

Middle Fork Weiser River Landscape Restoration Project Council Ranger District, Payette National Forest November 21, 2014

Draft Proposal

Introduction

The Middle Fork Weiser River Landscape Restoration Project (Project) is located approximately six miles southeast of Council, Idaho, primarily in the Middle Fork Weiser River watershed. Proposed treatments include timber harvest, biomass removal, prescribed fire, road treatments including road reconstruction and decommissioning, recreation improvements, increasing public firewood gathering opportunities and spring protection. The Project area is approximately 50,000 acres, including the Middle Fork Weiser River watershed and a small portion of the East Fork Weiser River subwatershed. Project proposals in the East Fork Weiser River are limited in scope to a non-motorized trail and bridge to protect bull trout critical habitat by strengthening the integrity of a cattle enclosure.

This proposal is based in part on recommendations provided by the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC) to the Payette National Forest Supervisor on August 20, 2014. The Payette Forest Coalition is a collaborative group whose recommendations are structured to meet the intent of the 2009 Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act (CFLRA). The PFC members represent stakeholders from a broad range of interests, including the environmental community, timber industry, recreational groups, and state and county government. The purpose of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Program is to encourage collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes.

The Project area current conditions were evaluated in the Middle Fork Weiser River Landscape Assessment (USDA 2014) and the Middle Fork Weiser River Transportation Analysis Process (TAP [USDA 2014b]) by the Council and Weiser Ranger Districts Interdisciplinary Team or IDT. The Landscape Assessment evaluated the current conditions in the Project Area and provides a basis for comparing current conditions to desired conditions as described in the Payette Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan [USDA 2003]). The TAP provides a recommendation to a Decision Maker for a Minimum Road System (MRS) as directed by the Travel Rule (36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295 2005).

Purpose and Need

Purpose

The **purpose** of the Project is to:

- 1) Move vegetation toward the desired conditions defined in the Forest Plan and consistent with the current science for restoration of low to mid-elevation, ponderosa pine habitats, with an emphasis on:

- a) Improving habitat for specific wildlife species of concern, such as the species dependent on dry coniferous forests, while maintaining habitat for federally-listed and sensitive species;
 - b) Maintaining and promoting large tree forest structure, early seral species composition (for example aspen, western larch, ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir) and forest resiliency; and
 - c) Reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, with an emphasis on restoring and maintaining desirable plant community attributes including fuel levels, fire regimes, and other ecological processes.
- 2) Move the Granite Creek, Jungle Creek, Little Fall Creek and Mica Creek subwatersheds within the Project area toward the desired condition for soil, water, riparian, and aquatic resources by reducing road- and trail-related impacts.
 - 3) Manage recreation use in the Project with an emphasis on hardening primary dispersed recreation areas, improving existing trails and providing new trail opportunities including an OHV loop and a non-motorized trail.
 - 4) Contribute to the economic vitality of the communities adjacent to the Payette National Forest.
 - 5) Improve firefighter and public safety by establishing strategically placed defensible fuel breaks within the project area.

Need

The **need** for the project is based on the difference between the existing and desired conditions. These differences include:

- 1) Loss of habitat for Family 1 wildlife species, such as the white-headed woodpecker, compared to historical conditions;
- 2) Fewer large tree size classes than desired in the drier forest types (PVGs 2, and 5), and higher canopy cover;
- 3) Fewer early seral tree species (i.e. aspen, ponderosa pine and western larch) than desired;
- 4) Increased conifer encroachment into the mid-elevation aspen belt, wet meadows, and dry meadows.
- 5) Fewer fire resilient tree species and higher densities of non-fire resilient tree species;
- 6) Higher surface fuel loading in those areas that have missed one or more fire return intervals;
- 7) Less than desired watershed function and integrity; and
- 8) Trail and recreation facilities that do not meet current design and accessibility standards.

The desired conditions for this project are based upon the Forest Plan, the Watershed Condition Framework (USDA Forest Service 2011) and the most recent science concerning management of wildlife habitats including the Payette National Forest Wildlife Conservation Strategy (Egnew,

2011).

Project Objectives

Project objectives are elements of the purpose and need that the project is designed to address.

Forested Vegetation

Objective 1: Move vegetation toward the desired conditions defined in the Forest Plan, with an emphasis on promoting large tree forest structure, early seral species composition and forest resiliency.

Fire and Fuels

Objective 2: Restore and maintain desirable fuel levels, fire regimes, and ecological processes.

Objective 3: Establish and maintain approximately 12 miles of strategically-placed shaded fuel breaks to improve firefighter and public safety and improve the defensible space adjacent to private lands and provide protection to infrastructure to the east of the Project.

Wildlife

Objective 4: Improve habitat for Family 1 wildlife species, as represented by the white-headed woodpecker, a Region 4 Sensitive Species (USDA Forest Service 2011) and Forest Management Indicator Species (MIS), by restoring forest conditions that contribute to source habitat for these species. Forested stands providing these source habitats should be restored to conditions within or near to the Historical Range of Variability (HRV).

Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic (SWRA) Resources

Objective 3: Move the Granite Creek, Jungle Creek, Little Fall Creek and Mica Creek subwatersheds within the Project area toward the desired condition for SWRA resources.

Recreation

Objective 5: Manage recreation use in the Project with an emphasis on identifying and hardening primary dispersed recreation areas, improving existing trails, closing and rehabilitating unwanted user created motorized routes and developing new trail opportunities.

Economics

Objective 6: Contribute to the economic vitality of local communities.

Proposed Action

The Project proposals are in the Middle Fork Weiser River (MFWR) watershed and a small portion of the East Fork Weiser River subwatershed. Project proposals in the East Fork Weiser River are limited in scope to a non-motorized trail and a bridge to protect bull trout critical habitat by strengthening the integrity of a cattle enclosure. Except for these two actions, vegetation treatments, road treatments, and all other actions are proposed only in the Middle Fork Weiser River watershed and analysis acres or miles are only included for MFWR.

Vegetation Background—Potential Vegetation Groups (PVGs)

At the level of the Forest Plan, forested habitat types have been further grouped into potential vegetation groups (PVGs) that share similar environmental characteristics, site productivity, and disturbance regimes. The purpose of these groupings is to simplify the description of vegetative conditions for use at the broad scale (USDA 2003, A-17). This classification allows for a more efficient and operational way to understand the ecological complexity of the landscape by grouping approximately sixty to seventy habitat types into eleven PVGs. Table 1 identifies the acreage and percentage of area of the PVGs in the Project area on National Forest System (NFS) lands.

