<p>No disproportionate negative impact on minority or low-income groups as defined in the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Reports.</p> <p>Less preference towards non-development social values than alternatives 1, 2, and 4.</p>	Same as alternative 2.
Terrestrial Species and Habitat	<p>Least risk to terrestrial species and habitat.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>	<p>More risk than alternative 1 and 4 to terrestrial species and habitat.</p> <p>Tree-cutting to improve habitat for TEPS species prohibited in upper tier acres.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>	<p>Greatest risk to terrestrial species and habitat.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>	<p>More risk than alternative 1 to terrestrial species and habitat.</p> <p>Tree-cutting to improve habitat for TEPS species prohibited in upper tier acres.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>
Recreation Settings	<p>Likely to retain the greatest proportion of acreage in primitive or semi-primitive settings</p> <p>The substantially altered portion of the IRA inventory would continue to be inconsistent with primitive or semi-primitive settings.</p> <p>The newly identified roadless acres (409,500 acres) where road construction and tree-cutting, sale or removal is projected to occur that are not within the IRAs could shift to less</p>	<p>Likely to retain a high proportion of acreage in primitive or semi-primitive settings. However, some areas where road construction and tree-cutting, sale or removal is projected to occur could shift to less primitive settings.</p> <p>The exclusion of the substantially altered acreage and inclusion of new roadless acres would create a more homogeneous primitive or semi-primitive recreation</p>	<p>Least likely to retain a high proportion of acreage in primitive or semi-primitive settings; especially where road construction and tree-cutting, sale or removal is projected to occur.</p>	Same as alternative 2.

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Issue or Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Proposed Action Colorado Roadless Rule	Alternative 3 No Action Forest Plans	Alternative 4 Colorado Roadless Rule
Lands-Special Use Authorizations	<p>primitive settings.</p> <p>Special use authorizations issued prior to the effective date of rulemaking would be unaffected.</p> <p>Future special use authorizations in IRAs would generally prohibit road construction.</p> <p>There would be no prohibition on the use of LCZs for future electrical power lines or telecommunication lines, water conveyance structures and oil and gas pipelines from sources outside of IRAs.</p>	<p>setting.</p> <p>Special use authorizations issued prior to the effective date of rulemaking would be unaffected.</p> <p>Future special use authorizations in CRAs would generally prohibit road construction.</p> <p>Limited exceptions for the use of LCZ for future electrical power lines or telecommunication lines, water conveyance structures and oil and gas pipelines from sources outside of CRAs.</p>	<p>Current and future special use authorizations would generally allow for road construction; except where prohibited under forest plans.</p> <p>There would be no prohibition on the use of LCZs for future electrical power lines or telecommunication lines, water conveyance structures or oil and gas pipelines.</p>	<p>Same as alternative 2.</p>
Invasive Plants	<p>Least risk of spread of invasive plants because this alternative has the least projections of road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>	<p>Slightly higher risk than alternatives 1 and 4 for the spread of invasive plants because this alternative has a higher projection of road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>	<p>Greatest risk of the spread of invasive plants because this alternative has the highest projections for road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>	<p>Slightly higher risk than alternative 1 but less than alternative 2 for the spread of invasive plants because this alternative has a higher projection of road construction or tree-cutting, sale or removal.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p>Least risk of damage to cultural resources because this alternative has the least projections for tree-cutting, sale or removal.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures</p>	<p>Slightly higher risk of damage to cultural resources than alternative 1 because this alternative has a high projection of tree-cutting, sale or removal and road construction.</p>	<p>Highest risk of damage to cultural resources because this alternative has the highest projection of tree-cutting, sale or removal and road construction.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria</p>	<p>Less risk than alternative 2 due to more acres in the upper tier.</p> <p>Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.</p>

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Issue or Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Proposed Action Colorado Roadless Rule	Alternative 3 No Action Forest Plans	Alternative 4 Colorado Roadless Rule
	are expected to minimize risk.	Site specific design criteria and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	and mitigation measures are expected to minimize risk.	
Roadless Area Characteristics	Minimal effect to roadless area characteristics because there is little projected activity to occur. No consideration or regulatory protection of roadless area characteristics on 409,500 acres outside of IRA boundaries.	Minimal effect to roadless area characteristics because there is little projected activity to occur. Consideration and protection of roadless area characteristics on 409,500 acres within CRA boundaries.	More effect to roadless area characteristics because there is an increase in projected activities to occur compared to the other alternatives. Some risk of adverse effects to roadless area characteristics because there are no regulatory prohibitions on road construction, use of linear construction zones or tree-cutting, sale or removal on any of the analysis area.	Minimal effect to roadless area characteristics because there is little projected activity to occur. Consideration and protection of roadless area characteristics on 409,500 acres within CRA boundaries.
Air Resources	Differences in effects on air quality do not substantially differ between the alternatives. Atmospheric emissions within the analysis area are not expected to increase to a level that would be likely to exceed State or federal air quality standards.			
Administratively and Congressionally Designated Areas	There are no differences between the alternatives to administratively or congressionally designated areas because none of the alternatives project tree-cutting, sale or removal or road construction in administratively designated areas and tree-cutting, sale or removal or road construction is prohibited in congressionally designated areas.			
Wilderness	Alternatives 1 and 2 have a low likelihood of affecting wilderness characteristics because tree-cutting, sale or removal and road construction are prohibited in Wilderness areas and projected activities within roadless areas are not expected to occur adjacent to Wilderness area boundaries.		Higher risk of adverse effect to wilderness areas because of the high projections for tree-cutting, sale or removal and road construction and a higher likelihood that these activities could occur adjacent to Wilderness boundaries.	Same as alternatives 1 and 2.

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