

	NGO-CTVA Comments	Responses
NGO-CTVA -170	<p>Therefore, elimination of motorized access and recreation on public lands is not widely supported. We request that the document and decision-making reflect citizens' support for motorized access and recreation.</p> <p>Issue: Travel management started from the beginning with a proposal to close the majority of existing roads and trails to motorized recreation and access with the exception of a few major roads. This practice forces motorized visitors and recreationists to start with the worst case scenario and then expend great effort (that is not very successful) to add routes currently in use back into the process. This practice places an enormous burden on motorized visitors just to maintain the status quo. This process, in effect, provides preferential treatment for non-motorized visitors who do not have to identify routes and challenge the process to protect their recreation opportunities. We request that the travel management process be practiced in a manner that does not put motorized visitors at a disadvantage.</p>	NGO-CTVA-170: The RMP/EIS does not propose to close the majority of roads. A separate travel management plan would be developed, that includes a public input process that would designate roads, trails, and routes within areas delineated as limited travel management. Existing recreation and OHV areas were analyzed under Alternative A. BLM administered public lands are managed in accordance with FLPMA.
NGO-CTVA -171	<p>Issue: A fair travel management process would start with a comprehensive inventory of all existing motorized routes in use by the public. Then, in order to avoid further cumulative loss and significant impact on motorized access and recreation opportunities, we request that the travel management process include a preferred alternative based on preserving all existing motorized routes. Existing motorized roads and trails have been around for decades and have not caused any significant problems. Therefore, it is not reasonable to close a significant number of existing motorized routes. Any significant negative impact associated with a specific motorized route should be the basis for an evaluation to close or keep that route open and should carefully consider all reasonable mitigation measures. The cumulative loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities within public lands has been significant. In order to avoid further cumulative negative impacts, we request that the majority of existing motorized routes remain open and the closure of an existing motorized route be offset by the creation of a new motorized route.</p>	NGO-CTVA-171: See responses to NGO-CTVA-1 and NGO-CTVA-2.
NGO-CTVA -172	<p>Issue: Oftentimes, many of the motorized roads and trails proposed for closure are primitive roads and trails that provide the ideal experience sought by motorized visitors. We request that the analysis adequately evaluate the type and quality of experiences that motorized visitors enjoy and want maintained in the area.</p> <p>Issue: Motorized recreationists prefer an interesting assortment of loop and spur routes for a variety of purposes. Each road and trail should be inventoried and viewed on the ground to determine its recreational value and any significant problem areas that require mitigation measures. Each road and trail should be evaluated for its value as a motorized loop or connected route. Each spur road and trail should be evaluated for its value including: a source of dispersed campsite(s), exploration opportunities (especially for young and older riders), destination such as an old mine and viewpoint or as access for all multiple-use visitors. Every problem has a solution. Every impact has a mitigation measure. We request that travel management alternatives be developed with the objective of including as many roads and trails as possible and addressing as many problems as possible by using all possible mitigation measures.</p>	NGO-CTVA-172: Road types and quality , and road and trail inventory would be analyzed through the Travel and Transportation management Plan process.

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Issue:

Motorized trail recreationists have been very reluctant in the past to give up the “open” designation because we believe we may lose legitimate and historic trails that are located in “open areas” that are crucial to loop opportunities. Our fear has been, and remains, that the agency will define key trails we currently utilize as “user created” because they are not on a current travel plan or forest map and because they are not identified that they will be closed. Many of these trails are recorded on earlier maps but others are not. While in fact they may have been created to access an activity such as mining or logging in the late 1800’s or early 1900’s when these uses and activities were more popular.

NGO-CTVA-173: See response to NGO-CTVA-167.

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Issue:

Motorized recreationists would accept area closure (restriction of motorized vehicles to designated routes and elimination of cross-country travel) when reliable documentation demonstrates that it would provide measurable and significant improvement to the natural environment in exchange for a reasonable number of designated motorized routes. We request that the analysis develop a preferred alternative with a reasonable number of designated routes in exchange for the environmental improvements that have been realized by motorized visitor’s acceptance of millions of acres of area closure under all plans including the 3-State OHV Plan, travel plans, forest plans, and resource management plans.

NGO-CTVA-174: Impacts to resources through proposed OHV designations have been addressed in Chapter 4 of RMP/EIS.

Issue:

In most locales, visitors to public lands have given up motorized cross-country travel opportunities and accepted millions of acres of area closure. Therefore, motorized recreationists cannot travel cross-country using motorized vehicles and motorized recreational opportunities are limited to existing roads and trails that are open to motorized use. At the same time, non-motorized recreationists can hike cross-country. Therefore, hiking opportunities are unlimited.

Issue:

Non-motorized recreationists traveling cross-country produce similar impacts to cross-country motorcycle travel, i.e. impact on weeds, foot prints, and disturbance of wildlife. Therefore, any areas closed to cross-country motorcycle travel should also be closed to non-motorized cross-country use.

Issue:

In most locales, public land visitors have given up motorized cross-country travel opportunities and accepted many acres of area closure. However, most often motorized recreationists have not been given credit for the benefits associated with the implementation of cross-country travel restrictions and area closures. Then along comes travel planning which seeks to further restrict motorized access and motorized recreation. We request that these trends and the significance of the cumulative negative impacts of these trends on motorized access and motorized recreationists be evaluated and that motorized trail projects be undertaken to mitigate the cumulative negative impacts on motorized access and motorized recreationists.



Issue:

Most of the motorized roads and trails in the project area have served as important public access routes since the turn of the century. This is demonstrated by the number of historic mines and structures that are located along these routes. We have observed that these travelways are

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currently significant recreation resources for motorized visitors in the area including ATV, motorcycle, and four-wheel drive enthusiasts. Many of these travelways have right-of-ways as provided for under the provisions of Revised Statute 2477. These roads are shown on older mapping sources including: aerial photographs, 15-minute USGS quadrangle sheets, and older county maps. The cut and fill sections and obvious roadbed indicate that these roads were constructed and used by the citizens for access to the forest. RS 2477 was created to provide adequate access to public lands. Now this public access is being eliminated. We request that these travelways remain open based on; (1) their history of community access, (2) the access that they provide to interesting historical sites, and (3) their importance to community access. We request that the document evaluate all of the issues surrounding RS 2477 including the cumulative negative impact of all past closures of RS 2477 routes which has become a significant impact on motorized recreationists.

NGO-CTVA-175: See response NGO-CTVA-2.

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## Issue:

On July 26, 1866, as part of a move to grant access to western lands, the United States Congress enacted the 1866 Mining Act, section 8 of which granted a right-of-way to all persons over unreserved federal lands when it stated "the right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted". In 1873, the 1866 grant was re-codified into section 2477, Revised Statutes of the United States, and rights-of-way granted by that section have since become known as the "RS 2477 rights-of-way".

NGO-CTVA-176: See response to NGO-CTVA-167

Throughout the later half of the 19th century and the first three-quarters of the 20th century, the use of "RS 2477 rights-of-way" over federal land in the western United States became a standard method of legal access across federal lands for commercial, industrial, and recreation pursuits to such an extent that the use of the RS 2477 rights-of-way has become an inherent part of western heritage and a capital asset for the public that should be preserved for future generations.

The use of RS 2477 rights-of-way over nearly a century has resulted in an extensive body of case law in the state and federal courts, in which owners of various types of rights-of-way have competed with holders of RS 2477 rights-of-way and in which the availability of those various rights-of-way has been decided by the courts, including the modern State Supreme Court as well as the federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, in such cases as *Robertson v. Smith*, Supreme Court Montana Ten., 1871; *Butte v. Mikosowitz*, 39 Mont. 350, 102 P. 593, (1909); *Moulton v. Irish*, 67 Mont. 504, 218 P. 1053 (1923); and *Shultz v. Dept. of Army*, 10 F.3d 649 (9th Cir. 1993).

RS 2477 rights-of-way have been given a liberal interpretation by state and federal courts in those judicial decisions interpreting what constitutes a "highway" within the meaning of RS 2477, those judicial opinions holding that even the barest foot trail could qualify as a "highway" and that no particular way across federal lands has even been identified, it being sufficient that travelers used an area of federal land as a method of access between two geographic points. After 110 years of public use of RS 2477 rights-of-way, the U.S. Congress repealed the most recent version of RS 2477, 43 U.S.C. 932, but that repeal was, by 43 U.S.C. 1701, specifically made subject to valid rights-of-way existing as of the date of repeal which was 1976.

Schiller, chairman of the High Desert Multiple-Use Coalition, told the Kern County Board of Supervisors at a meeting held on February 19, 2002 to address RS 2477 issues that "the roads represent our custom, our culture, our economy and our family traditions. I know it's been argued that this is about OHV uses and off-highway vehicles," said Schiller. "It is really about access". We

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request that any routes proposed for closure and in existence before 1976 be considered as having RS 2477 rights-of-way in order to provide citizens with access to public lands.

## Issue:

The maps used in the environmental document should be familiar and easily interpreted by all citizens. The public is most familiar with Forest Visitors Maps and other common visitors maps. The environmental document mapping should follow the guidelines required by 40 CFR 1502.8 which states that *“Environmental impact statements shall be written in plain language and may use appropriate graphics so that decision-makers and the public can readily understand them”*. Many visitors who traditionally use roads and trails in the project area may not comment during travel management process unless they understand which roads and trails are proposed for closure. This lack of understanding could lead to resentment and poor support of the closures by the community because a wide range of needs have not been adequately addressed. We request that mapping identify streams, road numbers, trail numbers, landmarks and key topographic features in a manner that all citizens can easily interpret.

## Issue:

Many citizens have not understood the extent of the motorized closures proposed in past travel management processes. This lack of understanding is due to inadequate communication in many forms including mapping, documents, and on-the-trail public involvement. We are concerned that this lack of public understanding and buy-in will lead to poor support and resentment of closures. We request that public understanding and buy-in be stressed throughout the process.

## Issue:

Site-specific analysis should be provided for every road and trail so that the benefits of keeping each motorized travelway is adequately addressed and accounted for in the decision. Site-specific questions will need to be discussed during the process. We request that the mapping be sufficient to allow site-specific analysis.

## Issue:

Positive impacts to the environment in areas such as fisheries, wildlife habitat, sediment reduction, and noxious weeds are largely based on personal judgment or predictive models. These models are not calibrated or based on data from the study area. All models are wrong, so honest modelers first report the expected uncertainty of the model and then the predictions. There are no case histories and very little data to back up any of the predictions.

All too often actions have been enacted based on proclaimed benefit to the environment and without any tangible evidence or follow-on monitoring to document whether proclaimed benefits occurred or not. All too often these same actions have produced significant negative impacts on multiple-use interests. Significant recreational opportunities have been taken from multiple-use and motorized recreationists based on theoretical environmental improvements that may never happen. This lack of accountability is not acceptable.

We request that sufficient background data be collected to quantify the existing conditions in the resource areas of interest. Then, if a motorized closure is enacted, sufficient data should be collected to demonstrate whether or not there was significant improvement to each resource area. If significant measurable improvement cannot be demonstrated, then, in order to be accountable, motorized closure actions should be reversed. In other words, the public needs to know how the

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NGO-CTVA-177:

Regarding maps, the BLM has furnished maps suitable for an RMP analysis. Regarding differences between trail requirements & impacts between ATVs and motorcycles, this will be further addressed and brought forward in the subsequent Transportation & Travel. See also response to NGO-CTVA-33

NGO-CTVA-178: FLPMA Sec. 202(c) (4) gives BLM the discretion to rely to the extent it is available, on inventory of the public lands, their resources and other values. Alternatives were developed using existing available data. User data and impacts of route designation will be further addressed & brought forward in the subsequent Transportation & Travel Management Planning processes.

BLM is required under NEPA to provide information in NEPA documents that must be of high quality, possess accurate scientific analysis, and is subject to public scrutiny before decisions are made or actions are taken (40 CFR 1500.1.(b)). On the other hand, the purpose of NEPA is not to collect massive amounts of data but to provide data that is high quality and accurate in order to conduct a detailed analysis of issues that are truly significant to the action in question and reach an informed decision. The BLM has used available data, information based on professional evaluations and observations and applicable reference materials to support the NEPA analysis. The FEIS includes updated information, revised tables, and figures.

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decision made, the data on which it was based on including the source, and whether the data was adequate to substantiate the claimed environmental improvements.

Additionally, we request that the cumulative negative impact from all past actions based on inadequate documentation and accountability for improvements be determined. Again, if significant measurable improvement cannot be demonstrated, then, in order to be accountable, motorized closure actions must be reversed.

## Issue:

Recent research (Sediment Production From Forest Roads In Western Montana, Brian D. Sugden and Scott W. Woods, Paper No. J05063 of the Journal of the American Water Resources Association (JAWRA)) has concluded that sediment traps are highly efficient at trapping sediment from routes (page 198-199) and are a reasonable mitigation measure, that the typical sediment yield from roads in Montana is relatively low compared to other regions for a number of reasons including the precipitation regime (page 201-202), that grading or maintenance (or removal) of roads increases sediment production (page 202-203) therefore leaving roadbeds alone is reasonable alternative, and that sediment models typically have a 30% variability in their estimates (page 203) which is probably greater than the total sediment impact from OHVs that the model(s) are trying to predict.

## Issue:

Watershed restoration and road decommissioning are designed to decrease sediment loads to fish-bearing streams over the long term, however, within the first few years of heavy equipment work, sediment loads commonly increase (Klein, R. 2003. Duration of turbidity and suspended sediment transport in salmonid bearing streams, North coastal California. 37 pp.).

## Issue:

Past analyses of the affected environment and environmental consequences have failed to adequately recognize that resources such as fisheries, wildlife, and sediment production are affected far more by nature than by motorized visitors. Drought has a significant impact on fisheries, OHV recreation does not compare. Erosion and other activities of interest such as the spread of noxious weeds occur naturally and at significant rates. Floods, fires, drought, and wildlife diseases have historically created significantly greater impacts than motorized visitors have. For example, cutthroat trout have never needed to be relocated because of motorized recreation and motorized recreation has never caused a sediment yield anywhere close to 19 tons per acre which both occurred following the Derby fire in 2006 ([http://www.helenair.com/articles/2006/11/07/montana/a07110706\\_02 prt](http://www.helenair.com/articles/2006/11/07/montana/a07110706_02 prt)).



In many cases it is not reasonable to deem as unacceptable the relatively small increase caused by motorized recreation on natural activities. Comparing man-caused impacts to natural impacts is a reasonable approach that should be used to test for the significance of impacts and improvements. The improvements to the natural environment from this action are not significant when compared to the naturally occurring impacts. The picture shows Copper Creek near Lincoln, Montana following the August 2003 fire. Prior to the fire the Forest Service was concerned about the public camping

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NGO-CTVA-179: BLM is required to comply with NEPA based on proposed federal actions. Impacts related from natural occurrences not associated with a federal action are not analyzed.

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next to the creek. The potential impacts from the public camping along this stream compared to this fire are insignificant yet closure of this recreation opportunity was being considered. Why are there so many double-standards in the impact analyses? We request that all impact analyses in all resource areas compare the relative magnitude of man-caused impacts to the background level of naturally occurring impacts or management actions such as the "Let it burn" policy.