Table 1. Potential Vegetation Groups by acres and percentage of MFWR area

Potential Vegetation Group	Acres within Project Area (NFS Lands)	Percent of Project Area
PVG 1—Dry Ponderosa Pine/Xeric Douglas-fir	246	1%
PVG 2—Warm Dry Douglas-fir/Moist Ponderosa Pine	3,300	9%
PVG 3—Cool Moist Douglas-fir	0	0%
PVG 4—Cool Dry Douglas-fir	122	<1%
PVG 5—Dry Grand Fir	4,262	12%
PVG 6—Cool Moist Grand Fir	11,607	31%
PVG 7—Warm Dry Subalpine Fir	5,367	15%
PVG 8—Warm Moist Subalpine Fir	44	<1%
PVG 9—Hydric Subalpine Fir	693	2%
PVG 10—Persistent Lodgepole Pine	952	3%
PVG 11—High Elevation Subalpine Fir	419	1%
Total Forested Vegetation	27,012	73%
PVG 99 Grassland/Shrubland	10,061	27%
Project Area Total (NFS Lands)	37,073	100%

Potential Vegetation Group 1— Dry Ponderosa Pine/Xeric Douglas-fir

This widespread group represents the warm, dry extreme of the forest environments wherever ponderosa pine is found. Historically, frequent nonlethal fire maintained large, park-like stands of ponderosa pine.

Potential Vegetation Group 2—Warm, Dry Douglas-fir/Moist Ponderosa Pine

This group represents warm, mild environments at low-to-middle elevations. Ponderosa pine mixed with Douglas-fir is the dominant cover type in this group. Historically, frequent nonlethal fire maintained large, park-like stands of ponderosa pine.

Potential Vegetation Group 4— Cool Dry Douglas-fir

This group is found at elevations above 6,000 feet. Douglas-fir is the predominant cover type on these sites and may form open or dense stands. The dense stands often display poor tree growth and heavy infestations of dwarf mistletoe. In some areas, quaking aspen or lodgepole pine may dominate seral stands. Historically, fires burned infrequently through stands.

Potential Vegetation Group 5—Dry Grand Fir

This group is found at elevations ranging from 4,300 to 6,400 feet. Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir are common cover types that appear to have been maintained by fire regimes that were historically nonlethal to mixed1. In many areas, this group may have resembled PVG 2, with open, park-like stands of large ponderosa pine. Mixed tree species stands were likely restricted to small micro sites that burned less frequently.

Potential Vegetation Group 6—Cool, Moist Grand Fir

This group is found at elevations ranging from 3,400 to 6,500 feet and represents moister environments in the grand fir zone. Ponderosa pine is common at the drier extremes of the group and lodgepole pine occurs in colder areas. Western larch may also be present as an early-seral species. Historical fire regimes were mixed, ranging from mixed1 to mixed2. Where ponderosa pine was maintained as a common seral species, it appears that fires were more often mixed1. In other areas, where western larch, Douglas-fir, or lodgepole pine were maintained as seral species, the mixed2 fire regime may have been more common. This difference within PVG 6 reflects a split, described by Crane and Fischer (1986), of the Grand Fir Habitat Types into warm, dry and cool, and moist subgroups.

Potential Vegetation Group 7—Warm, Dry Subalpine Fir

This group represents warmer, drier environments in the subalpine fir zone. Elevations range from 4,800 feet to 7,500 feet. At lower elevations, this group is found on steep, north-to-east aspects, but shifts to south-to-west aspects, as elevation increases. Adjacent sites at lower elevations are Douglas-fir or grand fir, and these commonly intermix where topography controls cold air flow. Douglas-fir is the most common cover type throughout this PVG. Ponderosa pine may be found at the warmest extremes, particularly where this group grades into the Douglas-fir or grand fir zone. Lodgepole pine or Engelmann spruce may occur at cool, moist extremes, but these cover types rarely dominate. Understories are commonly shrubby and include mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), mountain ash (*Sorbus scopulina* or *sitchensis*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), and scouler willow (*Salix scouleriana*). Historical fire regimes were generally

mixed2, though mixed1 fires may have occurred where ponderosa pine was maintained.

Potential Vegetation Group 8—Warm, Moist Subalpine Fir

This is a relatively minor group of habitat types in central Idaho. In central Idaho, this group ranges in elevation from about 5,000 to 7,200 feet but may follow cold air drainages as low as 4,500 feet. These sites are found in moist, protected areas such as stream terraces, toeslopes, and steep, northerly aspects. There are various mixtures of species lodgepole pine, western larch, Douglas-fir and Engelmann spruce comprise the seral tree layers. Historically, these sites experience infrequent high-intensity fires sometimes mixed with underburns.

Potential Vegetation Group 9—Hydric Subalpine Fir

Seasonally high water tables control this group, and the extent may be small in some areas, depending on the presence of these conditions. Elevations range from 9,000 feet, to as low as 4,500 feet in frost pockets and along cold air drainages. This group most commonly occurs on wet toe slopes, stream terraces, seep areas, and old bogs. Cover types are lodgepole pine, followed by Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. Early seral conditions usually support lodgepole pine, because this species can tolerate intermittent high water tables and cold air that often accumulates. In severe frost-prone areas, lodgepole pine can persist for long periods. In other areas with better cold air drainage, Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir rapidly establish under the lodgepole pine. Understories in this group are primarily dominated by herbs and grasses that require the seasonal influence of a high water table. Shrubs are sparse, though Labrador tea (*Ledum glandulosum*) can dominate some sites. Historically, fire was lethal in this group. Ignitions more likely occurred on adjacent drier slopes, and burning in this group likely depended on weather conditions before and at the time of the ignition.

Potential Vegetation Group 10—Persistent Lodgepole Pine

This group is common throughout the subalpine fir zone. It represents cold, dry subalpine fir sites that range in elevation from over 9,200 feet down to 5,200 feet in frost-pockets. Lodgepole pine is the dominant cover type, though small amounts of other species may occasionally occur. Understories can be sparse. Generally, grasses and scattered forbs are the most common understory components. Shrubs are sparse and consist mainly of low-growing huckleberries including dwarf huckleberry (*Vaccinium caespitosum*) and grouse whortleberry (*V. scoparium*). Historically, this group experienced lethal fire, though nonlethal fires may have occurred during stand development. Lodgepole pine is more often non-serotinous in western portions of the Forest and appears to become more serotinous moving easterly. Within the Forest, lodgepole pine may reproduce in areas that experience nonlethal fires. The result is more vertical stand diversity in some areas than is often found where lodgepole pine is mostly serotinous. Over time, the combinations of these low-intensity events, subsequent reproduction, and mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) mortality would have created fuel conditions that allowed lethal fires to occur under the right weather conditions.

