

Comparison Table of Draft Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Alternatives

August 27, 2013

ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D	ALTERNATIVE E
<p>Alternative A is the “no-action” alternative. This alternative serves as the environmental baseline for analysis of effects. Under this alternative, natural disturbances and ongoing management activities would continue to occur.</p>	<p>Alternative B is the proposed action. It was designed to respond to recommendations by the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC). Additionally, it responds to concerns expressed by the public regarding recreation access.</p> <p>**Note- minor changes have been made from the proposed action that was scoped in Spring 2013.</p>	<p>Alternative C is designed to respond to comments that requested a more effective watershed restoration effort, as well as elk security and other wildlife concerns.</p> <p>Alternative C would move Boulder Creek toward Watershed Condition Framework (WCF) condition class 1 and Forest Plan Watershed Condition Indicator (WCI) category Functioning Appropriately (FA) for road density. The portion of the Lower West Fork Weiser River subwatershed located on Forest system land would also move to FA for road density with additional RCA road decommissioning.</p>	<p>Alternative D is designed to respond to comments relating to the intensity and benefit of treatments (post-implementation species composition, level of vegetation restoration, and spatial arrangement of forested vegetation).</p>	<p>Alternative E is designed to respond to concerns regarding the cost of implementing the project.</p> <p>Alternative E drops some of the more expensive treatments, while attempting to retain restoration goals of the proposed action and meet the purpose and need of the project.</p>
<p>VEGETATION</p>	<p>Mechanical vegetation treatments (all acres are approximations):</p> <p>Approximately 40,000 acres proposed, including 1,800 acres in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCA’s).</p> <p>These treatments include:</p> <p><i>Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Thin – Free Thin: 12,200 acres Free Thin – Patch Cut: 1,800 acres Commercial Thin-Mature Plantations 8,100 acres Total Commercial Treatments: 22,000 acres <p><i>Non-Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18,000 acres <p><i>Associated actions</i></p> <p>Road maintenance and use, construction of temporary roads (planned and incidental, and brush disposal machine and hand piling and burning, lop and scatter, broadcast/underburning, and other methods.</p> <p>29 miles of temporary road construction</p>	<p>Mechanical vegetation treatments</p> <p>Approximately 37,000 acres proposed. No mechanical treatment in RCAs due to soil, water, riparian, and aquatic concerns.</p> <p>These treatments include:</p> <p><i>Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Thin – Free Thin: 8,500 acres Commercial Thin-Mature Plantations 6,000 acres Total Commercial Treatments: 14,500 acres <p><i>Non-Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22,000 acres <p>No regeneration treatments due to hydrology concerns.</p> <p>Less intense treatments, especially in cool moist grand fir forest types due to wildlife concerns (i.e. Family 2 species and elk security).</p> <p>11 miles of temporary road construction</p>	<p>Mechanical vegetation treatments</p> <p>Approximately 43,000 acres proposed. More intense treatments (i.e. cut to lower canopy cover, especially in cool moist grand fir forest types) to address duration of treatment concerns. 2,000 acres RCA treatments.</p> <p>Greater amount (more acres) and intensity (i.e. shelterwood) of regeneration treatments than proposed action to address species composition concerns.</p> <p>These treatments include:</p> <p><i>Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Thin – Free Thin: 14,500 acres Commercial Thin-Mature Plantations 8,100 acres Shelterwood harvest- 2,600 acres Total Commercial Treatments: 25,000 acres <p><i>Non-Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18,000 acres <p>31 miles of temporary road construction</p>	<p>Mechanical vegetation treatments</p> <p>Approximately 33,000 acres proposed. Mature plantation thinning limited to areas immediately adjacent to revenue generating commercial units. 1,600 acres RCA treatments.</p> <p>Biomass removal (chipping) limited to units where necessary for other resource objectives (i.e. visuals, recreation, and wildlife).</p> <p>Treatments would be similar to Alternative D.</p> <p>These treatments include:</p> <p><i>Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Thin – Free Thin: 13,200 acres Commercial Thin-Mature Plantations 5,400 acres Shelterwood harvest- 1,800 acres Total Commercial Treatments: 20,500 acres <p><i>Non-Commercial Treatments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12,000 acres <p>15 miles of temporary road construction</p>