## Issue:

Impacts should be evaluated in a fair and unbiased manner and with a relative sense of magnitude. For example, if natural events including floods, wildfires, and their associated impacts are natural and acceptable as stated by some agency personnel and environmental groups, then (in order to be consistent and equitable) impacts from OHV recreation should be compared in relative magnitude to the impacts associated with floods, wildfire, and other natural events. We are concerned about comments about OHV recreation being such a significant threat to public lands (Bosworth speech, January 16, 2004). The impact of OHV recreation in our area compared to the negative impacts from just one of the 6 significant fires in our area is miniscule ([http://www.helenair.com/articles/2004/09/30/top/a01093004\\_01.prt](http://www.helenair.com/articles/2004/09/30/top/a01093004_01.prt)). Therefore, the impact of recreation should be fairly compared to the impact of floods, wildfire, and other natural events on all resource areas. These comparisons should also include natural levels of noxious weeds, carbon dioxide production (<http://www.cbmjournals.com/content/pdf/1750-0680-2-10.pdf>), deforestation, erosion and sediment production, and loss of organic material.

The use of soil erosion as a reason to close motorized recreational opportunities is an example of the predisposition that exists per the following example. Soil erosion associated with fires that have burned severely has been reported in the range of 50 tons per hectare<sup>4</sup> (20 tons per acre). Nearly all fires increase sediment yield, but wildfires in steep terrain produce the greatest amounts (12 to 165 ton per acre per year, 28 to 370 Mg per hectare per year) (table 5 and figure 11)<sup>5</sup>. This soil loss occurs over the burned area due to the lack of vegetative cover to hold the soil in place on steep slopes during precipitation events and increased peak rates of runoff. Flood peak flows after wildfires that burn large areas in steep terrain often produce significant impacts. Peak flow increases of 10 to 100 times are common, but some have been measured as high as 2,300 times pre-fire conditions<sup>6</sup>. The increase in sediment production and deposition and impacts on the stream channel and over-bank areas following a forest fire is documented in the July 2006 and January 2008 editions of Stream Notes ([www.stream.fs.fed.us](http://www.stream.fs.fed.us)).

Since 1960 the acres burned nationally have ranged from 2.3 to 8.6 million acres and averaged 4.5 million acres. At a typical sediment yield of 20 tons per acre per year, about 90,000,000 tons of sediment has been produced by fires or about 9,000,000 dump truck loads. On a more local basis in the Helena National Forest several hundred thousand acres have burned since 1988. Sediment production associated with these fires would equal 4,000,000 tons or 400,000 dump truck loads. Sediment production associated with motorized recreation cannot begin to compare to this magnitude and, therefore, it is not reasonable use sediment as a basis to close motorized recreational

<sup>4</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3164843.stm>

<sup>5</sup> Robichaud, Peter R.; Beyers, Jan L.; Neary, Daniel G. 2000. **Evaluating the effectiveness of postfire rehabilitation treatments**. Gen. Tech. Rep. RMRS-GTR-63. Fort Collins: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. 85 p. [http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs\\_gtr63.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr63.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> POST-WILDFIRE WATERSHED FLOOD RESPONSES, Daniel G. Neary\*, Gerald J. Gottfried, and Peter F. Ffolliott, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Flagstaff, AZ School of Renewable Natural Resources, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ [http://www.rmrs.nau.edu/lab/4302/Publications/Neary\\_65982.pdf](http://www.rmrs.nau.edu/lab/4302/Publications/Neary_65982.pdf)

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NGO-CTVA-180: See response to NGO-CTVA-179. The BLM analyzed impacts from wildfire to each resource and land uses throughout chapter 4. Suppression of wildfires typically fall into emergency circumstances and are subject to 40 CFR 1506.11.

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opportunities when impacts from “Let it burn” and other management policies are a million times greater and considered acceptable.

Monitoring and evaluation must be made consistent with and pursuant to the best available scientific information, techniques, and methods, and any conclusions based on these evaluations must be statistically significant.

National Interagency Coordination Center Annual Fire Data

Total Wildland Fires and Acres (1960-2006)					
Year	Fires	Acres	Year	Fires	Acres
2006 (1/1/06 - 10/30/06)	86,545	9,442,610	1982	174,755	2,382,036
2005	66,552	8,686,753	1981	249,370	4,814,206
2004*	77,534	6,790,692	1980	234,892	5,260,825
2003	85,943	4,918,088	1979	163,196	2,986,826
2002	88,458	6,937,584	1978	218,842	3,910,913
2001	84,079	3,555,138	1977	173,998	3,152,644
2000	122,827	8,422,237	1976	241,699	5,109,926
1999	93,702	5,661,976	1975	134,872	1,791,327
1998	81,043	2,329,709	1974	145,868	2,879,095
1997	89,517	3,672,616	1973	117,957	1,915,273
1996	115,025	6,701,390	1972	124,554	2,641,166
1995	130,019	2,315,730	1971	108,398	4,278,472
1994	114,049	4,724,014	1970	121,736	3,278,565
1993	97,031	2,310,420	1969	113,351	6,689,081
1992	103,830	2,457,665	1968	125,371	4,231,996
1991	116,953	2,237,714	1967	125,025	4,658,586
1990	122,763	5,452,874	1966	122,500	4,574,389
1989	121,714	3,261,732	1965	113,684	2,652,112
1988	154,573	7,398,889	1964	116,358	4,197,309
1987	143,877	4,152,575	1963	164,183	7,120,768
1986	139,980	3,308,133	1962	115,345	4,078,894
1985	133,840	4,434,748	1961	98,517	3,036,219
1984	118,636	2,266,134	1960	103,387	4,478,188
1983	161,649	5,080,553		Total acres	206,638,790

\* 2004 fires and acres do not include state lands for North Carolina  
 Source: National Interagency Coordination Center ([http://www.nifc.gov/stats/fires\\_acres.html](http://www.nifc.gov/stats/fires_acres.html))

NGO-CTVA-181

In a fair and unbiased evaluation, the source of the impacts (natural versus human caused) should not be a factor. In a fair and unbiased evaluation, relative impact associated with natural events including floods and wildfires is thousands of times greater than impacts associated with timber harvests and OHV recreation, yet proposed action involving timber harvests and OHV recreation are considered to have unacceptable impacts. The absence of a rational connection between the facts found and the choice made has been defined by the courts as arbitrary and capricious (Natural Resources. v. U.S., 966 F.2d 1292, 97, (9th Cir.'92)). A clear error of judgment; an action not based upon consideration of relevant factors and so is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion or otherwise not in accordance with law or if it was taken without observance of procedure required by law (5 USC. 706(2)(A) (1988)). We request fair and unbiased evaluations and judgments during this evaluation and decision-making.

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NGO-CTVA-181: BLM issues decisions based on compliance with law, regulations and policy. NEPA defines agency decision making procedures at 40 CFR 1505.1. Public input, through public comments to the DEIS, the environmental analysis and staff expertise, are also taken into consideration in the decision process.

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## Issue:

The amount of sediment production from federal lands is relatively small compared to sediment production that ultimately reaches stream courses from non-federal lands. For example, the Bear Canyon sediment study in the Gallatin National Forest found that sediment production at the forest boundary was on the order of 3 tons per year while the sediment production at the mouth of the stream was on the order of 35 tons per year. Therefore, the sediment production from the federal lands is reasonable and any environmental benefit to the stream must be focused on the non-federal lands downstream.

## Issue:

The sediment analysis conducted for this project assumed that all of the increased sediment produced by public access and recreational use can be transported or moved. However, many sedimentation evaluations have found that the amount of sediment moved is often limited by the sediment transport capability of the stream. Hans Albert Einstein stated "The coarser part of the load, i.e. the part that is more difficult to move by flowing water, is limited in its rate by the transporting ability of the flow between the source and the section"<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, the transport capacity of the project streams must be established and compared to the amount of historic sediment transport to determine if there is any additional capacity to transport the increased amount of sediment predicted by the project evaluation. This basic check should be conducted so that the increase in sediment production and associated negative impacts are not over-estimated to the disadvantage of public use and motorized recreation.

## Issue:

The estimated reduced annual volume of sediment production attributed to proposed motorized closures versus the annual volume of runoff is an actual reduction in sediment production on the order of 10 or less parts per million. This level of predicted sediment reduction should not be considered significant especially when compared to the baseline sediment production and natural events discussed above. This level of predicted reduction in sediment production should not be used as the basis for motorized closures.

## Issue:

It is time to implement a practical and sensible application of NEPA. The intent of NEPA when it was created in the late 1960's was to better incorporate environmental concerns into proposed actions while still meeting the needs of the public. Up until that time, consideration of the natural environment was not always required and impacts to the natural environment were not always adequately considered. A significant correction has been made since then. Concerns with the natural environment now receive considerable attention and natural resource issues are adequately considered for nearly all proposed actions. Additionally, many ways and means have been developed to mitigate impacts to the natural environment and still meet the needs of the human environment.

There may have been a time when NEPA decisions struck an ideal balance between the natural and human environments but now NEPA is used by environmental organizations to rigorously pursue environmental perfectionism. Environmental perfectionism occurs when significant impacts are imposed on the human environment in return for relatively minor or unaccountable improvements

<sup>7</sup> Einstein, H. A., 1964, "Sedimentation, Part II. River Sedimentation," Handbook of Applied Hydrology, V.T. Chow, Section 17, McGraw-Hill Book Co., NY.

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NGO-CTVA-182: Effects of OHV management on soil resources were addressed in section 4.2.3. This will be further addressed & brought forward in the subsequent Transportation & Travel Management Planning processes.

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to the natural environment. The pursuit of environmental perfectionism has contributed to the significant cumulative negative effect of converting public land from the land of many-uses or multiple-uses to the land of limited-use or exclusive-use. The mindset of environmental perfectionism has pushed agencies far beyond the original intent of NEPA to better protect the natural environment from proposed actions. The pursuit of environmental perfectionism is attacking one of the basic requirements of NEPA to “achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities” (Public Law 91-190, Title I, Section 101 (b) (5)). The wording of NEPA was carefully chosen and was intended to produce a balance between the natural and human environment. Practice and interpretation since the law has strayed far from that intent. We request the development and implementation of a practical and sensible alternative that achieves a balanced and wide sharing of life’s amenities as originally envisioned under NEPA.

NGO-CTVA-183: See response to NGO-CTVA-I.

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## Issue:

The transport mechanism for noxious weeds includes all visitors and uses of public lands including hikers, equestrians, and cattle grazing in addition to motorized recreationists. Many events including fire, floods, and the importation of invasive species also contribute to noxious weed problems. For the most part, vehicles do not have a surface texture that will pick up and hold noxious weeds seeds. Transport mechanisms based on hair, fur, manure, shoes, and fabrics are more effective than the smooth metal and plastic surfaces found on vehicles. Additionally, motorized recreationists practice the “Wash your Steeds” policy. However, closures due to noxious weed concerns are only placed on motorized recreationists.

NGO-CTVA-184: Impacts of OHV management, and other resource use management, were analyzed in section 4.2.6. Impacts to weeds will also be analyzed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

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We have observed an equal amount of noxious weeds in non-motorized areas as there are in motorized areas. We request that the document make a fair evaluation of all sources and uses that contribute to the noxious weed problem including hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians (non-use of weed-free hay), etc. The document should also fairly evaluate how natural processes and wildlife spread noxious weeds. The document should include a balanced discussion of the noxious weed problem. The discussions, decisions and measures used to mitigate noxious weeds should be applied impartially to all visitors and with a realistic representation of noxious weeds natural ability to spread versus a relative magnitude for every activity’s contribution.

## Issue:

OHV owners in Montana, as part of their vehicle registration, contribute \$1.50 to a noxious weed abatement program. Non-motorized visitors do not contribute to a weed abatement program. We request that the analysis be based on a balanced discussion of the noxious weed problem. The discussions, decisions and measures used to mitigate noxious weeds should recognize the relatively minor impact that OHVs have on the noxious weed problem and credit OHV visitors for contributing to a program to control noxious weeds. Additionally, this is another example of predisposition because motorized recreationists have not been given credit for the positive action that they have taken and we have only been penalized for our past cooperation and the initiative taken to control noxious weeds.

NGO-CTVA-185:

Classification of roads will be further addressed & brought forward in the subsequent Transportation & Travel Management Planning processes.

NGO-CTVA  
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## Issue:

The environmental document should accurately address the significant negative impacts associated with disturbing existing stable roadways in order to obliterate the existing roadbed. A reasonable alternative would be to reclassify the road to either restricted-width or unrestricted-width motorized trail. We request that the preferred alternative make practical use of this management tool and the

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## Responses

benefits that it provides including reduced sedimentation impact, reduced fisheries impact, reduced noxious weed impact, much less construction cost, reduced road inventory, reduced road maintenance and increased opportunities for motorized recreationists. Reclassifying roadways to restricted- or unrestricted-width motorized trail also avoids contributing to cumulative negative impacts on motorized recreationists.

## Issue:

Current management directives seek to aggressively decommission non-beneficial or unclassified roads, reduce the existing backlog on road maintenance and reconstruction, and reduce the resource impacts of the current roads network. The Forest Service in the Roadless Rule EIS reported that the backlog of forest road maintenance was about \$8.4 billion. This estimate includes many primitive roads and trails that motorized recreations would prefer not to have improved except for mitigation measures such as water bars and reroutes to avoid sensitive environmental areas. The challenge and recreation value of these types of primitive roads and trails is what most motorized recreationists are looking for. Therefore, this maintenance effort is overstated and a more reasonable alternative would be to incorporate reasonable mitigation measures and convert roads to unrestricted-width or restricted-width trails to provide motorized recreation opportunities and then remove these roads from the roads inventory. We request that this reasonable alternative be included as part of the preferred alternative.

## Issue:

Motorized recreationists have a history of clearing trails. The agency's trail maintenance costs could be reduced by up to ½ if all trails were opened to motorized recreationists.

## Issue:

Motorized recreationists have historically provided a significant amount of maintenance in order to keep routes open as part of their normal use. Now because of the significant number of motorized closures, the level of maintenance has been significantly reduced. We know of many motorized routes that are now closed and have become impassable to non-motorized recreationists because of the lack of user provided maintenance.

## Issue:

Considerable trail and environmental mitigation work could be accomplished by programs similar to AmeriCorps and Job Corps if they were given that direction and organized to provide that assistance.

## Issue:

We request that maintenance actions be taken before closure actions. We believe that this is a viable alternative that would address many of the issues that are driving the pre-determined decision to closure. OHV recreation generates significant gas tax revenue that could be tapped for this purpose. For more background on this issue please refer to our comments on gas tax and funding.

## Issue:

We understand the operation and maintenance budget constraints facing the agency. However, lack of maintenance funding cannot be used as a reason for motorized closures because there is significant gas tax funding that is not being returned to motorized recreationists (see comments on gas tax issues). Motorized recreationists are willing to work in collaboration with the agency to obtain trail and OHV funding for the project area. Additionally, motorized recreationists can be

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NGO-CTVA-186: Decommissioning of roads will be addressed through Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

NGO-CTVA  
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NGO-CTVA-187: See response to NGO-CTVA-33.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

called upon to help with the maintenance of trails in the project area. In many cases motorized recreationists have been providing trail maintenance for many years and are quite willing to continue in return for continued access.

## Issue:

Most environmental documents have not taken into consideration the fact that motorized multiple-use designation serves all recreation activities, instead of the few served by non-motorized/wilderness designations. For example, motorized roads and trails allow access to dispersed camping sites for RVs, the collection of firewood, access for fishing and hunting, target shooting, access for bird and wildlife viewing, walking and bicycling opportunities, and family picnics. We request that the analysis and decision-making fully recognize all of these activities and the cumulative negative impact that closing roads and trails have had on all multiple-use recreationists which has become very significant. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts.