Potential Vegetation Group 11—High Elevation Subalpine Fir (with whitebark pine)

This group occurs at the highest elevations of the subalpine fir zone and generally represents the upper timberline conditions. It often grades into krummholz or alpine communities. Whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) is a major seral species in this group. Engelmann spruce and subalpine

fir are the climax co-dominates. In some areas, whitebark pine serves as a cover for Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir establishment. Understories are primarily forbs and grasses tolerant of freezing temperatures, which can occur any time during the growing season. Shrubs are sparse, due to the cold, harsh conditions. Historically, the fire regime in this group is characterized as mixed2, though the effects of fires were highly variable. Ignitions are common, due to the high elevation; however, fuel conditions were historically sparse, due to the cold growing conditions and shallow soils. Therefore, fire effects were patchy. Fire regimes are mixed2, with whitebark pine being a major seral component.

Potential Vegetation Group 99—Non-forested vegetation type

This vegetation groups consist of grasslands, sagebrush, high brush, scablands, dry and wet meadows or rocky areas; all areas are incapable of supporting more that 10% stocking of conifer trees.

Fire regime descriptions in relation to PVGs

Historically, the drier forest types (PVGs 2 and 5) in the Project area consisted of a diverse understory of grasses, forbs, and low shrubs, with a large-diameter, fire-resilient overstory. This condition was maintained over time by frequent, low-intensity fires. The moister, mixed-severity fire regimes found in PVGs 6, 7, and 11 occurred in the Douglas-fir, grand fir, subalpine fir, and whitebark pine communities. PVG 9 falls into a lethal fire regime. See Table 2 for a description of Fire Regimes and relationship to PVG.

Table 2. Fire regime description

Fire Regime	Fire Interval	Fire Intensity	PVG	Vegetation Patterns (Agee 1998)
Nonlethal	5–25 years	Low—10% mortality or less	2 and 5	Relatively homogenous with small patches generally <1.0 acre of different seral stages, densities, and compositions created from mortality
Mixed1	5–70 years	Low to moderate—10–50% mortality	5, 6, 7	Relatively homogenous with patches created from mortality ranging in size from <1.0 to 600 acres of different seral stages, densities, and compositions
Mixed2	70–300 years	Moderate to high—50–90% mortality	6, 7, 11	Relatively diverse with patches created by mixes of mortality and unburned or underburned areas ranging in size from <1 to 25,000 acres of different seral stages, densities, and compositions
Lethal	100–400 years	High—over 90% mortality	9	Relatively homogenous with patches sometimes >25,000 acres of similar seral stages, densities, and compositions. Small inclusions of different seral stages, densities, and compositions often result from unburned or underburned areas.

Design of Treatment Areas

Vegetation Treatments

Vegetative treatments include: Commercial and Non-commercial Vegetative Treatments, Meadow Restoration, Prescribed Fire, and Associated Actions.

The Forest Service proposes to treat ***up to*** 14,630 acres with commercial harvests (a combination of Free Thin, Free Thin–Patch Cut–Selection Harvest, Aspen Restoration, and Mature Plantation Harvest). Combined commercial and non-commercial vegetation treatments include up to 5,295 acres of meadow restoration, 770 acres Restoration of Low Density Timber Stands. Non-commercial treatments would include thinning up to 4,424 acres. These acreages includes treatments designed for and within RCAs (see Appendix A). Approximately, 3,332 acres are commercial treatments (as described below) within RCAs.

It is expected that there would be a reduction in treatments acres based on locations of northern goshawk Post Fledgling Areas (PFAs) and nest stands, elk wallows, Canada lynx habitat, archeological sites and additional streams and other water sources that would be identified during implementation. Specific guidelines that would be followed include:

- There are nine identified goshawk PFAs and within the PFAs, goshawk nest replacement nest stands would not receive mechanical treatment. Stands within goshawk post fledgling areas would be identified prior to marking operations and would be designed to meet *Management recommendations for the northern goshawk in the southwestern United States* (Reynolds et al. 1992).
- There is approximately 8,300 acres of lynx habitat in the Project area. No more than 30% of the lynx habitat would be moved to an unsuitable condition for lynx.

PVGs	Sum of Potential Commercial Treatment Acres
1	60
2	642
4	11
5	2271
6	7507
7	2196
8	76
9	162
10	460
11	234
Total Acres	14,630

Commercial Treatments

Stands would be thinned through commercial logging. Potential harvest systems may include ground based, skyline, and/or helicopter. Harvested trees would generally be removed with the limbs and tops attached. The limbs and tops would be utilized as biomass, or other products, where practical. Where appropriate and needed, sapling sized trees would be cut to reduce ladder fuels and promote desired advanced regeneration. Following harvest, these stands could be underburned as described in the prescribed fire section below. Commercial vegetative treatments have been divided into the following categories:

Commercial Thin-Free Thin (CT-FT) – up to 3,294 acres. Free thinning would allow flexibility to use different thinning methods for varying stand conditions and objectives. Free thinning would be accomplished primarily by low thinning (removing trees from the lower crown classes) with some crown thinning (removing trees from the dominant and co-dominant crown classes) and occasionally sanitation cutting (removing trees to improve stand health by reducing the anticipated spread of insects or disease, especially mistletoe infections).

These treatments would generally be completed in forested areas dominated by mature, vigorous ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and / or western larch (*i.e.* - PVG 1, 2, 4, and 5, and portions of PVG 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 dominated by early seral species) with canopy cover greater than 35 percent.

Treatment Intent:

- Reduce stand density and increase mean diameter.
- Maintain and promote large tree forest structure and old forest characteristics while restoring the desired species composition, and stand densities;
- Promote resiliency, reduce competition and improve growth rates for remaining trees;
- Improve habitat for wildlife species that require large tree and old forest characteristics with low to moderate canopy cover;
- Promote regeneration of desired tree species in areas that are conducive to uneven-aged silviculture systems (uneven-aged management would be considered in the drier forest types where successful regeneration of desired species is anticipated [*i.e.*, in ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest types]);
- Reduce potential for crown fire spread should a wildland fire occur.
- Restore a heterogeneous fine scale mosaic pattern.

