

# INTRODUCTION

## Resource of concern

Recreation

## Methodology and Regulatory Findings

### Measures/indicators/methodology

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2333.03

The FSM establishes priorities for development and management of recreation sites in the following order: (1) Ensure public health and safety; (2) Protect the natural environment of the site; (3) Manage and maintain sites and facilities to enhance users' interaction with the forest resource; and, (4) Provide new developments that conform to the National Forest recreation role.

## Analysis Methods

Analysis of the effects of the action alternative are based on the following design criteria that would be incorporated.

To protect the natural environment of recreation sites:

- 1) Avoid the use of developed and dispersed recreation sites as landings and staging areas
- 2) In the Meyers fire area, during summer log hauling, dust abatement will occur between the two bridges on County Road #80 alongside Copper Creek Campground.

To ensure public safety:

- 1) Safety hazards created logging operations, such as "widow makers" and other hazards would be removed.
- 2) For Little Hogback, log hauling will be prohibited from June 29th to July 1 on the Upper Willow Creek, Granite County road in Upper Willow Creek (starting from its junction with Hwy 348), and FS Road 4325 to allow for an annual mountain bike race to take place.
- 3) Roads and trails (including snowmobile trails) that pose a danger to forest users during harvest operations will be closed to the public to provide for public safety. Advance notice and appropriate signs will be used to inform the public of the closures.
- 4) Operating restrictions during high use times, such as holidays, may be implemented to reduce conflict with recreation users, hunters, special use permit holders, and winter recreationalists.

### Affected Environment:

*In the Little Hogback area, recreation is limited to infrequent use of the road system by mountain bikes, OHV users, hunters, and some rare snowmobile use. The 4325 road that parallels Upper Willow Creek is the main location for the aforementioned uses, and that road is a third of the mileage for an annual (usually around July 1) 50 mile mountain bike race that is permitted by the Pintler District. The 4325 road also sees fall hunting use, and is a popular spot for disabled hunters to get permission to travel behind FS gates.*

*In the Meyers area, there are no trails in the salvage logging units, but the road system that will be used for hauling is popular in summer and winter. The county road 80 is a popular winter snowmobile route that Granite County permits Anaconda Snowmobile Club to maintain for winter recreation and access to the Frog*

*Pond Basin area. County road 80 also runs adjacent to a Forest Service campground at Copper Creek. FS road 5106, that will be the main artery for log hauling, is popular as an access to the snowmobile trail on County road 80 and to recreation sites at Moose Lake, and Middle Fork of Rock Creek.*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

### **No Action**

No treatment of any kind would occur under this alternative. There would be no change in current recreation management direction or in the level of recreation management activities.

### **Proposed Action**

In the Little Hogback area, the short window prohibiting log hauling will allow the Philipsburg 46 mountain bike race to occur without danger to racers and spectators, or disruption to the flow of the event.

All haul routes in Meyers and Little Hogback would be signed to inform forest visitors of hauling operations. The use of developed and dispersed recreation sites as landings and/or equipment staging areas would be avoided.

For the Meyers area, winter recreationalists consisting mainly of snowmobile users could be impacted by salvage operations that occur on County Road 80 to Frog Pond Basin. Meetings with the Anaconda Snowmobile Club will be held to inform them of the impacts to grooming and use of that route.

In the Meyers area, dust abatement along County Road 80, would maintain the recreational experience in the Copper Creek Campground during log hauling that may occur in summertime.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects Spatial Boundaries**

The Little Hogback spatial boundaries are the project area, in addition to inventoried travel corridors, connecting the project area with Willow Creek County Road. The spatial boundary was selected because all timber harvest traffic to and from NFS Lands in the project area are accessed by Willow Creek County Road.

The Meyers spatial boundaries are the project area in addition to inventoried travel corridors connecting the project area with Middle Fork Rock Creek County Road 5106. The spatial boundary was selected because all timber harvest traffic to and from NFS Lands in the project area are accessed by Middle Fork Rock Creek County Road 5106.

### **Direct and Indirect Effects Temporal Scale**

The short-term timeframe used for this analysis is 0 to 5 years, when log hauling occurs, and the long-term effects are those that last beyond 5 years as motorized recreation access continues. Based on experience most BMP's last 0 to 5 years after construction.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Forest visitors and recreationalists that engage in the widest range of activities and for the longest duration have the greatest potential to experience cumulative changes to the forest setting or access to road and trail systems.

Displacement of recreationalists and forest visitors during implementation of the salvage project may be a short-term effect. Snowmobilers may use other routes to access Frog Pond Basin in the Meyers area (the snowmobile route on Road 80 is the most infrequently groomed of all routes, and sees minimal traffic.), and some campers may choose not to remain during log hauling activities, even with dust abatement.

Cumulatively, and in the next 5 years, the effects of the proposed action are not likely to have an adverse effect to forest visitors accessing the area, or in the recreational experience they seek when coming to or travelling through

the area. A number of past and present activities have occurred and continue to occur in the assessment area that affect recreation resources including: livestock grazing, noxious weed control, timber harvest, wildfire and fire management and suppression activities and other land management decisions. Future activities are likely to be the same as past and present activities.

The removal of burned trees along the Upper Willow Creek roads will likely help with clearing prior to the annual mountain bike race, the Philipsburg 46, and this would be a long term positive effect.

### **Forest Plan Consistency**

The proposed action is consistent with all applicable forest plan standards and guidelines for the recreation resource. For more detail on these standards see the Forest Plan Consistency table in the project record.

The Forest Plan, page 31, calls for a “variety of motorized and non-motorized travel and activities,” and the Pintler District has these opportunities spread over a wide area.

### **References:**

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2333.03