NGO-CTVA  
-188

NGO-CTVA-188: Use of OHV trails by other users will be further addressed & brought forward in the subsequent Transportation & Travel Management Planning processes.

## Issue:

Management decisions should be based on input from a management team that is representative of all citizens needs. This is especially necessary to provide a balanced perspective on the travel management team and when consulting and coordinating with other agencies. There is an inherent bias on management teams that do not include OHV enthusiasts. We request that the interdisciplinary team (IDT) include motorized recreation planners and enthusiasts in order to adequately speak for the needs of multiple-use and motorized visitors. A multiple-use and motorized recreationists advisory board could also be used to advise the IDT and decision-makers.

NGO-CTVA  
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NGO-CTVA-189: See response NGO-CTVA 181.

IDT for RMP includes a recreation specialist (see list of preparers).

## Issue:

Presently, very few agency staff members are OHV enthusiasts and can represent OHV recreation interests in day-to-day operations and long-term management decisions. OHV enthusiasts understand how to educate, manage, and meet the needs of OHV recreationists. Agency personnel are not able to relate to the needs and challenges of OHV recreationists because they are not familiar with OHVs nor are they typically OHV recreationists. There is an inherent bias on management teams that do not include OHV enthusiasts. We request that the staff on each project team include an adequate number of OHV enthusiasts in order to adequately represent and address the needs of OHV recreationists. The team should include an adequate number of atv, motorcycle and 4x4 enthusiasts. The test for an adequate number of OHV enthusiasts on a team should be based on the percentages of visitors. Information from NVUM, USDA, and CTVA cited earlier document that OHV recreationists represent from 25 to 60% of the visitors and the management team should also reflect these percentages.

Additionally we request that an adequate number of agency staff be licensed and safety trained to operate OHVs, have an adequate number of OHVs for their use and spend an adequate amount of time riding OHVs along with OHV recreationists so that they can adequately understand the needs associated with motorized access and motorized recreationists.

## Issue:

Examples of the positive benefits OHV recreation on the human environment can be found in ride reports including the following:

<http://ktmtalk.com/index.php?showtopic=319611>

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## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

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<http://www.chadman.net/upload/Ouray2008.wmv>  
<http://ktmtalk.com/index.php?showtopic=317728>  
<http://www.wsatva.org/id4.htm>  
<http://ktmtalk.com/index.php?showtopic=311192>  
<http://ktmtalk.com/index.php?showtopic=260664>  
<http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=402442&highlight=montana>

## Issue:

Natural conditions should be used as the benchmark for the test of impacts on natural resources. All impacts should be measured against a realistic assessment of natural conditions including natural sound levels, sedimentation rates and natural events such as fires, glacial periods, and floods. We request that guidelines be developed to help determine if perceived impacts are significant or insignificant. All measures of perceived impacts should be compared to natural levels of activities over the course of time to test for significance. A significant difference in magnitude should be required before a perceived impact can be considered significant. This standard is required in order to remove personal opinions from the process and to restore impartial and reasonable judgment to the process.

NGO-CTVA  
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NGO-CTVA-190: Impacts of proposed action to natural resources are determined by using the latest possible scientific methods.

NGO-CTVA  
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For example, the lack of adequate policy and implementation of fire management practices has led to many catastrophic fires. The sedimentation resulting from these fires should be measured and compared to all OHV activity in the forest. The results will demonstrate that the rate of sediment resulting from fires is thousands of times greater than that of all OHV activity in the forest. The determination of the natural rate of sedimentation over the course of time will also demonstrate that the natural rate of sedimentation is many times greater than that of all OHV activity in the forest. These are examples of the sense of magnitude and big picture perspective that should be required when evaluating impacts in the document and decision-making.

NGO-CTVA-191: Impacts to soil resources from fire management are addressed in section 4.2.3.

NGO-CTVA  
-192

## Issue:

There is no documentation or data to support closure of any motorized routes in the project area to improve wildlife connectivity. The existing level of roads and trails does not significantly impact wildlife connectivity, i.e. it functions as such with the existing level of roads and trails and closing any roads or trails to motorized use would not make any measurable difference. Connectivity is another concept being promoted by extreme green groups such as the Wildlands Project to further their agenda to close all land to the public. Additionally, non-motorized routes would have the same impact on wildlife connectivity as motorized routes and the evaluation must recognize this fact.

NGO-CTVA-192: Impacts to wildlife from OHV management actions are addressed in section 4.2.9. This will be further addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

NGO-CTVA  
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## Issue:

The Forest Service Stream Systems Technology Center has found, in a paper published in the July 2000 issue of Stream Notes, that roads and trails can easily be hydrologically disconnected from streams. Therefore, the sedimentation concerns can be easily mitigated and should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures except in exceptional cases that cannot be adequately mitigated.

NGO-CTVA-193: Impacts to streams from OHV management actions are addressed in section 4.2.4. This will be further addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

NGO-CTVA  
-194

## Issue:

A study of sound levels from OHV use was found to be less than the background noise of the wind in treetops (Nora Hamilton, Mendocino National Forest, memorandum to the file, November 17, 1992). Also, the USDA FS Technology and Development Program in a report prepared in 1993 and titled "Sound Levels of Five Motorcycles Traveling Over Forest Trails" found that at distances over

NGO-CTVA-194: Noise will be addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

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## Comments

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400 feet, motorcycles do not raise the ambient sound level (they are no louder than background levels of noise). Absolute quiet is not a reasonable expectation. Sound from motorized sources such as airplanes exists even in the most remote areas. It is not reasonable to expect absolute quiet in areas intended for multiple-use. The sound level of motorized recreation use is not greater than natural sounds, and therefore, sound level should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures.

## Issue:

A study of National Park elk habituated to human activity and not hunted were more sensitive to persons afoot than vehicles (Shultz, R.D. and James A. Bailey "Responses of National Park Elk to Human Activity", Journal of Wildlife Management, v42, 1975). Therefore, hikers disturb elk more than motor vehicles and "disturbance of wildlife" should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors.

## Issue:

Hikers disturb nesting birds (Swarthout, Elliott and Steidl, Robert, Journal of the Society of Conservation Biology, February 2003) yet restrictions on hiking and other non-motorized recreationists to reduce impacts on nesting birds are rarely imposed.

Hiking, cross-country hiking and wilderness uses also causes trail impacts yet these impacts are seldom acknowledged. For example, the USDA FS Intermountain Research Station Research Paper INT-450 "Changes on Trails in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Montana, 1978-89" and dated 1991 found that many trail segments changed markedly, depending on site and use.

Additionally the report "Keeping Visitors on the Right Track - Sign and Barrier Research at Mount Rainer", Park Science 14(4) published in 1994 found that off-trail hiking is a major source of impact that creates trails and erosion throughout the several thousand acres of sub-alpine meadows.

Additionally the report "Erosional Impact of Hikers, Horses, Motorcycles, and Off-Road Bicycles on Mountain Trails in Montana", Mountain Research and Development, Volume 14, No. 1, and published in 1994 found that multiple comparison test results showed that horses and hikers made more sediment available than wheels, and this effect was most pronounced on pre-wetted trails.

Why are there so many double-standards in the impact analyses and decision-making? If the issues surrounding motorized travel are significant enough to justify closures, then, in order to avoid introducing a bias to the evaluation and process the same issues and restrictions should also be applied to hiking, mountain climbing, cross-country hiking, wilderness users, etc.

## Issue:

A study of the heart rate of elk found that humans walking between 20 to 300 meters from the elk caused them to flee immediately 41% of the time while an OHV passing within 15 to 400 meters of the elk caused them to flee 8% of the time (Ward, A. L. and J. J. Cupal. 1976. Telemetered heart rate of three elk as affected by activity and human disturbance. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station. Laramie, WY. 9 pp.). Therefore, hikers disturb elk more than motor vehicles and "disturbance of wildlife" should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife

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NGO-CTVA-195: Impacts to fish and wildlife are provided in section 4.2.9. Impacts from OHV will be further analyzed through the Transportation and Travel Management Process.

NGO-CTVA  
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NGO-CTVA-196: Impacts from all recreation uses are analyzed throughout chapter 4 by resource and use.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors.

## Issue:

A study of mule deer found that 80% fled in reaction to encounters with persons afoot while only 24% fled due to encounters with snowmobiles (David J. Freddy, Whitcomb M. Bronaugh, Martin C. Fowler, "Responses of Mule Deer to Persons Afoot and Snowmobiles", Wildlife Society Bulletin, 1986). Therefore, hikers disturb deer more than motor vehicles and "disturbance of wildlife" should not be used as a reason to justify motorized recreation and access closures. Additionally, when there are concerns with wildlife disturbance, restrictions on hikers should be given a greater emphasis than restrictions on motorized visitors.

## Issue:

A lynx study completed in the Seeley Lake area found no adverse impact to Lynx from winter snowmobile use. The results of this study and the data that was collected must be used in evaluating areas open or closed to snowmobiles. The closure of any area because of winter motorized impact to lynx is not valid and, therefore, must not be used to initiate closures.

## Issue:

The wildlife sections of many travel plan documents tend to promote two underlying themes; (1) wildlife and forest visitors cannot coexist, and (2) there are significant negative impacts to wildlife from visitors to the forest. Observations of wildlife in Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks and the 600 deer that live within the Helena city limits combined with common sense tell us that wildlife can flourish with millions of visitors and motorized vehicles.

Wildlife can and do effectively coexist with motorized visitors in even the most heavily visited places. Therefore, concerns with motorized forest visitors and wildlife are often over-stated and over-emphasized which unfortunately demonstrates a predisposition in the process.



Elk have been bedded down and rubbing antlers in this area located 100 yards from busy Highway 12.

The wildlife/visitor interaction in national parks demonstrates that the manner in which visitors coexist with wildlife is the most significant factor in the interaction between wildlife and visitors. The manner in which visitors coexist with wildlife in national forest can be shaped by adequate use of mitigation measures including seasonal closures, educational programs and trail rangers. Therefore, reasonable alternatives to the closure of motorized roads and trails exist and can be used to address wildlife concerns. We request that these sorts of reasonable alternatives to closure of roads and trails to motorized visitors be adequately considered and incorporated into the preferred alternative.

## Issue:

The road density criteria is not valid because hundreds of deer in Helena and elk in the Montanan City area exist just fine with road densities far in excess of the targets for the project area. Obviously there are other factors that have a far greater influence on deer and elk populations and the analysis must uncover and use those.

## Issue:

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NGO-CTVA-197: Road densities will be further addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Process.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

The actual zone of influence of motorized trails on wildlife is very small.

## Issue:

“Present day populations of white-tailed deer and elk are at their highest levels recorded in recent history” (Montana Wolf Conservation and Management Planning Document, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, January 2000 (<http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/wildthings/wolf/wolfmanagement011602.pdf>)). Additionally, “nearly 60 percent of Montana's original elk management units exceed elk-population objectives, while only 31 percent exceed harvest objectives” ([www.fwp.state.mt.us/hunting/elkplan.html](http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/hunting/elkplan.html)).

Additionally, the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE), outside of Glacier National Park, has grizzly bear population densities of about 1 bear per 20-30 square miles and has human recreation consisting of motorized access, motorized recreation, hiking, fishing, camping, horseback riding, and big game hunting. Glacier National Park annually receives approximately 2-3 million visitors, does not allow hunting, and has grizzly bear population densities estimated at about 1 bear per 8 square miles. The Yellowstone Ecosystem (YE) which is comprised of Yellowstone Park and surrounding National Forests, receives more visitation than Glacier Park and has an increasing grizzly bear population estimated at 1 bear per 30-50 square miles (<http://www.r6.fws.gov/endspp/grizzly/bittereis/deischp2.htm>). All indications are that grizzly bear habitat is fully occupied and that additional road closures and obliteration will not produce any more bears and, therefore, motorized closures are not reasonable or productive. Therefore, grizzly bears can coexist at reasonable population densities with multiple-use recreation and there is no compelling reason to close roads and trails to motorized recreationists to increase grizzly populations because the most significant constraint is their need for so many acres between other grizzly bears.

Furthermore, Kate Kendall's Greater Glacier Bear DNA study (includes all the North Fork of Flathead), which identified 367 unique individual bears with one years data not yet analyzed. The recovered population target was 600 bears for the entire Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, so there is already known that about 2/3 of that target exist on about 1/4 of the habitat. Completion of DNA study of the rest of the ecosystem is certain to show that bear populations far exceed the recovery goal and should be de-listed. The study was released in December 2006 and indeed did confirm that there was more than 545 bears in the ecosystem (<http://www.greatfallstribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2006612240302>). Furthermore, a study released in September 2008 found that there were at least 765 grizzly bears ([http://www.helenair.com/articles/2008/09/17/top/55st\\_080917\\_grizzlies.txt](http://www.helenair.com/articles/2008/09/17/top/55st_080917_grizzlies.txt)). It is clear that the grizzly bear populations are healthy and that motorized recreationists should no longer be shut out of grizzly bear habitat.

## Issue:

As of 2007, the grizzly bears in the Yellowstone region have been delisted.

## Issue:

The number of hunters is declining (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. [http://library.fws.gov/nat\\_survey\\_1996.pdf](http://library.fws.gov/nat_survey_1996.pdf) and <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/09/03/national/printable3228893.shtml>).