Following treatment, these stands would be a mosaic of thinned areas, clumps of trees, and small openings. The average canopy cover in these stands after harvest and underburn operations would be between 25 and 45 percent. In mature stands, this equates to an average crown spacing of approximately 6 to 20 feet. Lower canopy cover (25 to 30 percent post treatment canopy cover) would generally be targeted in PVG 1 and 2. This equates to 10 to 20 foot crown spacing. Higher canopy cover (30 to 45 percent) would generally be the desired post treatment desired condition in PVGs 5 and 6. This equates to 6 to 15 foot crown spacing. Portions of stands with

natural openings and heavily thinned areas would have less canopy cover, perhaps as low as 10 percent. These openings would eventually develop more canopy cover where seedlings establish and grow. In mature stands, this equates to an average crown spacing of 12 to 30 feet.

Free Thin–Patch Cut-Modified Shelterwood-Selection Harvest (Group or Individual Tree) (FT-PC-MSw-SH) – up to 7,980 acres. This treatment would be implemented primarily in relatively cool, moist grand fir, subalpine fir and lodgepole forest types (i.e. - PVGs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11) that have evidence (i.e., - relic early seral trees, stumps, snags, etc.) of previously having had an aspen, ponderosa pine, western larch and/or Douglas-fir component. In some cases PVG 1, 2, and 5 may be treated with FT-PC-MSw-SH. This treatment would occur in stands that still have a component of early seral species (i.e., – 25 to 75 percent of the desired amounts) but not enough to free thin throughout and still leave the desired species composition.

Treatment Intent:

- Re-establish early seral species in areas where they have departed from the desired conditions.
- Establish varying patch sizes consistent with spatial patterns created by historic fire regimes. Retaining portions of stands that historically would not have been dominated by early seral species as skips.
- Skips are defined as portions of units not treated mechanically (Franklin et al 2013). These skips would not generally exceed 30 percent of a stand.

Implementation of these treatments would allow for regeneration (e.g., patch cut with reserves or selection harvest) in patches ranging from three to ten acres in size, generally on less than 50 percent of a stand. In regenerated areas (patches) approximately four to twelve trees per acre would be retained as reserve trees. The stand would be either naturally or artificially regenerated after treatment; unless, the stand is predominately lodgepole pine and the intent is lodgepole regeneration these stands would only be naturally regenerated.

Reserve tree preference would be legacy trees, replacement legacy trees, high value wildlife trees (i.e. cavities, broken tops with structure for nesting), dominant non-serals and vigorous serals in any crown class. Artificial regeneration (planting trees) would be utilized in areas (excluding lodgepole pine areas intended for lodgepole regeneration) where the desired species composition would not be expected to be met with natural regeneration.

In portions of stands with an early seral component still remaining, free thinning or modified shelterwood would be implemented. Portions of each stand not meeting the criteria for patch cuts, modified shelterwood, selection or free thinning would not receive commercial treatment during this entry.

Aspen Conifer Removal Treatment – up to 1,322 acres. This treatment would be implemented in relatively cool, moist grand fir, subalpine fir and lodgepole forest types (i.e. - PVGs 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11) that have evidence (i.e., - relic early seral trees, stumps, snags, etc.) of previously having a dominant aspen overstory. The treatment would occur in stands that still have a dominant component of aspen present with canopy cover greater than 35 percent.

Treatment Intent:

- Re-establish Aspen where they have departed from desired conditions. Aspen restoration conifer overstory removal would remove all conifers except legacy ponderosa pine/western larch and legacy like Douglas-fir. Conifers within 100 feet of the south and west edges of the aspen stands and within 50 feet on the north and east edges of the aspen stands would be removed. Whole tree yarding would be used to limit slash concentrations within the aspen stands. Excessive slash would be hand piled and burned. To initiate suckering of the root system, units would be burned; additionally, aspen may, in limited cases, be girdled or felled when other treatment options have failed.
- In areas adjacent to aspen clones, establish varying patch sizes and densities (using FT-PC-SH treatments) consistent with spatial patterns created by historic fire regimes. Retaining portions of stands that historically would not have been dominated by early seral species as skips.
- Legacy ponderosa pine and western larch would be released by removing younger trees for approximately twice the canopy drip line of the legacy tree(s). As discussed earlier, overlap of other legacy tree crowns is acceptable and these other legacies would be retained. Release of replacement/future legacy trees/clumps would also be considered. In addition, retention of replacement trees would be considered if a desirable legacy tree replacement is within this area.
- To ensure that aspen are restored in riparian areas both mechanical (including harvesting, and skidding) and hand treatments (including girdling, non-commercial thinning, and felling conifer trees) would occur within the RCA boundaries. Machine or hand piling would occur outside of the RCA. In some locations near seeps and springs fencing may be needed and would be determined on a site by site basis.
- To initiate suckering prescribed burning would be used following mechanical or hand treatments.

Commercial Thin / Mature Plantations (CT-MP) – up to 787 acres. This treatment would be applied to stands that were previously artificially regenerated (plantations). These stands are typically greater than 30 years in age and were planted predominately with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and/or western larch. These mature plantations contain commercial trees with an average diameter at breast height (DBH) greater than eight inches and would average approximately 70 to 80 trees per acre (this would generally result in crown spacing of 10-15 feet) after thinning. Thinning would generally favor the retention of larger, early seral trees and be completed to create stands with variable densities while promoting a mix of desired species. Merchantable material would be removed from the site and utilized as markets allow. Non-commercial material (slash) would be lopped and scattered, mechanically harvested, removed, hand piled, machine piled, and/or broadcast burned to reduce fuel loading. The cost of slash treatment, coarse woody debris, and fuel loading would be considerations in determining the method of non-commercial material treatment.

Commercial Thin within RCAs. Both thinning and prescribed fire treatments are proposed in RCAs in the Middle Fork Weiser River watershed. Up to 1,689 acres of CT-FT, FT-PC-MSw-SH, and CT-MP treatments in RCAs have been proposed in areas dominated by drier forest

types (e.g., PVGs 1-6) historically maintained by frequent, low intensity fire regimes to maintain upland vegetation within the historic range of variability. These acres are not additional acres of proposed treatment and are accounted for in the CT-FT and CT-MP sections above. Only areas in the outer half of RCAs have been proposed for this treatment and the CT-FT and CT-MP treatment descriptions would be modified in these areas to retain adequate stocking to achieve shade and large woody debris recruitment objectives within RCAs.