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<p>WILDLIFE</p>	<p>Emphasis would be on implementing the USFWS northern Idaho ground squirrel recovery plan (USFWS 2003) by establishing prioritized areas for treatment with tree thinning and prescribed fire.</p> <p>NIDGS Priority Areas</p> <p>Priority 1 - Treatments within ¼ mile of occupied NIDGS habitat within USFWS metapopulation area boundaries.</p> <p>Treatment Type – Approximately 4,900 acres mechanical thinning complimented with prescribed fire (3-7 years intervals) resulting in 15-30% canopy closure and high quality NIDGS forage.</p> <p>Priority 2 - Treatments may also be within ¼ mile of occupied NIDGS habitat but may include linkage corridors that connect occupied habitat. Acres of treated habitat would vary depending on existing populations and linking new or revived populations and habitat.</p> <p>Treatment Type – Mechanical thinning (acres TBD) complimented with prescribed fire (3-7 years intervals) resulting in 15-30% canopy closure and high quality NIDGS forage.</p> <p>Family 1 Species ((White-headed woodpecker)</p> <p>Source habitat is PVGs 1, 2, 3, 5 and PVG 6; large tree size class and low canopy closure.</p> <p>Treatment Type – Range of tree thinning (mechanical or hand) and prescribed fire methods that reduces canopy closure (<30%), grows large, ponderosa pine >20” and creates snags in Source habitat (Acres habitat treated TBD).</p> <p>Family 2 Species (Pileated woodpecker, northern goshawk, great gray owl, flammulated owl, et al. that are part of the Forest Plan and draft WCS)</p> <p>Source habitat is the denser PVG’s (PVG’6) with large trees and tighter canopy closure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire suppression and past logging has created denser conditions that these species may prefer or have adapted successfully to; • Proposed treatments to restore these Source habitats toward what they were like historically (HRV) may reduce the quantity of habitat available but make the remaining habitat more resilient and less wildfire prone. <p>Elk</p> <p>Winter Range – Exists primarily on the southern half of the</p>	<p>Alternative C would be the same as the Proposed Action for NIDGS but in addition would retain more habitat for pileated woodpeckers and other species in Habitat Family 2 and maintain existing elk security habitat. This would require retention of larger DBH 20”+ trees and maintain higher canopy in PVG 6 than in the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Family 1 species and NIDGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of habitat may consist of more noncommercial thinning and prescribed fire to restore open, dry habitats on the Lost Creek side of the project Area (i.e. not Boulder Creek) for species such as: • White-headed woodpecker • NIDGS • Migratory Bird Treaty Act species that prefer drier open habitat • Mule Deer <p>Family 2 Species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of habitat may consist of less mechanized treatment on Boulder Creek side of project area but prescribed fire treatment may be similar to proposed action. • Denser conditions that Family 2 wildlife species prefer would receive less/no treatment <p>Elk</p> <p>Winter Range – Exists primarily on the southern half of the project area and 3,000 acres of prescribed fire are proposed for habitat enhancement.</p> <p>Calving Habitat – Treat 3,500 acres by thinning/prescribed fire in calving areas to improve browse/parturition habitat.</p> <p>Elk Security – Elk security due to high road densities may be improved by maintaining denser habitat (PVG 6) and by increasing seasonal closures and enforcement of existing access management. Increased emphasis on effective closures (i.e. purchase, replace, or repair seasonal gates and provide additional law enforcement during the bull elk rifle season)</p>	<p>Alternative D is designed to move existing vegetative conditions more quickly toward HRV with more pronounced reductions in security habitat for elk and species in Family 2 as defined in the WCS. Due to higher mechanized treatments, less prescribed fire would be used to treat elk winter range and possibly elk calving areas.</p> <p>Family 1 Species and NIDGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum treatment of Family 1 habitat and NIDGS modeled potential habitat (~ 15, 000 acres). Treatment would consist of the maximum amount of thinning complimented by prescribed fire to restore open, dry habitats on the Lost Creek side of the project area (i.e. not Boulder Creek watershed). Corridors that link existing populations and habitat would also be treated to provide immigration and emigration of NIDGS and possible genetic interchange. <p>Family 2 Species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of habitat may consist of more mechanized treatment on Boulder Creek side of project area and possibly less prescribed fire. • There would be a net acre loss to existing Family 2 habitat due to mechanical treatment in the short to mid-term (possibly several decades). <p>This alternative responds to the following forest vegetation and wildlife issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive harvest in PVG 6 to promote seral species that were historically more abundant and have been outcompeted by grand-fir due to lack of disturbance (i.e. fire). • Large blocks of vegetation/habitat are more sustainable over time when intensity of restoration is accelerated. • Larger regeneration treatments that remove shade tolerant species such as grand fir (PVG 6) are necessary to achieve restoration in those habitat types that are heavily departed from HRV • Treatments to improve existing aspen stands need to be a minimum of 10 acres to provide enough sunlight. 	<p>Alternative E is designed to move existing vegetative conditions more quickly toward HRV with more pronounced reductions in habitat for elk and species in Habitat Family 2 as defined in the WCS, but would compensate for reductions in elk security by implementing more road closures.</p> <p>NIDGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would benefit known, current, occupied NIDGS sites on Lost Creek side of project area <p>This alternative responds to the following forest vegetation and wildlife issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive harvest in PVG 6 to promote seral species that were historically more abundant and have been outcompeted by grand-fir due to lack of disturbance (i.e. fire). • Large blocks of vegetation/habitat are more sustainable over time when intensity of restoration is accelerated. • Larger regeneration treatments that remove shade tolerant species such as grand fir (PVG 6) are necessary to achieve restoration in those habitat types that are heavily departed from HRV • Treatments to improve existing aspen stands need to be a minimum of 10 acres to provide enough sunlight.