NGO-CTVA	Comments	Responses
NGO-CTVA-198	<p>Therefore, there are no compelling reasons “to elevate the level of elk security in the project area and...enhance elk populations” as frequently suggested by wildlife biologists (example; Fish, Wildlife and Parks letter dated February 27, 2002 to Helena National Forest on the Clancy-Unionville Travel Planning Project, bottom of page 9). Additionally, there are no compelling reasons to justify reduced road densities as a sought-after or necessary wildlife management criterion. Lastly, there are reasonable alternatives including permit hunting and seasonal travel restrictions that can better accomplish the outcome sought by reduced road and trail densities. NEPA requires consideration and implementation of all reasonable alternatives. Not considering and implementing reasonable alternatives demonstrates a predisposition in the process.</p> <p>Issue: In the past many of the impacts associated with motorized recreation were based on opinions about the impacts on wildlife. The courts have clearly established the prevailing standard for evaluating scientific evidence in <i>Daubert vs. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals Inc.</i> (DAUBERT v. MERRELL DOW PHARMACEUTICALS, INC., 509 U.S. 579 (1993)) (<a href="http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/printer_friendly.pl?page=us/509/579.html">http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/printer_friendly.pl?page=us/509/579.html</a>), in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that expert testimony must be based on a testable theory or method that has passed peer review, has a known error rate and has reliable results. In part, the Daubert ruling was triggered by the proliferation of experts and professional witnesses who expressed their opinion in reports and testimony as opposed to sound scientific principles and evidence. Therefore, peer reviewed reports and recommendations are mandatory in order to protect the public from personal opinion. We request that an adequate peer review plan and process be used for all impact analyses and include experts that are neutral about motorized recreation.</p>	NGO-CTVA-198: See response to NGO-CTVA-1.
NGO-CTVA-199	<p>Issue: Wildlife security criteria and standards in the forest plan are out of date. The science, data and findings as far as road density and impact of motorized vehicles on wildlife have changed significantly. This new information must be considered in this evaluation.</p> <p>Issue: The road density evaluations must also consider the viable alternative of closing a reasonable number of routes during hunting season and other critical seasons and then opening them during the summer recreation season. This strategy would effectively address road density criteria without nearly as many motorized closures as proposed.</p>	NGO-CTVA-199: The DEIS was review at the BLM Nevada State Office and Washington office levels. These reviews included a recreation specialist. The proposed RMP was also peer reviewed by interdisciplinary specialists at the BLM Nevada State Office and Washington Office.
NGO-CTVA-200	<p>Issue: Road density criteria must be used with reasonable judgment and consider the mitigating effects that an adjacent block of roadless area has on a roaded area that exceeds the desired road density. Oftentimes these areas that exceed the ideal density are very valuable multiple-use motorized areas and border on large roadless areas that provide more than adequate wildlife security thereby effectively mitigating the impacts associated with the roaded area.</p> <p>Issue: Road density does not equal motorized trail density. Impact information developed based on roads should not be used to estimate impacts from ATV and single-track motorcycle trails. ATV trails has far less impact than roads in all resource areas and motorcycle single-track trails have far less impact than roads in all resource areas. Motorized trails have less impact than roads and this condition must be recognized during the analysis and decision-making.</p>	NGO-CTVA-200: Road densities and impacts to wildlife will be further addressed & brought forward in the subsequent Transportation & Travel Management Planning processes.
NGO-CTVA-201	<p>Issue: Road density does not equal motorized trail density. Impact information developed based on roads should not be used to estimate impacts from ATV and single-track motorcycle trails. ATV trails has far less impact than roads in all resource areas and motorcycle single-track trails have far less impact than roads in all resource areas. Motorized trails have less impact than roads and this condition must be recognized during the analysis and decision-making.</p>	NGO-CTVA-201: Different types of road uses will be further addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

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## NGO-CTVA

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## Issue:

A recent Grizzly Bear study in the Swan Valley of Montana found that 99 percent of the bears spent 99 percent of their time on Plum Creek property. This property has been heavily logged resulting in undergrowth plant species that support bears. Thick and overgrown timber does not allow for adequate undergrowth. As we now see by this study, critical bear habitat is quite different than what was once assumed and this new information must be incorporated into this evaluation. The Forest Service should discard the original "road density guidelines" and develop new guidelines that reflect the habitat most critical for bears as one that is timber harvested and roaded. Old outdated science formulated by assumptions should not be used when true science and actual data is now available.

## Issue:

If protection of fish and game species is a significant issue, then a reasonable alternative that would produce far more positive results would be a different management scenario for fishing and hunting in the area rather than the closure of trails to OHV use. OHV recreationists have been the only recreationists to pay the price for improvements to fish and game populations. At the same time the improvements to fish and game populations from motorized closures is miniscule and the cumulative impact on motorized recreationists has been significant and negative. Motorized recreationists have been the first to be eliminated for far too long. The human environment is also important but it has been ignored and not adequately quantified. If there is some over-arching mandate to maximize fish and wildlife populations, then fishing and hunting management scenarios must be developed as reasonable alternatives to be considered. It is time for a reasonable approach to the management of fish and wildlife. If maximizing fish and game populations is that significant, then the opportunities for others besides motorized recreationists (who have paid their dues many times over) should be reduced. This concept is entirely reasonable and particularly when fishing and hunting closures or management would be far more effective in producing the desired outcome. We request consideration of fish and game management alternatives and a more balanced consideration of recreation versus fish and wildlife populations in the decision-making.

## Issue:

Wildlife populations are at all time highs. Wildlife has consistently been given higher priority over motorized recreational opportunities for the past 30 years. This priority has led to significant cumulative effects on motorized recreationists which must now be addressed and mitigated. The project must seek a more reasonable balance of multiple-use and motorized recreation opportunities and a lesser, yet reasonable, priority for wildlife management.

## Issue:

A December 31, 2003 Federal Court ruling found that associated with actions taken under the endangered species action must be paid to the public. The case stemmed from the government's efforts to protect endangered winter-run chinook salmon and threatened delta smelt between 1992 and 1994 by withholding billions of gallons from farmers in California's Kern and Tulare counties. Court of Federal Claims Senior Judge John Wiese ruled that the government's halting of water constituted a "taking" or intrusion on the farmers' private property rights. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution prohibits the government from taking private property without fair payment. "What the court found is that the government is certainly free to protect the fish under the Endangered Species Act, but it must pay for the water that it takes to do so," said Roger J. Marzulla, the attorney representing the water districts that brought the claim. This same standard should also

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NGO-CTVA-202

NGO-CTVA-202:

Effects of wildlife management on OHV use was addressed in Section 4.3.3.

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Comments

Responses

be applied to the economic and motorized recreational losses that the public has suffered under the ESA including motorized closures justified by grizzly bear habitat and impacts on westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout. (<http://www.uswaternews.com/archives/arcrights/4caliwate2.html> )

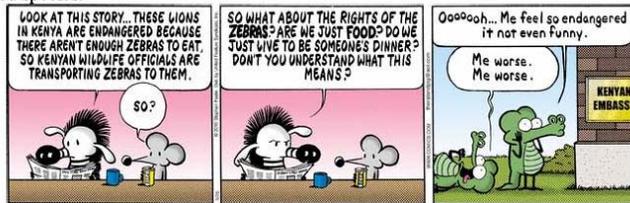
Issue:

The Agency must support any claim that various recreational activities (e.g., off-highway vehicle use, camping, equestrian use, hunting etc..) pose significant threats to endangered species. Claims that are highly speculative and based on little or no reliable data should be excluded from the environmental analysis.

The Agency must establish much more than a casual connection between recreation activities and any perceived declines in the population of any threatened or endangered species known to reside in the project area. At most, the technical data shows that some recreational activities, in some areas, have the potential to displace some species on a very local level. This, however, cannot establish that recreational activities pose a substantial threat to an entire population or subpopulation of a particular plant or animal.

Suggestions:

- a) The agency should not utilize technical data that displays a pronounced bias against public recreation.
- b) The agency must not jump to conclusions regarding the effects of recreation on threatened and endangered species.



Issue:

Our observations over decades of trail riding have established that significant wildlife mortality does not result from OHV activity. We are not aware of any reports of large animals such as deer, elk, or bear being hit or injured by OHV activity. Additionally, it is extremely rare for OHVs to injure any small animals such as squirrels or chipmunks. We request that wildlife mortality from OHV activity be considered minor and that wildlife mortality not be used as a reason to close roads and trails to OHV visitors.

Issue:

OHV use and wildlife can and do coexist. We do not see any evidence in the field that would indicate that summer motorized recreation use is a significant wildlife problem. We support motorized closures where necessary to protect wildlife during the spring calving season and hunting season while maintaining a reasonable level of access during those periods.

Issue:

It is obvious from aerial observation of the project area that under the existing conditions so much of the area is inaccessible to motor vehicles and that the existing level of motorized access and

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-203

NGO-CTVA-203: Effects of OHV and recreation management on Special Status Species were addressed in 4.2.10 and will be further analyzed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

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-204

NGO-CTVA-204: Impacts to wildlife will be further analyzed through the Transportation and Travel Management process.

NGO-CTVA  
-205

NGO-CTVA-205: Existing recreation and OHV areas were analyzed under Alternative A.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

motorized recreation is entirely reasonable. Reduced motorized road and trail density is often used as a desired management goal but is not reasonable. The trend of reduced motorized access and motorized recreational opportunities is not necessary and is not consistent with multiple-use management of the area.

## Issue:

Wildlife management also depends on adequate motorized access. For example, the lack of adequate roads and motorized access for hunter access has led to reduced hunter success and reduced harvest of game animals and affected the overall number and balance of game animals. This in turn has led to the need for cow permits and special hunts. In order to be consistent with the Forest Plan and meet the goal of no net change in herd numbers requires no net change in hunter access which in turn justifies the current level of motorized roads and trails.

NGO-CTVA  
-206

NGO-CTVA-206: Impacts to wildlife will be further analyzed through the Transportation and Travel Management process.

## Issue:

The current analysis does not adequately consider grizzly bear delisting under the Reasonably Foreseeable actions. This action is imminent. At the same time there is so much emphasis on the management of the area and region as a non-motorized area for grizzly bears. First, we do not feel that OHV recreation has a significant effect on grizzly bears and, secondly, the analysis must be based on the impending delisting of grizzly bears. Other pending delisting of endangered species must also be considered.

NGO-CTVA  
-207

NGO-CTVA-207: Impacts of OHV management on recreation values were addressed in the DEIS in section 4.3.3 and will be further analyzed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process. There are no known grizzly bears in the decision area.

## Issue:

The encroachment of residences into the forest is often the most significant factor contributing to the loss of summer and/or winter wildlife habitat. First, we request that the impact of these permanent encroachments be quantified and compared to the relatively minor impact that mechanized forest visitors have on wildlife habitat. Secondly, public land visitors should not have to pay the price in the form of motorized closures required to offset the impact of permanent encroachments by private residences. Proper assignment of restrictions would rest on those private individuals who permanently encroached on the natural habitat.

NGO-CTVA  
-208

## Issue:

Independent scientist should review and participate in all aspects of planning, broad-based assessments, local analysis, and monitoring. Independent scientists must review the published results of all partnership studies including those prepared by students under the direction of professors, in order to be sure that they are appropriately interpreted and documented and that the supporting data is adequate.

Scientists may come from within federal or state agencies, or the general public, and may hold a variety of important and influential positions. The study team should:

- 1) require minimum standards and criteria for qualifications which must be met before a scientist can be deemed an "expert";
- 2) provide minimum standards and criteria for determining when a scientist may be deemed "independent"; and
- 3) provide a minimum amount of public notice and opportunity to object whenever any such scientist is considered for such participation, whether such position is permanent or temporary, full time or part time, voluntary or compensated. Such notice should include the qualifications of the individual, the role which the individual will have in such participation, and the type and duration of the position.

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NGO-CTVA-208: Development of alternatives for planning effort included input from Resource Advisory Council, Cooperating Agencies, and issues identified by the public during scoping. The RAC subgroup included a scientist from UNR.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

Review and participation by independent scientists is a good thing, provided the process require standards which assure that such scientists are in fact qualified and independent, and provide the public the opportunity to review such factors.

## Issue:

We are greatly concerned about the prevailing management trend for public lands that has significantly reduced or eliminated motorized recreation and access opportunities. Why does the closure of public lands permeate the current management mind set? This mind set is not in line with the best interests of the public. The closure of any existing motorized trail will add to the significant cumulative loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities that has occurred within public lands during the past 35 ± years. In order to avoid contributing further to the significant cumulative loss of motorized recreation and access, we request that the closure of a motorized trail or access should be offset by the creation of a new motorized trail or access of equal value.

## Issue:

The elimination of public access to public lands through private property has also contributed to the loss of motorized access and motorized recreation opportunities. We request that agencies acquire private land and right-of-ways to provide access to public land that is now blocked off to the public. This action is necessary to reverse the prevailing trend of significantly less public access to public land over the past 35 ± years and the cumulative negative impact of that trend on multiple-use recreationists.

NGO-CTVA  
-209

NGO-CTVA-209: BLM included management actions to provide legal access to public lands by acquiring easements through privately owned lands in D-LR-3.1(e), D-LR-4.1, LR-CA-6.1, and Objective LR-4.

## Issue:

If a private property owner closes a historic motorized access or route to public land through their property, then in order to be fair, to avoid special privileges; the public routes should be closed at the private property line to all motorized use and, where the route has access from the other end on public land, it should remain open so that it can provide an out and back motorized opportunity.

NGO-CTVA  
-210

NGO-CTVA-210: Road types and quality would be analyzed through the Travel and Transportation management Plan process.

## Issue:

Private property owners that border public land should not benefit from public land without providing access to the public. Any private landowner that owns land that borders public land and does not provide public access to that public land should also be denied access to that public land under the principles of fairness and reciprocity. This action is necessary to reverse the prevailing trend of significantly less public access to public land over the past 35 ± years and the cumulative negative impact of that trend on multiple-use recreationists.

NGO-CTVA  
-211

NGO-CTVA-211: Outside the scope of this RMP.

## Issue:

Anytime there is a land exchange between private and public entities, a public access easement or right-of-way should be required in order to offset the trend of less public access to public land over the past 35 ± years and the cumulative negative impact of that trend on multiple-use recreationists.

## Issue:

Page 279 of the Supplement to Big Snowy EA. *As previously stated in our response to 3c – Roadless/Wilderness comments, we fail to see how the Roadless Rule has a cumulative effect on multiple-use recreationists. The Roadless Area Conservation Strategy did not prohibit motorized use on roads and trails that already exist within inventoried roadless areas. It also did not prohibit construction of new motorized trails. It did not designate the areas as wilderness. It did not prohibit*

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## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

*the Forest Supervisor from making local decisions about motorized travel within roadless areas. Therefore, we consider this comment beyond the scope of the project.*

We disagree with the conclusion that the Roadless Rule will not have a cumulative negative effect on motorized recreationists. The Final Roadless Rule published on January 5, 2001 included the following directive "The proposed rule did not close any roads or off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails". Even though motorized recreation is allowed by the Roadless Rule, non-motorized groups will contest every inch of motorized trail in roadless areas. The comments submitted by non-motorized use groups as part of this proposed action are representative of their position. All too often, the preferred alternative implements a significant reduction in motorized access and recreation. Every action involving travel management in the region has had significant motorized access and recreation closures associated with it. There is no evidence that future actions will be any different.

Montana has a total of 16,843,000 acres in National Forests. Of that area, 3,372,000 acres or 20% are designated wilderness. Areas subject to the Roadless Rule total 6,397,000 acres or 38% of our National Forest area. Therefore, 9,769,000 acres or 58% of the National Forest in Montana is either wilderness or subject to the Roadless Rule. This number of acres must be balanced with the fact that wilderness visits account for only 2.55% of the visits to public land (Table 2-7 in the Social Assessment of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest dated October 2002). Therefore, nearly all (97.45%) visitors to public lands benefit from land management for multiple-use and benefit from motorized access and mechanized recreational opportunities.

Based on our experience with past actions and current proposed actions, motorized recreationists will lose significant recreational opportunities and suffer cumulative negative impacts from the Roadless Rule. Therefore, we disagree that this issue is out of scope. We request that the cumulative negative impact of the Roadless Rule, past actions and future actions be considered a significant issue and adequately considered in the document and decision-making. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts.

## Issue:

Natural resources are renewable and sustainable when reasonably managed and used. Environmental health is not significantly improved under management for wilderness or roadless character. Reasonable management and use for the benefit of all citizens is best provided under multiple-use policies. We request that decision-making be based on restoring reasonable management and use of public lands.

NGO-CTVA-212: See response to NGO-CTVA-1.

NGO-CTVA  
-212

## Issue:

The wilderness designation is not good for recreation and an alternative designation is needed. Many U.S. citizens do not trust our federal land managers to manage our natural resources responsibly. Wilderness advocates have taken advantage of this situation to promote the Wilderness designation and now the Roadless designation as a means to protect these areas. Wilderness designation was originally conceived, by the Wilderness advocates involved in the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act, as appropriate for about ten million acres of administratively designated Primitive Areas. Present day Wilderness advocates have since expanded the concept to a system of over one hundred million acres and they say we need much more.

NGO-CTVA-213: There is no proposal within the PRMP to designate Wilderness.