Proposed treatments have been designed to mitigate potential activities that could degrade current RCA conditions or retard the attainment of SWRA desired conditions. RCA treatments would apply to upland vegetation that occurs within the outer portion of a RCA, and to riparian vegetation in aspen stands where conifer encroachment is causing a decline in aspen or other deciduous tree vigor. These treatments would move more vegetation toward desired conditions as described in the Forest Plan (Forest Plan, pp. III-30, A-15 and III-131 Objectives 0325 and 0326). Treatments would only occur if all SWRA resource requirements and Forest Plan standards and guidelines could be met.

RCA treatments would remove less than 40 percent canopy cover and would be developed in consultation with the district fish biologist and/or hydrologist to ensure streambank stability and ground cover are addressed and riparian functions are maintained or improved as required by Forest Plan SWST10 (USDA 2003).

Combined Commercial and Non-Commercial Treatments

Restoration treatments in stands with Low Densities – up to 770 acres. These stands typically have stocking rates not conducive to commercial harvest; however, in many cases there are restoration needs in overstocked forested pockets. In these stands there is an early seral species component that is being affected by increased ladder fuels and insect/disease issues. Both thinning (commercial and non-commercial treatments) and prescribed fire treatments are proposed in timber stands with lower densities.

PVGs	Potential Restoration of Low Density Acres
1	43
2	155
4	9
5	208
6	165
7	110
9	9
10	35
11	36
Total Acres	770

Treatment Intent:

- Maintain legacy and legacy-like trees while reducing stand densities and ladder fuels;
- Restore natural fire disturbance regime to improve understory plant diversity and vigor, and provide habitat for native species;

- Move the project area toward a pre-fire suppression vegetative condition related to stand density, tree size class, and species composition to enable the reintroduction of fire into a fire adapted ecosystem and;
- Promote resiliency and reduce competition for remaining trees.

Commercial and Non Commercial Thinning within Meadows (wet and dry) – up to 5,678 acres. Both thinning (commercial and non-commercial treatments) and prescribed fire treatments are proposed in wet and dry meadows. This treatment addresses Objective 0325 in the Weiser River Management Area section of the Forest Plan, which provides direction to, “Maintain and promote native grasses and aspen where they occur...”. Approximately, 5,482 acres are considered non-commercial treatments and 196 acres considered commercial treatment.

PVGs	Potential Wet and Dry Meadow Thinning (Commercial/Non-Commercial) Acres
1	16
2	17
4	70
5	17
6	0
7	16
8	0
9	67
10	5
11	4
99	5,482
Total	6,049

Wet Meadow Treatment – Wet meadows within the project area have higher tree densities, reduced riparian vegetation, and reduced water tables, which is primarily due to conifer encroachment. The preferred approach is to treat wet meadows in one entry using a combination of mechanical treatment or hand treatment followed by prescribed fire. In some locations near seeps and springs fencing may be needed and would be determined on a site by site basis.

Treatment Intent:

- Restore physical (hydrological) and biological (terrestrial and aquatic diversity and abundance), and ecological meadow processes (evapotranspiration) and functions (flow dispersal, ground water recharge, and sediment retention) that are appropriate for the current climate regime and comparable to reference conditions.
- Restore natural fire disturbance regime in wet meadows to enhance riparian habitat for native riparian-dependent species, increase meadow acreage, improve plant diversity and vigor, provide habitat for native species, increase water availability for wetland species, and provide wetter conditions for a longer duration each year.
- Provide diverse wildlife habitat for native riparian-dependent species, which is currently limited within the Middle Fork Weiser River project area due to past land management

activities.

Dry Meadow Treatment – Within the Dry meadow complexes there is an encroachment of young conifers primarily along the edges as well as a decadency of upland shrubs. Treatment of encroaching conifers include a combination of hand felling, lop and scatter or hand piling followed by burning; while the remaining meadow complex would be treated with prescribed fire.

Treatment Intent:

- Restore natural fire disturbance regime in dry meadows to enhance upland meadow species, increase meadow acreage, improve plant diversity and vigor, and provide habitat for native species.
- Move the project area toward a pre-fire suppression vegetative condition related to stand density, tree size class, and species composition to enable the reintroduction of fire into a fire adapted ecosystem.

Non-commercial Treatments

PVGs	Sum of Potential Non-Commercial Thinning Acres
1	48
2	1,392
5	364
6	947
7	113
8	0
9	9
10	102
Total Acres	2,974

Non-Commercial Thinning – up to 2,974 acres. Non-commercial thinning would be completed in plantations that currently have density-related stress occurring. These plantations are generally less than 30 years old and have an average DBH of less than eight inches. Within these plantations, thinning would be completed to improve wildlife habitat, increase growth rates and tree vigor, improve stand resiliency to natural disturbance, and reduce density-related competition. Post treatment, these stands would retain approximately 80 to 100 trees per acre. Thinning would favor early seral species but would retain a mixture of species and variable densities depending upon site-specific objectives. Where reserve trees within plantations receiving this treatment are causing forest health problems (primarily due to mistletoe) trees may be killed by girdling. Girdled trees would be marked with wildlife tags as necessary to meet desired snag numbers and sizes.

Non-commercial thinning would generally cut trees less than eight inches DBH and prune residual trees, when practical, up to six feet in height. In areas targeted for prescribed fire treatments (see below) non-commercial thinning/ladder fuel thinning would be completed where necessary to:

- Expand the opportunity for application of prescribed fire by changing the fuel profile;
- Reduce the potential for undesired fire effects (i.e., mortality of legacy trees);
- Aid in the retention of desired leave trees;
- Reduce non-commercial tree densities, increase growth rates, improve wildlife habitat, and tree vigor.

Ladder fuel thinning would be permitted within RCAs where active ignition has been approved by the District hydrologist and/or fisheries biologist. All ladder fuel treatments in RCAs would be completed by hand and would not cut trees larger than eight inches DBH. Slash produced from ladder fuel treatments would be lopped and scattered or hand piled as directed by the District hydrologist and/or fisheries biologist or soil scientist. Piling of slash would not occur within RCAs.

Associated Actions

A number of activities associated with implementing these vegetative treatments are necessary. These include:

Road Maintenance and Use – Road maintenance may include, but is not limited to, blading, installation of drainage features (i.e. – rolling dips), hardening soft spots (i.e. - utilizing pit run), surfacing, installing or improving water passage (i.e. – culverts), realignment of small segments of roads to minimize impacts to resources, and brushing roads to improve visibility and safety. System roads currently in long-term closure may also be reconstructed and used for implementation of the project. Use of these roads may involve the installation of stream crossings that were removed as part of the long-term closure treatment. These roads would be returned to long-term storage following use.