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	<p>project area and can be enhanced by prescribed fire (approximately 2,000 acres).</p> <p>Calving Habitat – Treat (thinning/prescribed fire) calving areas to improve browse/parturition habitat (e.g. strata 70 on southerly aspects, approximately 2,500 acres).</p> <p>Elk Security – Elk security is an issue throughout the project area and will be further decreased by treatments in PVG 6. Seasonal road closures by gating (during bull elk rifle season) and road decommissioning, obliteration, and law enforcement are necessary to mitigate effects.</p>			
RECREATION	<p>Recreation actions under Alternative B include</p> <p>Dispersed Camping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New trailhead at Ant Basin with new restroom -6 new restrooms in Lost Creek <p>Decommission 5 outhouses in Boulder Creek</p> <p>Decommission 1 outhouse in Lost creek</p> <p>Total 7 new toilets, 6 decommissioned outhouses</p> <p>3 new sign kiosks in Lost Creek with updated trails and camping information</p> <p>Maintain and improve 70 dispersed camping sites in Lost Creek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fire rings -Barrier rock -improved road access <p>Close 12 existing dispersed sites and rehabilitate</p> <p>Roads and Trails:</p> <p>Designate 20 new miles of ATV/UTV* routes</p> <p>Construct 0.5 miles of connector trail from Cow Camp trail #181 to the Pollock trailhead (rehabilitate Lower Cow Camp trail).</p> <p>Close 0.9 miles of Trail #324</p> <p>As a result of comment letters, all proposed ATV trails would be accessible to UTVs; a connector trail from Cold Springs campground to the ATV/UTV would be added to the trail system; and spur roads accessing dispersed sites would be consolidated and rehabilitated where not needed.</p>	<p>Same as Proposed Action, except:</p> <p>Heavy maintenance proposed on Lick Creek trail in Lost Creek</p> <p>Proposed ATV trails would not be accessible to UTVs. (Slightly less than 20 miles of proposed ATV/UTV routes).</p> <p>Construct 20 miles of non-motorized trail designed for horse use with access for hiking and mountain biking.</p> <p>Dispersed camping along open roads in the project area would be restricted to designated sites only. The public would no longer be able to dispersed camp using a motorized vehicle as shown on the current 2013 MVUM map.</p>	Same as Proposed Action.	Same as Proposed Action.
ECONOMICS	Enterprise Team economist (Henry Eichman) will provide analysis.			

ACRONYMS:

AOP - aquatic organism passage

ATV – All terrain vehicle

FA – functioning appropriately

HRV – Historic range of variability

LSP – landslide prone

NIDGS – Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel

PVG – potential vegetation group

RCA – Riparian Conservation Area

RNA – research natural area

TAP – Travel analysis process

TBD – to be determined

USFWS – US Fish and Wildlife Service

UTV – Utility vehicle

WCC - Watershed Condition Class

WCF - Watershed Condition Framework

WCI - Watershed Condition Indicator

WCS – Wildlife Conservation Strategy

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