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An alternative land designation is needed to resolve the Wilderness and Roadless area debate. Off-highway motorcycles, aircraft, snowmobiles, 4X4s, mountain bikes, ATVs, and personal watercraft are not allowed in designated Wilderness areas. Therefore, these popular recreation pastimes are severely impacted by the Wilderness and Roadless designation. Motorized uses that have been grand fathered into some Wilderness areas, such as use of aircraft and powerboats, are subjected to harassment. Horseback riders, hunters and other non-motorized recreationists are also increasingly under attack from Wilderness advocates who push more restrictive regulations in existing Wilderness areas and those areas proposed for that designation.

The U.S. Congress should act on legislation establishing a federal designation that is less restrictive to recreational use than Wilderness and the Roadless designation. It should be called "Back Country Recreation Area" (<http://www.sharetrails.org/index.cfm?page=39> and <http://www.sharetrails.org/index.cfm?page=40>). This designation should be designed to protect and, if possible, enhance the backcountry recreation opportunities on these lands while still allowing responsible utilization of these areas by the natural resource industries.

This designation should be used for those areas currently identified by the federal land management agencies as "roadless" and thus currently under consideration for Wilderness designation. Areas considered may or may not be recommended for Wilderness designation or classed as Wilderness Study Areas. In addition, the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have administratively developed non-Congressionally designated Wilderness-like reserves or buffer zones. The Forest Service's buffers are called natural and near-natural areas. The BLM's reserves are named primitive and semi-primitive. These non-Congressionally approved land classifications should be receive the Back Country Recreation Area (BCRA) designation.

Many roadless areas have been under consideration for Wilderness designation for over 35 years. The opposition to Wilderness designation in many of these areas has been largely from recreationists whose preferred form of recreation isn't allowed in Wilderness areas. Recreational resources need not be sacrificed for responsible resource extraction. The BCRA designation will encourage cooperation, not only between diverse recreation interests, but also between recreationists and our resource industries.

A recent public opinion survey shows majority support for a Backcountry Recreation Area alternative to a proposed 300,000 acre Wilderness Bill in Northern California (<http://www.sharetrails.org/index.cfm?page=42&magazine=50>). In Del Norte County, 66 percent of people surveyed supported a Backcountry alternative instead of a Wilderness designation. Fifty-three percent of respondents in Humboldt County said it was wiser to designate land as a Backcountry Recreation Area. We request that all "roadless" federal lands, not currently designated as Wilderness, be reviewed for their importance to back country recreationists and designated as Back Country Recreation Areas.

Issue:

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) for motorized recreationists should consist of an equivalent number, type and quality of opportunities as compared to non-motorized recreationists including access to back country recreation areas, long distance back country discovery routes, back country airstrips and destinations including historic areas, lakes, vistas, streams and rivers.

Issue:

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NGO-CTVA-214: Congress designates Wilderness Areas. Management of these areas is in accordance with FLPMA and the Wilderness Act of 1964. Wilderness Study Areas are managed as directed under FLPMA and BLM guidance through the Interim Management Plan.

NGO-CTVA-215: Number, type and quality of recreational experience are addressed through a range of recreation management actions, starting on page 2-185 of the DEIS.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

Many visitors who traditionally use roads and trails in the project area may not participate in a formal NEPA process. The process is both time consuming and confusing to many citizens. Multiple-use interests oftentimes struggle to provide participants due to many other time commitments. At the same time, non-motorized groups funded by foundations have well-organized, trained and experienced staffs that are readily available to participate in the NEPA process and collaborative sessions. These groups are able to participate on a wide front of actions from travel management to timber sales to non-motorized designations. The magnitude of foundation funding available to non-motorized groups tends to amplify their limited-use interests in comparison to the needs of the public. The number of groups and the magnitude of their funding can be found at <http://www.green-watch.com/search/directory.asp>. For example, there are over 45 special-interest environmental groups operating in our area. This setting often results in non-motorized interests getting undue benefits by creating and manipulating the process. This setting is not based on the principles of addressing public need and technical merit. We request that the effectiveness and impact of foundation-funded organizations versus the needs of all citizens be evaluated and factored into the agencies decision-making.

## Issue:

Given the current setting (number of actions and time required to address each), most of the public not associated with foundation-funded special-interest environmental organizations does not have the time and money to adequately protect their recreation rights. This characterization typifies most motorized and multiple-use recreationists who already struggle to balance family obligations with work obligations. It is not reasonable to require major involvement in the NEPA process from the working public in order to protect their recreation rights. Conversely, it is not reasonable to reward those groups backed by foundation funding and paid positions with an advantage in the NEPA process and undue recreational opportunities. We request that the cumulative negative impact associated with this setting be adequately evaluated and factored into the decision-making for this action.

## Issue:

Motorized recreationists cannot hold full-time jobs and, at the same time, be able to compete with the paid staff of non-motorized for recreational resources. Unfortunately, the agency has adopted the expectation that motorized recreationists must demonstrate a level of involvement equivalent to the involvement of paid staff from non-motorized groups in order to get a reasonable allocation of recreational resources. We have been told that we are politically insignificant by forest supervisors, district rangers and BLM managers. There are many socio-economic and environmental justice issues associated with this setting if it is not adequately addressed by this action ranging from the allocation of near-term motorized recreational opportunities and the level of human health that it promotes to the ultimate elimination of motorized recreation from public land in the long-term.

## Issue:

We have also observed from past NEPA travel management processes that the lack of participation by motorized recreationists has been due to the cumulative effect of confusing and poor documentation of the proposals, which included maps that did not have clearly defined characteristics, landmarks, trails, roads, routes and historical sites that would be removed from communal use by the proposed closure action. We are concerned that this lack of understanding will lead to resentment and poor support of motorized closures by the community. We request that the travel management process seek out and document the needs of all motorized visitors including those who traditionally use the primitive roads and trails, plus the handicapped, elderly, and

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NGO-CTVA-216: See response to NGO-CTVA-28.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

physically impaired as required under 40 CFR 1506.6 (a) *Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing the NEPA process, (3) (vii) Publication in newsletters that may be expected to reach potentially interested persons. (ix) Posting of notice on and off site in the area where the action is to be located, and (d) Solicit appropriate information from the public.* Additionally, NFMA requires the Forest Service *"shall publicize and hold public meetings or comparable processes at locations that foster public participation in the review of such plans and revisions."* 16 U.S.C. § 1604(d).

## Issue:

Many multiple-use and motorized recreationists have expressed a concern about the general lack of trust in the travel management process. They feel that travel management decisions are pre-determined, that it is pointless to participate in the process, and that travel management is not intended to meet their needs. These opinions could be easily confirmed by publishing a request in local newspapers and on local television channels asking for a response to the question "Do you feel that you have been adequately involved in the closure of roads and trails on public lands to motorized use? Yes or No" and "Do you feel that the needs of multiple-use and motorized recreationists have been adequately considered in the travel management process? Yes or No".

We request that the process adequately meet public involvement requirements with respect to motorized visitors. The process should include methods of public involvement that effectively reach motorized visitors and methods to account for the needs of citizens who may not participate for diverse reasons. Some public involvement methods that would be effective include: (1) the use of trail rangers (who are motorized enthusiasts) to count and interview visitors using the travelways and distribute Travel Management materials to them, (2) publication in the newsletters of motorized association, (3) attendance at motorized club meetings, (4) posting of information packets at motorized trail head areas, and (5) mailings to OHV enthusiasts and owners.

## Issue:

We are concerned with the way that comments are being used by agencies in the decision-making process. Agency management has said that the total number of comments received during the process is considered during the decision-making. There is a clear indication that decisions are being made based on those interests producing the most comments. We strongly disagree with a decision-making process using comments as a voting process where the most comments wins the most trails and recreation opportunities because motorized recreationists and working class citizens have a low participation rate in NEPA processes for reasons discussed further in this document.

The intent of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when seeking comments during scoping and document comment processes is to solicit input in order to assure that significant issues were brought forward and considered. This intent is stated in NEPA Section 1501.7 as *"There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action."* And in NEPA Section 1503.1 as *"(4) Request comments from the public, affirmatively soliciting comments from those persons or organizations who may be interested or affected."*

Clearly, comments under NEPA were intended to bring issues and concerns to the attention of the team preparing the environmental document and the decision-makers. NEPA did not suggest that comments were to be used as a voting process to indicate support of alternatives. Nor did NEPA anticipate that the scoping and citizen input would be dominated by well-funded special interest

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## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

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groups. And finally, NEPA did not intend citizens to comment on every possible NEPA as a requirement to protect their interests, needs, and quality of life.

Unfortunately, the comment process has been considered a voting process to gauge communal opinion and agencies have not always recognized their responsibility to adequately address the needs of all citizens. This misuse of the comment process has resulted in agencies overlooking the needs of all citizens and decisions have been made that do not adequately address the needs of the public. NEPA requires decision-making that adequately addresses the needs of all members of the public. This direction was stated in Title 1, Sec. 101 of NEPA Policy Act of 1969 as “*achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities...*”. Under NEPA, decision-makers have a responsibility to seek out, determine, and make decisions that address the needs of all citizens and not just those that submit comments.

Communal needs are best met by management of public lands and programs for multiple-uses. Motorized roads and trails are a significant source of recreation for all of the public. The public expects decision-makers to adequately protect the existing standards of living and opportunities (human environment) in their decisions. The public expects and needs public agencies to be on their side. NEPA did not intend for citizens who do not comment on NEPA actions to give up their standard of living to those that do. We ask that public comments not be used as a voting process and that the needs of all citizens be fairly addressed in the document and decision-making.

## Issue:

The NEPA process is complicated and unapproachable to most of the public yet there has never been a program to inform, educate, and increase the public’s awareness and ability to work with the NEPA process. The lack of widespread information, education, awareness and NEPA skills has contributed to extremely low participation in the NEPA process by some sectors of the public. Public participation for even the most controversial proposed action (roadless rule) has involved less than 1% of the affected public. Additionally, the general lack of understanding of the NEPA process has resulted in poor acceptance and opinions of the process by the public.

Moreover, those with significant NEPA knowledge, training, and skills are able to successfully manipulate the NEPA process and have benefited significantly from the process and the ability to influence its decisions.

A quantification of the level of public understanding and participation in the NEPA process has never been undertaken. Additionally, a quantification of the level of public acceptance of the NEPA process has never been undertaken. We request that the significant negative impact on the majority of the public resulting from the lack of information, education, training, understanding and acceptance of the NEPA process be evaluated and that the cumulative negative impacts which have become significant on the public be adequately mitigated.

## Issue:

National Foundations are providing significant funding to special-interest environmental groups. For example, Turner Foundation provided \$14,174,845 in year 2000 to over 40 organizations that are active in our area (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=581924590> ).

Pew Foundation provided \$37,699,400 in 2001

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NGO-CTVA-217: Please visit <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/nepa.html> for more information on NEPA and public involvement in the NEPA process.

NGO-CTVA  
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NGO-CTVA-218: Outside scope of RMP.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=236234669>).

Weeden Foundation provided over \$65,000 in 2003 and 2004 (<http://www.weedenfdn.org/grantsummaries.htm>) with \$20,000 going to the Wildlands Center for Preventing Roads with a stated mission of *limiting motorized recreation*.

Another example, Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics had a total revenue of \$837,550 in year 2000 with \$810,853 originating as gifts from 5 foundations (<http://www.fseee.org/990/>).

Financially significant national foundations providing funding to environmental groups in the project area include:  
 Bullitt Foundation (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=916027795>),  
 Banbury Fund (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=136062463>),  
 Edward John Noble Foundation (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=061055586>),  
 Richard King Mellon Foundation (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=251127705>),  
 Charles Engelhard Foundation (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=226063032>),  
 Ford Foundation (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=131684331>),  
 William & Flora Hewlett Foundation (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=941655673>),  
 and W.K. Kellogg (<http://www.green-watch.com/search/gmdisplay.asp?Org=381359264>).

Cary Hegreberg in the January 2004 edition of the Montana Contractor News described the current situation as “Montana-based environmental groups that specialize in stopping development generate millions of dollars each year selling their “services” to out-of-state donors... Montana certainly doesn’t need to produce any more environmental advocacy than our own residents pay for”. We are concerned about the magnitude and influence of foundation funding to non-motorized organizations. The level of funding provided to non-motorized organizations from national foundations is tens of thousands of times greater than that available to individuals and local organizations representing multiple-use and motorized recreationists. This level of funding provides non-motorized organizations with significant staffing, management, and legal support. Local residents are closest to the land and should have a major say in the way that the land is managed but they cannot counter the influence of the organized environmental groups.

We request the significant impact that national foundation funding to environmental groups has on motorized recreationists be adequately evaluated and considered including: (1) the impact that foundation funding has on the NEPA process, (2) the impact that foundation funding has on the decision-making, and (3) the impact that foundation funding has on the NEPA process through significant use of legal challenges to nearly every decision involving multiple-use proposals for public lands. In addition, the document and decision-makers should evaluate the cumulative negative impact national foundation funding has had on all past NEPA actions involving multiple-use and motorized recreation.

## Issue:

We have been told that motorized recreationists must participate in the travel management process and/or collaborative sessions in order to realize future motorized recreational opportunities. While we agree that motorized recreationists have the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process, the level and effectiveness of participation should not be the deciding factor when making decisions about who gets what recreational opportunities within public lands. NEPA does not identify the quality and quantity of individual and group participation as a decision-making criterion. Agencies

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NGO-CTVA-219: Outside scope of this RMP.

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NGO-CTVA-220: BLM issues decisions based on compliance with law, regulations, and policy. Public input, through public comments to the DEIS, the environmental analysis and staff expertise, are also taken into consideration in the decision process.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

should not be overly influenced by the network of influence groups that foundations and environmentalists have established. The network of influence groups has a significant advantage over common citizens in areas including funding, staffing, training and advertising through radio, television, web sites, and newspapers. This setting allows environmental groups to get undue benefits by manipulating the NEPA process. This setting does not address the principles of meeting public need. NEPA and other laws do not intend for independent individuals who are less organized to give up their life's amenities to better-organized and funded groups.

The establishment of recreational opportunities on public lands should be based on public need. Other government entities are directed to address and meet the needs of the public. For example, cities provide water and sewer systems based on public need. Highways are constructed based on public need. The need for these facilities is not based on the level of citizen involvement. The need for these facilities is based on an assessment of need developed by water and sewer usage, traffic counts, etc. The public has a basic expectation that agencies will look out for all of their interests and the best interests of the public are met when agencies respond to the needs of the public in this manner. If members of the public did not comment on the upgrade of a water treatment plant or the construction of a highway does not mean that their water is shut off or that they can't drive to Bozeman. We request that the use of public participation in decision-making for this proposed action be monitored to assure that it does not obscure the needs of all citizens who rely on the project area for their recreation and livelihoods.

## Issue:

It has been stated that motorized recreationists should participate in collaborative sessions with non-motorized groups in order to obtain motorized recreational opportunities on public lands. The agencies may think that the definition of a collaborative effort as "working together to develop a solution that reasonably meets the needs of all parties" but the dictionary definition of collaborate is "To cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy".

Additionally, British Prime Ministry Lady Margaret Thatcher describe consensus which is another closely related process as "...the process of abandoning all beliefs, principles, values and policies in search of something in which no one believes, but to which no one objects; the process of avoiding the very issues that have to be solved, merely because you cannot get agreement on the way ahead".

Both sides would be further down the trail towards measurable protection of the human and natural environment if multiple-use, motorized access and motorized recreation were accepted at a reasonable level and we all focused our energy on visitor education, site-specific problems and site-specific mitigation measures. Consensus and collaborative processes cannot by nature produce reasonable results and motorized recreationists should not be forced into these processes where they are guaranteed to lose.