Temporary roads - Temporary roads are defined as roads authorized by contract, permit, lease, other written authorization, or emergency operation; that are not intended to be part of the forest transportation system; that are not necessary for long-term resource managements; that are not forest roads or forest trails; and that are not included in a forest transportation atlas. Both planned and incidental temporary roads would be utilized and decommissioned (fully re-contoured) after project implementation. Planned temporary roads are defined as routes identified during the planning process and depicted on project maps. Some of the planned temporary roads would be newly constructed; however, most of the planned temporary roads have existing roadbeds (unauthorized routes) in place. Up to 23 miles of existing temporary roads would be used. Incidental temporary roads are roads that are needed to complete vegetative treatments but cannot yet be identified due to the level of site-specificity necessary. These incidental temporary roads would be preferentially located on existing roadbeds (unauthorized routes) where applicable and receive full obliteration and recontouring when logging is completed. Incidental temporary roads would require approval by resource specialists prior to construction and would be limited to 7 miles or less of temporary road (not on an existing roadbed) throughout the Project Area.

Gravel Pits – Existing gravel pits would be utilized within the project area in order to provide gravel for resurfacing roads. Three sites for potential gravel pits have been identified on NFS

lands and one location on private land. All of the gravel pits have suitable rock for present and foreseeable future expansion needs. Activities in the pits would be coordinated with the Wildlife Biologist for any restrictions or constraints for the protection of wildlife.

Brush Disposal- After thinning, slash reduction would include machine piling and burning, hand piling and burning, lop and scatter, broadcast/underburning, or removal. This applies within and outside of areas designated for prescribed fire treatments. Opportunities would be sought for removing and utilizing the biomass for energy production or other uses where practicable.

Site Preparation – After the harvest activities are completed and prior to planting in proposed areas, site preparation may be completed either by prescribed burning, hand scalping or mechanical scalping (exposing mineral soil) with heavy equipment. This would be completed to reduce competition to seedlings from brush and grass. All site preparation activities would be consistent with SWRA requirements, specifically detrimental disturbance and coarse woody debris.

Planting – Planting of ponderosa pine, western larch, Douglas-fir and/or Engelmann spruce seedlings on all proposed regeneration treatments would be completed as necessary to meet desired stocking levels. The species mix would depend on elevation and site conditions.

Prescribed Fire Treatments

Up to 37,000 acres of the project area would be targeted (see description below) for prescribed burning over the next 15-20 years. Commercial activities would generally be completed prior to the application of fire. Reintroducing 500 to 10,000 acres of fire annually for the next 15-20 years would move forested and non-forested vegetation towards conditions that more closely represent historic distribution, structure, and function.

Primary target areas (up to 8,000 acres) for treatment consist of stands with historically high fire frequencies and lower severities (grasslands and stands dominated by seral species such as ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and western larch). Secondary target areas (up to 29,000 acres) include stands with historically moderate fire frequency and mixed severities stands comprised of both seral and non-seral species (i.e., grand fir).

A mosaic-like application of fire would re-introduce fire to approximately 75 percent of treated primary targeted acres, and 50 percent of treated secondary targeted acres. All acres targeted for the application of fire would be available for noncommercial thinning in order to minimize mortality from prescribed fire and aid in moving towards restored conditions.

- Fire would not be directly applied to non-target areas. These stands comprise young plantations, stands of historically low frequency and high severities, and stands set aside for other resource concerns or objectives (e.g., wildlife cover). Approximately 20 percent of non-target acres within the project area can be expected to receive fire, through backing (low intensity fire spread, without additional lighting). This minimal fire spread would not alter overall stand conditions within the non-target areas.
- Prescribed fire would be used to reduce fuel loads and rejuvenate vegetation. Aspen stands in the Project area are in particular need of rejuvenation and regeneration. Coniferous trees have encroached on aspen stands due to the lack of frequent low-

intensity fire. In the past, frequent fire killed encroaching conifers and induced aspen root sprouting. After treatment, these areas would appear more open.

Existing barriers to fire spread (barren ridgelines, roads and trails) would be used where possible to contain prescribed burns within specified boundaries. In areas where existing barriers are insufficient to control fire spread, handline would be constructed. Hand-constructed fireline would be limited to use only where necessary. The integrity of existing trails and roads would be considered in the application of fire and damage caused by these actions would be repaired. Constructed fireline would be rehabilitated after use.

Ignitions would be by hand or helicopter. Prescribed burning operations may occur from early spring to late fall. Fire may be applied to tree wells in winter or early spring to reduce fuel accumulation and to reduce the potential for tree mortality during regular broadcast burning. Maintenance burning (burning after initial application of fire) would occur every 5-10 years to maintain desired conditions in high frequency fire regimes. Prescription parameters (wind speed, fuel moisture, smoke dispersion, and other resource area objectives) influence burn opportunities. Ignitions within some RCAs would be permitted where approved of in advance by the District hydrologist and/or fisheries biologist.

Up to 8,500 acres of burning would be conducted in the Council Mountain Poison Creek Inventoried Roadless Areas to rejuvenate grass/shrub communities and promote whitebark pine restoration. There would be no road building or timber harvest. Fireline construction would be limited to handline construction where needed. To lower the risk of mortality to whitebark pine, subalpine fir trees would be lopped and scattered if located adjacent to whitebark pine.

All burning would follow Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines, and adhere to national and state air quality regulations. Specific conditions under which burning would occur would be developed through a prescribed fire plan, prior to ignition.

Shaded Fuelbreaks

A shaded fuelbreak would be created using existing roads and terrain features on approximately 370 acres to provide areas to control large or emerging fires in a safe manner for firefighters and to provide protection to the values to the east of the project (Tamarack Ski Area and structures in this area). This treatment would involve reducing crown closure, piling and burning ladder fuels (excavator or hand piles) or using a masticator to reduce fuel loading. The width of the fuelbreak would range from no fuelbreak needed to up to 500 feet wide, depending on fuel type, site slope, and the risk level associated with protecting improvements.

Firewood Availability

Closed roads used for timber harvest would be evaluated for firewood retrieval, including firewood decks made available for public use.

Watershed Improvement and Restoration Treatments

Watershed improvements proposed would improve watershed function and resiliency through minimizing the impact of the road and trail network and restoring vegetation and soil productivity in riparian areas. Treatments include road and trail decommissioning, improvements, and reroutes, and vegetation treatments designed to restore or enhance native

riparian vegetation through mechanical or hand treatment, prescribed fire, or planting and seeding.

Road treatments proposed for this project were developed using the Travel Analysis Process (TAP) conducted in 2013 and 2014 (USDA Forest service 2014b). Changes to the Forest System Road network are proposed to reduce road-related impacts to water quality and fish habitat, as well as reduce overall road density and comply with the Travel Rule (36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295 2005) requirement of establishing a Minimum Road System (MRS).

Roads that are recommended to remain on the landscape as part of the MRS would be maintained and improved to reduce sediment production (guided by recommendations from site-specific sediment modeling). Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) would be improved at two crossings described below. Fish habitat connectivity would be achieved by replacement of fish passage barriers on open and closed maintenance level two system roads and by removal on closed maintenance level one system roads. Forest Service System Roads not needed for future management or access and unauthorized routes are identified for decommissioning.

System road treatments proposed throughout the project area include maintenance and/or improvement of Forest Service System Roads. This could include graveling, reshaping, upgrading and replacing culverts, and stabilizing cut and fill slopes. Approximately 16.6 miles of road would be placed in Long Term Closure status. Long-term closure treatments include stabilizing road surface, cut, and fill slopes, removing or bypassing culverts, and blocking the entrance. Approximately 16.1 miles of system roads would be decommissioned. Approximately 62.1 miles of unauthorized roads would be decommissioned. Decommissioning treatments proposed range from full recontour to spot treating isolated areas such as stream crossings on roads that have little to no defined prism and that have recovered to a point where vegetation and features blend with the surrounding terrain. Currently, 72.7 miles of road are open year round and 27.3 miles are open seasonally to motorized use within the Project area.

Table 3. Road Treatments by Subwatershed

Treatment	Granite Creek-Weiser River	Jungle Creek-Weiser River	Mica Creek-Weiser River	Little Fall Creek
Decommission- System Road, full recontour	2.8	1.5	2.3	2.3
Decommission, System Road, outslope 20%	0.5	0	0.7	0
Decommission, System Road, permittee coordination (includes option of range of treatments, from full recontour to outslope 20%)	2.8	0	0	1.3

Treatment	Granite Creek- Weiser River	Jungle Creek- Weiser River	Mica Creek- Weiser River	Little Fall Creek
Decommission, System Road, spot treat	1.1	0.7	0.1	0
Decommission- unauthorized road, full recontour	15.7	9.7	15.3	9.8
Decommission, unauthorized road, outslope 20%	0.2	0	0.8	0
Decommission, unauthorized road, permittee coordination (includes option of range of treatments, from full recontour to outslope 20%)	0	0	0.8 *same miles as above	0
Decommission, unauthorized road, spot treat	4.6	0.7	1.2	4.1
System Road, long term closure (level I maintenance)	7.3	2.8	5.0	1.5
Block Entrance (Level II closed roads that currently have ineffective closures; treatments could include gate, earthen berm, or boulders.	0	1.8	0.7	0

Aquatic Organism Passage/Habitat Connectivity

Culverts that restrict proper hydrologic function and passage of fish and other aquatic organisms would be replaced. These are:

1. FS System Road 50186 at the MF Weiser River
2. FS System Road 50186 at Big Creek

Temporary culverts or bridges would be installed where access crosses intermittent or perennial streams in planned temporary roads or closed system roads where culverts have been removed. Where fish passage is needed, fish passage would be provided.

Riparian Conservation Area Delineation

The Forest Plan (Appendix B) outlines criteria to aid IDTs in delineating RCAs for perennial and intermittent streams, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands (USDA Forest Service 2003). The RCAs within the project area have been identified by the IDT using the Option 2 delineation method for forested streams. Forest Plan Option 2 provides a more site-based delineation of an

RCA boundary using site potential tree heights. While there are PVGs within the project area that, under Option 2, would have RCA widths narrower than 120 and 240 feet, these PVGs are intermixed with PVGs where the 120 and 240-foot RCAs are appropriate. The IDT decided that, for the sake of consistency and reduction in margin of error during project layout, using a simpler RCA distance for all PVGs would be most efficient. Furthermore, trees upwards of 120 feet have been documented consistently in areas of the project proposed for treatment, other than in plantations.

RCAs where there is a vegetation treatment objective will be adjusted accordingly on a site-by-site basis, as long as soil and water requirements can be met while also meeting the specific vegetation objective (i.e., aspen or riparian vegetation restoration).

Table 4. Riparian Conservation Area (RCA) delineation distance by water source

Water Body	RCA Width*
Perennial Stream	240-foot slope distance (two site-potential tree heights)
Intermittent Stream Providing Seasonal Rearing and Spawning Habitat	240-foot slope distance (two site-potential tree heights)
Intermittent Stream	120-foot slope distance (one site-potential tree height)
Ponds, Lakes, Reservoirs and Wetlands	120-foot slope distance (one site-potential tree height)

Note: RCA distance is measured slope distance from the ordinary high water mark (either side of the stream).

Riparian Conservation Area Treatments

RCA treatments would be considered in several scenarios. The first is where the outer portion of the RCA is characterized by upland vegetation identical or very similar to the adjacent stand outside the RCA. Treatment objectives would be based on Desired Future Conditions (DFC) as defined in Appendix A of the Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service 2003) for that PVG.

Treatment would also be considered in riparian areas where conifers are encroaching upon aspen or meadow vegetation, or where conifer encroachment has shaded out riparian vegetation to the extent that the riparian corridor is a homogenous block of late-successional conifers (grand fir, spruce). The objective in these cases would be to restore site-appropriate, vigorous riparian vegetation to the RCA while maintaining Appendix B WCIs and meeting Forest Plan standards for the soil and water resource. See the “Vegetation Treatments” section for more detail on these treatments.

Input on treatment design would be given by the district hydrologist or fish biologist in order to ensure that all riparian functions were maintained or improved, as required by Forest Plan

standard SWST01 (USDA Forest Service 2003).

See Appendix A, “Riparian Conservation Area Thinning Guidelines,” for more detailed information on proposed harvest guidelines for work in RCAs. The RCA width selection would be verified on-site prior to harvest and potentially affected intermittent streams would be surveyed for fish presence.