## Issue:

In group settings, the Delphi or Collaboration Techniques can be unacceptable manipulative methods of achieving consensus on controversial topics when they are used in the following manner. Both methods use facilitators who can deliberately escalate tension among group members, pitting one faction against another to make a preordained viewpoint appear sensible, while making opposing views appear ridiculous. Both methods can be used by those in power to preserve the illusion that there is community participation in decision-making processes, while in fact lay citizens are being squeezed out. The setting or type of group is immaterial for the success of the

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NGO-CTVA-221: See response to NGO-CTVA-1.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

technique. The point is that, when people are in groups that tend to share a particular knowledge base, they display certain identifiable characteristics, known as group dynamics, which allows the facilitator to apply the basic strategy. In an unacceptable process, the facilitators encourage each person in a group to express concerns about the programs, projects, or policies in question. They listen attentively, elicit input from group members, form task forces, urge participants to make lists, and in going through these motions, learn about each member of a group. They are trained to identify the leaders, weak or non-committal members, and those who are apt to change sides frequently during an argument. Then the amiable facilitators become professional agitators and devil's advocates. Using the divide and conquer principle, they manipulate one opinion against another, making those who are out of step appear ridiculous, unknowledgeable, inarticulate, or dogmatic. They attempt to anger certain participants, thereby accelerating tensions. Many facilitators are well trained in psychological manipulation and in an unacceptable process they are able to predict the reactions of each member in a group. Individuals in opposition to the desired policy or program will ultimately be shut out or so heavily discounted when the process is used in the above manner. A process with these characteristics must be considered unacceptable for public participation.

## Issue:

Multiple-use recreationists are receptive to reasonable actions that benefit both the human and natural environment. The intent and goals of non-motorized groups can be examined by reviewing their comments submitted on this action and other similar proposed actions, reviewing the list of legal actions that they have sponsored, and browsing websites such as:

<http://www.greateryellowstone.org> ; <http://wildmontana.org/orvpubland.htm> ;  
<http://www.wildlands.org> ; <http://montana.sierraclub.org> ; <http://www.sierraclub.org> ;  
<http://www.wildmontana.org> ; <http://www.wildrockies.org/> ; <http://www.wildrockies.org/TECI/> ;  
<http://www.wildlandsepr.org> ; <http://maps.wildrockies.org/orv/> ;  
<http://www.wildrockiesalliance.org> ; <http://www.friendsofthebitterroot.org> ; and  
<http://www.montanawildlife.com> (click on "activism" or "issues" or "news" or "take action" or "opinions" or search for "OHV" or "ATV", etc).

A common stated goal of non-motorized groups is the elimination of as much multiple-use on public lands as possible and the establishment of as much wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use area as possible (<http://www.weedenfdn.org/grantsummaries.htm>). While collaborative agreement on a travel management plan between two opposing interests is a desirable solution from an Agency's perspective, the reality of the current setting is that collaborative sessions have failed because a reasonable allocation of recreational opportunities that would meet the needs of all citizens never stays on the table. The approach to travel management taken by the agencies is to pit user groups against each other in the process. Furthermore, the lack of a reasonable multiple-use alternative combined with the significant cumulative negative effects that motorized recreationists have experienced (loss of over 50% of motorized recreational opportunities during the past 35 ± years) precludes motorized recreationists from accepting any additional unbalanced proposals coming out of collaborative sessions. The collaborative approach must produce reasonable multiple-use alternatives for all (100%) of the remaining lands intended for multiple-use.

NGO-CTVA  
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Additionally, we must make decisions based on adequate consideration of the needs of both the human and natural environment. Recreational opportunities should be established based on the needs of the public and not the negotiating skills of participants in collaborative sessions.

NGO-CTVA-222: See response to NGO-CTVA-1.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

The reality of the current setting is that we must share public lands with all visitors. Sharing requires coexistence among exclusive-use and multiple-use recreationists. It is not reasonable to take the position that motorized and non-motorized recreationists cannot coexist at the levels of use typical in the project area. The motive behind a non-coexisting attitude is a selfish one. Collaborative sessions and decision-makers must not yield to those unwilling to share or accept diversity. All parties must accept diversity and coexist. All parties must be responsive to and willing to meet the needs of the public. The reality of the current setting is that we must make balanced decisions that meet the needs of the public. We have been told that motorized recreationists must participate in the travel management process and/or collaborative sessions in order to realize future motorized recreational opportunities. While we agree that motorized recreationists have the opportunity to participate in the NEPA process, we disagree that the level and effectiveness of participation should be the factor deciding when making decisions about who gets what recreational opportunities within our public lands.

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Decisions should be based on;

- (1) accurate and unbiased information,
- (2) fairness to all members of the public and their needs,
- (3) the principles of sharing and tolerance, and
- (4) an equitable distribution of benefits to all interests.

Issue:

NEPA does not require or suggest that the quality and quantity of individual and group participation be used as a decision-making criterion. Agencies should not be overly influenced by the network of influence groups that environmentalists have established. The network of influence groups has a significant advantage over common citizens in areas including funding, staffing, training and advertising through radio, television, web sites, and newspapers. Collaborative sessions or other types of negotiations often result in undue benefits for environmental groups because they have manipulated the process. The decision-making process should be solidly founded on the principles of unbiased information and public need.

Issue:

Environmental groups have the funding and legal backing to pursue their agenda. Court rulings and negotiations favorable to environmental groups are a heavy influence on the agency decision-making including:

The Bitterroot timber salvage settlement

(<http://www.helenair.com/rednews/2002/02/08/build/headline/1A2.html>) is an example of an unreasonable compromise with environmental groups. The Forest Service developed a reasonable proposal to harvest 44,000 acres (14%) out of 307,000 acres burned during the fires of 2000. The final negotiated settlement will allow just 14,770 acres (5%) to be harvested.

This pattern of unreasonable negotiation was repeated with the Cave Gulch fire settlement ([http://www.helenair.com/articles/2003/01/23/helena\\_top/a01012303\\_03.txt](http://www.helenair.com/articles/2003/01/23/helena_top/a01012303_03.txt)). Again, the Forest Service developed a reasonable proposal to harvest 2,767 acres (10%) out of a total of 27,660 acres burned during 2000. The final negotiated settlement in January 2003 allowed just 1,191 acres (4%) to be harvested.

NGO-CTVA-223: BLM issues decisions based on compliance with law, regulations, and policy. The proposed RMP took into consideration public input, through public comments from public scoping and comments to the DEIS, input from cooperating Agencies, the environmental analysis and management and staff expertise.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

This pattern of unreasonable negotiation was repeated with the Snow Talon fire settlement ([http://www.helenair.com/articles/2005/12/07/helena/a09120705\\_01.txt](http://www.helenair.com/articles/2005/12/07/helena/a09120705_01.txt)). Again, the Forest Service developed a reasonable proposal to harvest 2,763 acres (7%) out of a total of 37,700 acres burned during 2003. The final negotiated settlement in December 2005 reduced the original proposal by 85% from 27 million board feet of timber to just 4 million board feet to be harvested.

This pattern of unreasonable court rulings was repeated with the Lolo National Forest timber salvage sale proposals after the year 2000 fires. Again, the Forest Service developed a sound proposal to harvest about 4,600 acres or 6% out of 74,000 acres that were burned. Environmental groups challenged that proposal all the way to the Ninth Circuit court and successfully stopped the harvest proposal (<http://www.missoulian.com/articles/2005/12/10/news/top/news01.prt>).

Clearly, these and the many other legal actions by environmental groups with funding and resources have influenced the system and set precedent with federal agencies. Appeals and lawsuits by environmental groups greatly outnumber those of average citizens ([http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/appeal\\_index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/projects/appeal_index.shtml)) and (<http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/applit/index.htm>). The current precedent is that legal actions and appeals are the most effective way to influence decisions on how public land is to be managed. Unfortunately, the true public need for management of public lands for multiple-uses is not adequately defended because agencies are so focused on countering the massive legal attack by environmental groups.

The final “negotiated” decision-making in these actions had nothing to do with science or public need. The final “negotiated” decision-making in these actions had everything to do with the amount of money and legal support that special interest environmental groups have available. These resources allow them to routinely pursue actions within the NEPA process and significantly influence the NEPA to benefit their special interests. Environmental groups are not representative of the overall public need yet their use of legal actions allowed only their perspective to be represented in a negotiating session. This inequity creates a serious flaw in the process. For example in the Bitterroot and Cave Gulch salvage harvest actions, the “negotiated” settlement conceded too many un-harvested acres (30,000 and 1,600 acres respectively) to wilderness oriented groups, was not based on sound technical information, and was not representative of the majority of public needs. The negotiated settlement will likely happen again with the Snow-Talon Salvage Sale decision ([http://www.helenair.com/articles/2005/07/17/opinions/a04071705\\_03.txt](http://www.helenair.com/articles/2005/07/17/opinions/a04071705_03.txt)) and the Middle East Fork (<http://www.missoulian.com/articles/2007/01/14/news/mtregional/znews08.prt>). The same sort of influence and “negotiated” settlement is repeated over and over in travel planning actions and has resulted in the closure of over 50% of the existing motorized roads and trails exceeding 50% in most cases. This “negotiated” decision-making has created a significant negative cumulative negative impact on multiple-use and motorized recreationists.

We request that the use of public participation in decision-making for this proposed action be monitored to assure that it does not obscure the needs of all citizens who rely on this area for their recreation and livelihoods. Collaborative sessions are inequitable and a travesty if they do not meet a true cross-section of public needs. The needs of the public are best met by managing public lands for multiple-uses. Multiple-use includes motorized access and motorized recreation. We request that agencies conduct collaborative sessions that produce reasonable multiple-use outcomes.

Issue:

*We are a locally supported association whose purpose is to preserve trails for all recreationists through responsible environmental protection and education.*

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NGO-CTVA-224: See response to NGO-CTVA-223.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

Each and every travel management plan has significantly reduced motorized access and motorized recreation. Therefore, non-motorized recreationists gain more opportunities with each and every travel plan compromise that closes motorized roads and trails and areas to motorized recreation. This trend is effectively converting significant areas of multiple-use public land to defacto wilderness/non-motorized/exclusive-use land. This conversion is being repeated over and over and the cumulative negative impact of this trend on motorized access and motorized recreation is significant and must be evaluated as part of this action.

## Issue:

The lack of money to maintain OHV routes is being used as a reason to close OHV routes and at the same time Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and gas tax money paid by OHV recreationists is not being returned to OHV recreation. There is also unused motorized RTP money available each year. Additionally, the lack of money is used as a reason that new OHV routes cannot be constructed.

## Solution:

The BLM and Forest Service must aggressively pursue and make use of all available forms of OHV trail funding including RTP, and a more equitable return of the gas tax paid by OHV recreationists. As demonstrated in the following comments, the amount of gas tax paid by OHV recreationists is enormous.

## Issue:

Our observations of recreationists taking visiting the primitive roads and trails within public lands indicate that 97% of the visitors represented multiple-uses that rely on motorized access and/or mechanized recreation (data available upon request). These needs can be further quantified by researching records from the Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) and the report Fuel Used for Off-Road Recreation (Report ORNL/TM-1999/100, Federal Highway Administration). Both of these sources document OHV numbers by state.

Montana is estimated to have 32,747 off-road trucks, 18,400 off-road motorcycles, and 23,017 off-road atvs for a total of 74,164 OHV recreationists (Report ORNL/TM-1999/100). This total does not include other multiple-use visitors using automobiles, SUVs, etc. Nationally, the total estimated off-highway vehicles equal about 7,400,000 which does not include other multiple-use visitors (Report ORNL/TM-1999/100).

Additionally, there are millions of other multiple-use visitors who use motorized access for sightseeing, exploring, picnicking, hiking, rock climbing, skiing, mountain biking, riding horses, camping, hunting, RVs, target shooting, fishing, viewing wildlife, snowmobiling, accessing patented mining claims, and gathering of firewood, rocks, natural foods, etc. Mountain bikers seem to prefer OHV trails because we clear and maintain them and they have a desirable surface for biking. Additionally, many of the routes within the project area are necessary to maintain access to patented mining claims and historic districts. Also, physically challenged visitors must use wheeled vehicles to visit public lands. The needs of all of these multiple-use visitors have not been adequately addressed and the proposed negative impacts to them have not been adequately disclosed. We request that the cumulative needs of these visitors be accurately quantified and the cumulative negative impacts of closures on these visitors be considered in the decision-making.

## Issue:

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NGO-CTVA-225: See response to NGO-CTVA-28.

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NGO-CTVA-226: The PRMP revised cumulative impact analysis is located in Chapter 4 by resource or use. Different types of motorized use and the cumulative impacts on users will be further addressed & brought forward in the subsequent Transportation & Travel Management Planning processes.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

Finding funding for programs can be a challenge. In the case of OHV recreationists, ample funding is being generated by OHV recreationists, however as demonstrated in the following paragraphs, a reasonable amount of this funding is not being returned to OHV recreationists.

State governments collect excise taxes on gasoline for road and highway improvements ranging from \$0.075 to \$0.389 per gallon (References 7, 9, and [http://www.flyingj.com/s\\_tax.html](http://www.flyingj.com/s_tax.html)). The federal government collects excise tax on gasoline for road and highway improvements equal to \$0.184 per gallon, which is earmarked for the Federal Highway Trust Fund (Reference 8 and 10). A federal excise tax refund program for gasoline used for off-road purposes does not exist at this time. Some states allow purchasers of gasoline for off-road use to collect a state tax refund for fuel used in a non-taxable manner. For example, the State of Montana defines fuel consumed by equipment and vehicles operating off public roads as fuel used in a non-taxable manner (Reference 2). Therefore, excise tax on gasoline used for off-road fuel use should either be refunded to off-highway recreationists or used to fund programs that benefit off-highway recreationists. Neither of these mechanisms are being implemented in an equitable manner at this time. Therefore, a reasonable amount of the gasoline excise tax paid by off-highway recreationists is not being returned to off-highway recreationists or used for their benefit at this time.

The magnitude of gas tax paid by OHV recreationists is significant. Fuel used for off-road motorcycle, atv and 4-wheel drive recreation in Montana is estimated at 18,537,060 gallons per year (Reference 1). The State of Montana fuel tax is \$0.2775 per gallon (Reference 2). Therefore, an estimated \$5,144,034 in state fuel tax (\$0.2775 per gallon times 18,537,060 gallons per year) is paid annually by Montana off-road recreationists. The present worth of this annual amount over the past 30 years is about \$88,940,000. Other states can be calculated by referring to the state gas tax amount per gallon published at [http://www.flyingj.com/s\\_tax.html](http://www.flyingj.com/s_tax.html). Unfortunately, most of the state tax paid by OHV recreationists on gasoline ends up being used for other programs and not for OHV programs.

Additionally, federal gas tax paid by OHV recreationists living in Montana is significant and is estimated at \$3,410,819 (\$0.184 per gallon times 18,537,060 gallons per year). The present worth of this annual amount over the past 30 years is about \$58,973,000. There is no method for direct return of the federal excise tax to OHV recreationists. Therefore, most of the federal excise tax paid by OHV recreationists on gasoline ends up being used for other programs and not for OHV programs. In summary, OHV recreationists in Montana generate total state and federal annual gas tax revenue on the order of \$8 million and a present worth over the past 30 years of about \$150,000,000. Other states are similar or more. This level of funding would be sufficient to fund expanded and enhanced OHV programs in Montana and other states but this objective requires an equitable means of returning off-road gas tax to OHV recreationists.

The amount of gas tax being returned to Montana OHV recreationists through State Trails Program (STP) and Recreational Trails Programs (RTP) is on the order \$200,000 per year (References 3 and 4) or about 3% of the actual state and federal gas tax paid by OHV recreationists. This small percentage of return is not equitable and other states also follow this trend. We request that revisions be made to state and federal programs in order to return to OHV recreationists the full amount of gas tax paid by OHV recreationists in the form of funding specifically earmarked for enhanced and expanded OHV Programs.

NGO-CTVA-227: Out of scope of this RMP.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

Furthermore, at the national level, RTP was funded at a \$50,000,000 level in fiscal year 2002 (Reference 5). The maximum amount made available to OHV projects by RTP funds is no more than 70% (split of funds is authorized at 30% motorized recreation, 30% for non-motorized, and 40% for diverse trail use, Reference 6). If an estimated 50% (probably high given current circumstances) were returned to OHV recreationists through the RTP program, then the total amount returned to OHV recreationists at the national level would be about \$25,000,000.

Table 7.1 in Reference 1 reports the total annual gallons of gasoline used nationally by all off-road recreationists is about 1,882,191,331 gallons. Most states limit a refund of excise tax on gasoline to off-road use to agricultural or commercial off-road use and specifically do not allow a gas tax refund to OHV recreationists. Therefore, about \$470,547,832 (assuming a minimum state and federal gas tax rate of \$0.25 per gallon times 1,882,191,331 gallons per year) is paid in fuel taxes by all off-road recreationists in the country each year. The present worth of this annual amount over the past 30 years is about \$8,135,772,000. At a national level, the amount returned to OHV recreationists by the RTP program is no more than 5% of the actual state and federal gas tax paid by OHV recreationists. This small percentage of return is not equitable. We request that revisions be made to state and federal programs in order to return the full amount of the gas tax paid by OHV recreationists to programs that benefit OHV recreationists.

OHV recreationists have significant needs that have gone unmet for many years due to the lack of adequate funding. The lack of adequate funding and attention to these needs has also contributed to some concerns associated with OHV recreation. An adequate level of funding, as discussed above, would address all needs and concerns associated with OHV recreation including environmental protection and mitigation projects, education and safety programs, the enhancement of existing recreation opportunities and, the development of new OHV recreation opportunities necessary to meet the needs of the public. We request the development of a funding mechanism that equitably returns gas tax revenues directly to OHV recreationists.

Additional funding is needed for expanded and enhanced OHV programs to effectively address the concerns and needs of OHV recreationists including programs:

- To provide greater promotion of responsible OHV recreation,
- To provide greater promotion of OHV tourism,
- To provide greater promotion of an OHV Safety program and distribution of safety educational materials,
- To provide greater promotion and distribution of educational materials on land use and visitor ethics,
- To provide greater promotion and distribution of educational materials on OHV and hunting ethics,
- To actively promote and support the development of local OHV organizations in all areas of the state to further promote OHV educational and awareness programs,
- To promote greater registration of OHVs which will produce greater support for the OHV Program,
- To develop and distribute a monthly or quarterly newsletter to all registered OHV owners,
- To develop and distribute OHV information including maps and listings of OHV recreational opportunities,
- To develop multiple-use recreation opportunities on public lands as allowed under existing laws,

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NGO-CTVA-228: Out of scope of this RMP.

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NGO-CTVA-229: Out of scope of this RMP.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

- To develop and operate a collection and distribution point for OHV recreational and educational information, links to OHV clubs, etc.,
- To provide a Trail Ranger program that supports OHV recreationists similar to the State of Idaho's,
- To mitigate all existing concerns with OHV recreation on public lands in cooperation with federal and state agencies and in conformance with all existing laws and a Memorandum of Understanding dated February 25, 2002 between U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and the Blue Ribbon Coalition, and
- To develop and promote all reasonable OHV recreation opportunities on public lands in cooperation with federal and state agencies and in conformance with all existing laws and a Memorandum of Understanding dated February 25, 2002 between U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and the Blue Ribbon Coalition.

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Note that an OHV Trust Fund should be set up to collect and hold OHV gas tax monies paid by OHV recreationists in the past but not returned to them. This trust fund could also be used in the event of delays in the start-up of OHV Programs and to accommodate the scheduling of NEPA actions for on-the-ground OHV projects.

NGO-CTVA-230: Out of scope of this RMP.

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In summary, we cite a common principle of law articulated in the Montana Codes Annotated "1-3-212. Benefit -- burden. He who takes the benefit must bear the burden." We agree with that principle and the necessary obverse, "He who bears the burden must receive the benefit." We request that all gas tax revenue generated by OHV recreationists be returned to OHV recreationists for their benefit and used to address; through education, mitigation, enhancement, and development projects; all of the concerns and needs associated with OHV recreation.

NGO-CTVA-231: Out of scope of this RMP.

Reference 1: Report ORNL/TM-1999/100, Federal Highway Administration  
[http://www.cta.ornl.gov/cta/Publications/Reports/ORNL\\_TM\\_1999\\_100.pdf](http://www.cta.ornl.gov/cta/Publications/Reports/ORNL_TM_1999_100.pdf)  
 Reference 2: <http://www.mdt.state.md.us/administration/gastaxrefund.html>  
 Reference 3: <http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/parks/trails/trailgrantapps.asp>  
 Reference 4: <http://www.fwp.state.mt.us/parks/ohvgrantaward.asp>  
 Reference 5: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recfunds.htm>  
 Reference 6: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rbroch.htm>  
 Reference 7: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/KeyFacts/GasTaxRates.htm>  
 Reference 8: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/KeyFacts/HiwayUserFees.htm>  
 Reference 9: [http://www.njpp.org/archives/otr\\_gastax.html](http://www.njpp.org/archives/otr_gastax.html)  
 Reference 10: <http://www.bts.gov/transtu/ts2/ts2.htm>

## Issue:

Past comments made in opposition to the Symms Act by non-motorized groups have tried to establish that the OHV portion of the Symms Act and RTP are subsidized by public funds, however, just the opposite is true. Off-road motorized recreationists do have a funding mechanism available in the form of the gas tax monies collected from their gas purchases and, furthermore, these monies may have been inappropriately used for non-motorized projects. Additionally, wilderness trails are routing maintained without a source of funding tied to the users. In contrast to that situation motorized trails are seldom maintained by the agency even though motorized recreationists generate more than adequate funding through the collection of gas taxes. We request that corrective actions (an adequate mitigation plan) be taken to address to return all past and current off-road gas tax monies to OHV recreationists.

NGO-CTVA-232: Out of scope of this RMP.

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## Comments

## Responses

## Issue:

The lack of funding is often used as an excuse to avoid addressing problems associated with OHV recreation when in reality there is more than adequate funding. This is another example of the absence of a rational connection between the facts found and the choice made. Furthermore, the diversion of gas tax paid by OHV recreationists to other programs has contributed to many of the problems facing motorized recreationists. We request the evaluation of the impact and cumulative negative impacts that have resulted from the diversion of gas tax paid by OHV recreationists to other programs including impacts associated with reduced OHV safety, education, mitigation, and development programs. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts.

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NGO-CTVA-233: Chapter 4—Section 4.1.1 includes analytical assumptions of effects by alternative. Bullet #1 includes an assumption that sufficient funding from implementing the final decision. Gas taxes are outside the scope of this RMP.

## Issue:

We have noticed that most trails in wilderness areas are adequately maintained with clearing, water bar construction and trail rerouting provided on an annual basis. All of this is done by agencies without any user-generated fees. At the same time motorized resources see very little maintenance and motorized recreationists have had to do a lot of work themselves in order to keep motorized routes open even though OHV gas tax has generated over 8 billion dollars over the last 30 years. Moreover, to top off this incredibly inequitable situation, lack of maintenance is often used as a reason to close motorized recreational resources. We request that this issue be addressed and corrected by using OHV generated gas tax monies for maintenance, education, and construction of motorized recreational opportunities.

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NGO-CTVA-234: Out of scope of this RMP.

## Issue:

There are cases where OHV gas tax funding has been used to improve a non-motorized trail. There are also cases where OHV gas tax money has been used to improve a trail and then that trail has been closed to motorized use. The use of OHV gas tax funding for non-motorized recreation is improper. We request that these cases be identified and that they be corrected by replacing motorized recreational opportunities that have been closed with new motorized recreational opportunities of equal recreational value.

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NGO-CTVA-235: Out of scope of this RMP.

## Issue:

Any significant closing of motorized routes in the project area does not meet the basic requirement of the NEPA act of 1969 as stated in "Sec. 101 (b) (5) *achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities*". High standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities should include recognizing and meeting the need for motorized access and recreation opportunities in the project area. All visitors should be expected to share the project area with others and to tolerate the presence of others. We have met very few hikers on the multiple-use roads and trails that we use. We have not perceived any problems with the non-motorized visitors that we have met. We ask that the analysis and decision-making be based on sharing and tolerance and to avoid unreasonable accommodation of visitors to public lands that are not reasonably tolerant and sharing.

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## Issue:

The first sentence on the inside cover of most federal environmental documents includes a statement similar to "*The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a diverse organization committed to equal opportunity in employment and program delivery.*" We are greatly concerned about the lack of equal recreation opportunity and quality within public lands.

NGO-CTVA-236: BLM issues decisions based on compliance with law, regulations, and policy. Public input, through public comments to the DEIS, the environmental analysis and staff expertise, are also taken into consideration in the decision process. See also response to NGO-CTVA-1.

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Everyone should have equal access and opportunity to enjoy the natural environment. There is a need for motorized recreation and access opportunities (areas and trails including inter-forest and interstate routes, OHV back country discovery routes, and OHV byways) equal to our non-motorized/wilderness opportunities (examples include the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce National Historic Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, Continental Divide Trail, National Recreation Trails, and the recently created Pacific Northwest Trail). We request actions that will develop regional (inter-forest and interstate connections) motorized recreational opportunities such as the Great Western Trail and Oregon Back Country Discovery Route. OHV back country discovery routes and OHV byways are required to provide opportunities for motorized recreationists equal to existing long-distance non-motorized opportunities.

## Issue:

Our vision for motorized recreation includes opportunities such as the Great Western Trail and Oregon Back Country Discovery Route, and other regional opportunities that include connections between forests and adjoining states. A system of OHV back country discovery routes and OHV byways could provide loops and interconnecting trails to points of interest including lakes, streams, rivers, ghosts towns, and scenic overlooks. This system of OHV routes could also include connections to small towns for access to motels and restaurants and could be a significant source of economic revitalization for the project area. OHV recreation and tourism could be a significant boost to many local economies. This potential has yet to be recognized and tapped. Examples of OHV tourism can be found at: <http://www.visitid.org/Outdoor/ATV.html> , <http://www.marvsvale.org/> , <http://www.trailsout.com/> , <http://www.transamtrail.com/main.htm> , <http://www.motorcycleexplorer.com/> , and <http://www.visitnorthidaho.com/wallace.html> . We request that the positive benefits of OHV recreation and tourism be considered as part of the evaluation and implemented for this action.

## Issue:

OHV recreation and tourism has not been promoted or supported by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP) as aggressively as recreation and tourism associated with fish and wildlife programs. Be clear that this is not a reflection on the dedicated OHV staff assigned to the MDFWP OHV program; rather it is a function of perceived conflicts of interest and lack of management directives that exists within MDFWP. These conditions significantly restrict what OHV staff members and the MDFWP OHV program can accomplish. For example, the mission, vision, and goals statement for MDFWP do not mention the OHV program. MDFWP is focused and managed as a fish and wildlife management agency. We request that MDFWP actively promote OHV recreation and OHV tourism. We also request that MDFWP increase the level of OHV management to a level that addresses the needs of motorized recreationists, enthusiastically promote OHV recreation opportunities and enthusiastically develop OHV tourism.

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## Issue:

Inadequate attention and passive support of OHV recreation by agencies in a position to support and manage OHV recreation has contributed to the issues impacting OHV recreationists. Again, motorized access and motorized recreation including OHV recreation are the most popular, fastest growing and most fundable forms of recreation and should be given a much higher priority. We request that the cumulative negative impact on OHV recreation resulting from less than adequate and enthusiastic support from managing agencies be adequately evaluated in the document and adequately considered during the decision-making. Additionally, we request that an adequate

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NGO-CTVA-237: Road types and quality would be analyzed through the Travel and Transportation management Plan process. See also response to NGO-CTVA-51.

NGO-CTVA-238: Out of scope of this RMP.

NGO-CTVA-239: Impacts of various management actions on OHV use are analyzed in Section 4.3.3. BLM issues decisions based on compliance with law, regulations, and policy. Public input, through public comments to the DEIS, the environmental analysis and staff expertise, are also taken into consideration in the decision process.

## NGO-CTVA

## Comments

## Responses

mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts.

## Issue:

Many handicapped, elderly, or physically impaired citizens can only access and recreate on public lands by using motorized roads and trails. The needs of these citizens should be adequately considered. On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998, President Clinton signed Public Law 105-359, requiring the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to improve access for persons with disabilities to outdoor recreation opportunities made available to the public. This law states:

*(a) STUDY REQUIRED. – The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior shall jointly conduct a study regarding ways to improve the access for persons with disabilities to outdoor recreational opportunities (such as fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, hiking, boating and camping) made available to the public on the Federal lands described in subsection (b).*

*(b) COVERED FEDERAL LANDS. – The Federal lands referred to in subsection (a) are the following:*

- (1) National Forest System lands.*
- (2) Units of the National Park System.*
- (3) Areas in the National Wildlife Refuge System.*
- (4) Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management*

The Study prepared to address P.L. 105-359 (Improving Access to Outdoor Recreational Activities on Federal Land, prepared by Wilderness Inquiry, June 27, 2000) found and recommended the following areas of action:

- 1) Agencies must re-dedicate their efforts to achieve the goal of equal opportunities for access to outdoor recreation by persons with disabilities.*
- 2) Agencies should conduct baseline assessments of existing facility and programmatic accessibility, and develop and implement transition plans for facilities and programs that are not now accessible to bring them into compliance.*
- 3) Increase accessibility related awareness and educational opportunities for agency personnel, service providers, and partners.*
- 4) Increase funding to federal land management agencies for accessibility.*
- 5) Increase accountability and oversight in implementing accessibility initiatives.*
- 6) Improve communications about opportunities for outdoor recreation to persons with disabilities.*
- 7) Clarify the balance between resource protection and accessibility.*

We request that the proposed action adequately address and comply with the recommendations of the Study conducted to address P.L. 105-359 including items 1 and 7.

## Issue:

Equal treatment and access to public lands must be provided for all people including motorized visitors. One example of unequal treatment is demonstrated by the agency sponsored hikes. We have never seen an agency sponsored OHV outing. Another example is the number of agency publications and information on agency web sites promoting non-motorized recreation versus the publications and web site information pages provided for motorized recreationists. Non-motorized

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NGO-CTVA-240: Access for individuals with disabilities will be further addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan.

## NGO-CTVA

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recreation opportunities are easy to find using agency web sites and printed information. Yet another example is the use of hiking information signs posted along highways at ranger stations and the lack of the same signs and information for OHV recreation. The Condon Ranger Station is one of many examples of this situation. Most often little or no information is provided about motorized recreation opportunities. The one good example of a motorized web site can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/recreation/cohvops>. There is a need for every forest and district to have a similar motorized recreation web site. Another example of bias is the fact that signs say "Non-motorized Uses Welcome" and we have never seen a sign that says "Motorized Uses Welcome".