East Fork Weiser River Bull Trout Exclosure #5 Livestock Crossing Bridge

The East Fork Weiser River Bull Trout Exclosure #5 is located in the head waters of the East Fork Weiser River. It is a four strand barbed wire letdown fence that is approximately three miles long and excludes approximately 60 acres of riparian area and bull trout spawning habitat from livestock grazing. Livestock are excluded from grazing the area annually from August 15 through the end of the grazing season which is October 15.

This exclosure is approximately 1.5 miles in length and impedes livestock movement to the northeast. Exclosure breaches by livestock have been encountered in the past and to help prevent future breaches it is being proposed to split the exclosure in half and install a bridge approximately in the middle of the exclosure.

The bridge would be placed on an old road bed that used to cross the East Fork Weiser River. In this location either a culvert or bridge used to be in existence but was removed years ago. The new trail bridge would be approximately 32-35 feet long and 10-12 feet wide. It would have 4 foot side rails and a four strand barbed wire letdown fence would be attached to each corner of the bridge to funnel livestock across the bridge. The bridge would be a glued laminated slab trail bridge.

Spring Protection

Undeveloped springs that are currently being disturbed by livestock are located in the SE ¼ of section 33, T 17N, R 2E. A spring box would be installed to collect water with buried pipe diverting the water to a tank downslope from the spring box. The area around the spring box would be fenced to protect the water source and reduce compaction and trampling that is currently taking place.

Previously developed spring sources would be maintained to improve desired watershed conditions. This work would consist of relocating or resetting spring boxes, repairing and reburying pipe, and/or replacing and resetting water tanks. Existing developed ponds would be maintained by removing sediment, rebuilding dam and overflow, and/or putting in bentonite. The names and locations of the developments are as follows:

- No Business Spring - T17N, R2E, section 34, SWSW
- Sheep Creek Spring – T16N, R1E, section 34, SWNE
- Dutch Oven Spring – T 16N, R1E, section 33, SWSW
- Huston Cabin Spring – T15N, R2E, section 6, SENE
- Roadside Pond – T15N, R1E, section 27
- Big Pine Spring - T15N, R1E, section 27

- North Gray #2 Pond – T15N, R1E, section 21
- North Grays #3 Pond – T15N, R1E, section 21
- Little Fall Creek Pond – T15N, R1E, section 22
- Hyser Pond - T15N, R1E, section 22
- Ogle Dry Pond - T15N, R1E, section 21
- Riverhead Pond – T15N, R2E, section 14
- Ridgetop Pond - T15N, R2E, section 14
- Last Chance Pond - T15N, R2E, section 15
- Willow Pond - T15N, R1E, section 15
- Middlefork Spring - T15N, R1E, section 10
- Corner Draw Pond - T15N, R1E, section 9
- Sugarloaf Pond - T15N, R1E, section 15
- Indian Mountain Lookout Spring - T15N, R2E, section 30
- Tony and Tom Spring - T15N, R2E, section 2
- Delbert's Spring - T15N, R1E, section 26, NW

Recreation Improvements

Recreational use within the Project area is moderate during the summer months and higher in the fall, during hunting season. One developed campground, Cabin Creek, is located in the area with the rest of the camping occurring in dispersed sites adjacent to open roads. There are both motorized and non-motorized trails within the area. Trail use is low to moderate. Trail maintenance and minor trail relocations are proposed to improve watershed conditions by repairing erosion problems and re-routing around wet areas along some trails. Trailhead development is also proposed to better accommodate recreational use of these trails.

Proposed improvements include:

Developed Recreation

1. Cabin Creek Campground:

- Install and relocate one single vault toilet to replace the old existing one. Relocate it to meet all required health and safety codes, including setbacks from live water.
- Add new site markers to individual campsites, a new fee tube and information kiosk, install accessible tables, and build an accessible pathway to the water system.
- Gravel the main campground loop road, and widen the road and turn at the campground access to accommodate full size recreational vehicles.

2. Make improvements to the Horse Cabin Flat dispersed site including installation of up to four hitch rails, designation of camping sites using boulders, graveling and site signs to mark the allowed camping locations, add a single vault toilet.

3. Harden the crossing of Jungle Creek at the dispersed camping area to minimize resource damage. Make improvements to the site in general (hardening, providing physical barriers to direct use) in order to minimize impacts to the adjacent Middle Fork Weiser River

4. Roads identified for decommissioning (obliteration) would be evaluated for site-specific

dispersed recreation opportunities, at the intersection with FS System open, or seasonally-open roads, if no resource concerns are identified. If necessary for resource protection, sites would be improved by surfacing, or other hardening and evaluate for barriers, where stream impacts are found.

Trails

1. Establish trailheads with parking and hitch rails for the #205 (northeast) and the #198 (southwest) trails. Both trailheads would require securing easements from Potlatch Corporation, the private landowner.
2. Change the designation of a short section of the #198 trail (near Council Mountain and within the IRA) from non-motorized to two-wheel motorized so that the entire #198 existing trail is two-wheel motorized.
3. Perform trail maintenance (including proper signing) on 24 miles of existing open designed trail within the Project area (this includes the 518 trail to Indian Mountain).
4. Construct and formally designate for seasonal use, a new motorized OHV loop Trail (Trail open to vehicles 70 inches and less in width) using closed road 50166 and closed road 50485, to provide a motorized trail approximately 3 miles in length. This would require ½ mile of new trail construction to complete and close the loop.
5. Sign and formally designate the former # 202 trail as open for non-motorized use. Complete needed switchback construction to mediate the steep sections.
6. Relocate the trailhead for the #209 ATV trail onto National Forest Lands. Correct the map to coincide with actual trail location. Change the designation of the trail from “open year round” to” seasonal”, to coincide with other seasonal trail and road designations in the immediate area.
7. Re-route portions of the #198 trail near the base of Council Mountain to reduce resource impacts and improve sustainability. Work to reduce congestion of multiple trail junctions in this sensitive upper elevation trail network.
8. Close and rehabilitate approximately 4 miles of unauthorized OHV trails throughout the project area, as identified on numerous field trips.
9. Work with private landowners to develop a non-motorized trail (approximately ¼ mile in length) to the scenic Cabin Creek waterfall.

Council Mountain and Poison Creek Inventoried Roadless Areas

Proposed actions in the IRAs include:

- Prescribed burning and associated handline: and
- Preparation for prescribed burning including burning of tree wells, removal of ladder fuels, and lop and scatter of small trees to protect whitebark pine
- Trail improvement and designation changes.

Council Mountain Research Natural Areas

There is no treatment proposed in the Council Mountain Research Natural Area.

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