## Issue:

Motorized visitors are extremely concerned over the significant cumulative loss of many historic travelways. Motorized visitors are unwilling to compromise any further because of the cumulative loss of motorized access and recreation opportunities that has resulted in the lack of equivalent recreation and access opportunities within public lands. Motorized visitors have the need for trail systems and areas equal to those available to non-motorized visitors (areas and trails including inter-forest, interstate routes, Continental Divide Trail, Pacific Crest Trail and National Recreation Trails). There are no new opportunities within public lands to make-up for the closure of roads and motorized trails. Therefore, a substantial need for motorized recreation and access opportunities will not be met if a substantial number of roads and trails are closed. We request that the impacts associated with the significant loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities be adequately addressed in the environmental document and decision-making, i.e. Where will displaced motorized visitors go? And, due to the lack of any reasonable motorized access and recreation opportunities, what will they do? Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts.

## Issue:

We request that the loss of motorized recreation and access opportunities due to millions of acres of area closure (motorized travel restricted to designated routes) be adequately addressed in the document and decision-making. The area closure action without closing of any existing roads and trails is a significant loss of recreation and access opportunities to motorized visitors. The lack of adequate consideration of the negative impact of area closure on access and motorized recreation has produced a cumulative negative impact that is significant. We request adequate consideration of area closure impacts on motorized visitors in the project area and the cumulative negative impact of all area closures. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts.

## Issue:

Past actions have closed many roads and trails to motorized recreation and access without addressing the merits of each one. We are concerned with the lack of site specific analysis for past road and trail closures. Justification has included reasons such as non-system roads or trails, ghost roads, user created roads etc. that are not site specific and do not provide adequate justification. The fact is that many roads and trails in use today have been created by visitors going back to the early days of history when all public lands were "open" to motorized access. Agencies cannot select which roads are useful to keep and which are not without a site-specific analysis. The cumulative negative effect of not analyzing each road and trail segment is tremendous. We request that the decision-making be based on the individual and site-specific merits of each travelway. Additionally,

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NGO-CTVA-41 in Chapter 4. Site specific analysis will be further addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

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we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts.

## Issue:

Non-system roads and trails are a significant OHV recreation resource. However, non-system roads and trails are, most often, not inventoried and considered in the travel management process. Failing to identify and consider non-system roads and trails in the travel management process will underestimate the existing use and needs of motorized recreationists. Therefore, the impact that the resulting closure of non-system roads and trails by non-consideration will have on motorized recreationists will also be under-estimated. NEPA requires adequate disclosure of all impacts and this is not happening with respect to all existing non-system roads and trails that are in use by the public. We request that adequate consideration be given to a comprehensive inventory and analysis of all non-system roads and trails and the current recreational opportunity that they provide to motorized recreationists.

## Issue:

All public lands were largely open to motorized access prior to the 1960's. Many existing roads and trails were created by legal logging, mining and public access during this period. Nearly all of the roads and trails in the project area have been in existence for many years with many dating back to the turn of the century. The term "unclassified road or ghost road" may give the impression that these roads evolved illegally. We request a clarification in the document that travelways with these origins are legal travelways as recognized by all policies and decisions including the 3-States OHV ROD, national OHV and route designation policy, and BLM OHV policies. We are very concerned that the agencies are not honoring this agreement and decision. Additionally, we request that these roads and trails continue to provide recreation opportunities for motorized visitors and that mitigation measures be used, as required, to stabilize or address any environmental concerns.

## Issue:

We are concerned about the loss of access and impact on the handicapped, elderly, and physically impaired produced by each motorized closure to historic sites and traditional use areas. The proposed closures deny these citizens access to public lands that are especially important to them. We request that all the roads, trails, and features of interest be analyzed for the access and recreation opportunity that they provide for handicapped, elderly, and physically impaired visitors.

## Issue:

The concept of area closure is not consistent with Forest Service regulations as established by appeals to the Stanislaus National Forest Travel Management Plan ([http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ecoplan/appeals/1998/fy98\\_stanislaus.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ecoplan/appeals/1998/fy98_stanislaus.htm)). We request that the findings of that appeal including the following excerpts be included in this evaluation:

- 1) Pursuant to regulations and policy, the Forest Service shall "Designate all National Forest System lands for off-road vehicle use in one of three categories: open, restricted, or closed" (FSM 2355.03-3). Restricted is defined as "Areas and trails on which motorized vehicle use is restricted by times or season of use, types of vehicles, vehicle equipment, designated areas or trails, or types of activity specified in orders issued under the authority of 36 CFR 261" (FSM 2355.13-2).
- 2) The Forest Supervisor decided to manage motorized use as closed unless designated (signed or mapped) as open (DN, p. 3). This affects over 2,500 miles of Level 2 roads and trails on

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NGO-CTVA-242: Non system roads and trails will be addressed through the Transportation Management Plan process.

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NGO-CTVA-243: See response NGO-CTVA-44-235.

NGO-CTVA

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*the Stanislaus. His decision is inconsistent with Federal regulations, which require signage for closed routes, not open ones.*

- 3) *I found the Forest Supervisor's decision on signing inconsistent with Federal regulations, which require signage for closed routes, not open ones. The Forest Supervisor is directed to managed motor vehicle travel as restricted to designated routes unless signed or physically closed. Vehicle restrictions must be processed in accordance with 36 CFR 261.50 and posted in accordance with 36 CFR 261.51. 36 CFR 295.4 addresses additional requirements for public information regarding Use of Motor Vehicles Off Forest Development Roads. Restrictions on motor vehicle travel will be addressed through site specific NEPA analysis with consideration of any civil rights impacts.*
- 4) *Where RS 2477 rights are asserted, these routes may be considered for motor vehicle use.*
- 5) *Route maps were not included in the planning documents and the quad maps of the Opportunity Classes were difficult to read due to their scale.*

Issue:

The signing of "closed unless posted open" is not consistent with the 3-States OHV ROD and national OHV policy. It is also very confusing to the public. The 3-States OHV decision and national OHV policy logically defines what constitutes an open road or trail and the appropriate vehicle for that route. This is a more reasonable approach than "closed unless posted open".

NGO-CTVA-244: See response to NGO-CTVA-33.

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Issue:

Closed unless posted open is an impractical concept because signs do not last very long for many reasons including vandalism, animals and weather knocking them down, rotting of posts, etc. It is not fair to the public and will be very confusing to have somebody pull down a sign and then it is technically illegal for the public to travel on that route. Signs will become damaged and/or destroyed and then the public does not know whether they are legally open or closed. Additionally, "closed unless posted open" will have a huge annual maintenance cost that will be difficult to fund. Also, posting signs as required to adequately define open routes under "closed unless posted open" will be extremely unsightly which should not be considered reasonable or acceptable.



Issue:

A science-based approach to the analysis of forest roads is presented in the Forest Service publication FS-643 Roads Analysis which was published in August 1999. This document includes a comprehensive overview of considerations and issues, suggested informational needs and sources, and analytical tools that should be evaluated during the analysis of forest roads. Many of the considerations and issues presented in FS-643, if evaluated adequately and fairly, would support keeping primitive roads and trails in the project area open for motorized recreation, handicapped, elderly, and physically impaired. We request that FS-643 be used in this evaluation to determine the specific values of each motorized road and trail.

NGO-CTVA-245: Out of scope of this RMP.

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Some of the considerations and issues are:

*Economic (EC)*

- EC (1) How does the road system affect the agency's direct costs and revenues?*
- EC (2) How does the road system affect priced and non-priced consequences included in economic efficiency analysis used to assess net benefits to society?*

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*EC (3) How does the road system affect the distribution of benefits and costs among affected people?*

*Timber Management (TM)*

*TM (2) How does the road system affect managing the suitable timber base and other lands?*

*Minerals Management (MM)*

*MM (1) How does the road system affect access locatable, leasable and saleable minerals?*

*Special Use Permits (SU)*

*SU (1) How does the road system affect managing special user permit sites?*

*Protection (PT)*

*PT (1) How does the road system affect fuels management?*

*PT (2) How does the road system affect the capacity of the FS and cooperators to suppress wildfires?*

*PT (3) How does the road system affect risk to firefighters and public safety?*

*Road Related Recreation (RR)*

*RR (1) Is there now or will there be in the future excess supply or excess demand for roaded recreation opportunities?*

*RR (2) Is developing new roads into unroaded areas, decommissioning existing roads, or changing maintenance of existing roads, causing significant changes in the quantity, quality, or type of roaded recreation opportunities?*

*RR (3) Who participates in roaded recreation in the areas affected by road constructing, maintaining, or decommissioning?*

*RR (4) What are these participants' attachments to the area, how strong are their feelings, and are there alternative opportunities and locations available?*

*Social Issues (SI)*

*SI (1) What are peoples' perceived needs and values for roads? How does road management affect people's dependence on, need for, and desire for access?*

*SI (2) What are people's perceived needs and values for access? How does road management affect people's dependence on, need for, and desire for access?*

*SI (3) How does the road system affect access to historical sites?*

*SI (4) How are roads that are historic sites affected by road management?*

*SI (5) How is community social and economic health affected by road management?*

*Civil Rights and Environmental Justice (CR)*

*CR (1) How does the road system, or its management, affect certain groups of people (minority, ethnic, cultural, racial, disabled, and low-income groups)?*

We request full use of the FS-643 Roads Analysis Manual in order to adequately account for the social, economic, cultural, and traditional values that motorized roads and trails provide to the public. FS-643 should be used on every road and trail segment in order to adequately identify and evaluate the needs of motorized visitors and in order to avoid contributing to additional cumulative negative impacts to motorized visitors.

NGO-CTVA-246: Manual referenced applies to US Forest Service.

Issue:

The environmental document should be an issue driven document as required under NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality guidelines. The driving issue is the development of a reasonable travel management alternative that addresses the needs of the public. NEPA requires that agencies "Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated" [40 CFR 1502.14(a)]. We request that the environmental document adequately addresses the social, economic, and environmental justice issues associated with multiple-use access and motorized

NGO-CTVA-247: See responses NGO-CTVA-2and NGO-CTVA-30

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	NGO-CTVA	Comments	Responses
NGO-CTVA -247 Cont-d	↑	recreation. We request that the environmental document include a travel management alternative for the project area that adequately responds to these issues and the needs for multiple-use access and recreation.	NGO-CTVA-248: BLM issues decisions based on compliance with law, regulations, and policy. Public input, through public comments to the DEIS, the environmental analysis and staff expertise, are also taken into consideration in the decision process. See also response NGO-CTVA-2
NGO-CTVA -248		<p>Issue: The underlying strategy of past travel management actions has been to eliminate as many motorized recreational opportunities as possible and to avoid the creation of any new motorized opportunities. We request that the underlying principle of all new travel management actions be to maintain the existing level of opportunities for motorized visitors. We also request that the document and decision-making; (1) evaluate the cumulative negative effect of past strategies to eliminate motorized recreation opportunities including the conversion of multiple-use lands to all designations of non-motorized areas including pre-Columbian scheme, monuments, wilderness, wilderness study areas, roadless areas; and (2) enact actions that will offset the cumulative negative effect of past strategies to eliminate motorized recreational opportunities.</p>	NGO-CTVA-249: Motorized recreational opportunities for OHV use will be addressed in the TTMP.
NGO-CTVA -249		<p>Issue: A new strategy for travel management actions should be to enhance the level of opportunities for motorized visitors in order to be responsive to the needs of the public. Enhancement could include roads and trails systems with loops, exploration destinations such as lakes, mines, scenic overlooks, and inter-connections to other public lands and regional trails. We request that the preferred alternative include the enhancement of motorized recreational opportunities.</p>	NGO-CTVA-250: Impacts of OHV management actions are addressed in Section 4.3.3 and will be further addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.
NGO-CTVA -250		<p>Issue: We request evaluation of the loss of opportunities for off-highway vehicles due to the lack of a continuous system of roads and trails on which off-highway vehicles can be legally ridden and the formulation of a preferred alternative to address that issue. In areas where OHVs must use a roadway, we request that a reasonable travel management alternative be developed that includes the designation of a reasonable network of dual-use roads to allow inter-connection access to OHV recreational resources.</p>	Road types and quality and distribution of motorized recreational opportunities would be analyzed through the Travel and Transportation management Plan process.
NGO-CTVA -250		<p>Issue: The preferred travel management alternative should maintain existing travelways that provide motorized access to recreational loops and destinations. We also request that the preferred alternative avoid cutting off access to motorized looped trail systems, exploration opportunities, destinations, and motorized access areas located outside the project area. The cumulative negative effect and lack of motorized access to loop trail systems and destinations outside of the project area should be adequately addressed in the analysis and decision-making.</p>	Existing recreation and OHV areas were analyzed under Alternative A.
NGO-CTVA -250		<p>Issue: A reasonable travel management alternative is needed in order to avoid contributing to the significant impacts that motorized recreationists have experienced from the cumulative effect of all closures. A reasonable alternative would incorporate all existing motorized roads and trails and restrict motorized travel to those travel ways. Under the requirements of NEPA, all reasonable alternatives should be addressed in the environmental document and decision-making. In order to avoid contributing to further cumulative negative impacts, we request that an alternative based on incorporating all existing motorized roads and trails and restricting motorized travel to those travelways be included in the analysis and selected by the decision-makers.</p>	BLM issues decisions based on compliance with law, regulations, and policy. Public input, through public comments to the DEIS, the environmental analysis and staff expertise, are also taken into consideration in the decision process.

	NGO-CTVA Comments	Responses
NGO-CTVA -251	<p>Issue: The environmental document should consider the following visitor profiles in addition to OHV enthusiasts as motorized visitors who use roads and trails within public lands. People out for weekend drives, sightseers, picnickers, campers, hunters, hiking, rock climbing, target shooters, fisherman, snowmobile enthusiasts, woodcutters, wildlife viewing, berry and mushroom pickers, equestrians, mountain bikers, and physically challenged visitors who must use wheeled vehicles to visit public lands. All of these multiple-use visitors use roads and motorized trails for their recreational purposes and the decision must take into account motorized designations serve many recreation activities, not just recreational trail riding. We request that the significant impact from all cumulative statewide-motorized closures on all of these visitors be included in the environmental document. A statewide analysis is required because cumulative negative effects are forcing all motorized visitors to travel farther and farther to fewer and fewer places to find motorized access and recreation opportunities.</p>	NGO-CTVA-251: See response NGO-CTVA-2
NGO-CTVA -252	<p>Issue: Visual and other impacts associated with motorized trails have been cited as significant negative impacts. Many non-motorized trails have environmental impacts similar to motorized trails. Existing wilderness and non-motorized areas include many trails that are visually and functionally similar to primitive motorized roads and motorized trails. For example, the Mount Helena trails, and the main trails into the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness at Benchmark, Holland Lake, and Indian Meadows and the main trails into the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness are similar visually and functionally to many primitive motorized roads and motorized trails. Additionally, trails resulting from activities including wild animals and Native Americans have always been a part of the natural environment. We request that the existence of trails be considered part of the natural landscapes, and that the visual appearance of motorized trails and non-motorized trails be recognized as equal in most cases and that the environmental impacts of motorized and non-motorized trails be addressed fairly and equally.</p>	NGO-CTVA-252: Impacts to Visual Resources Management are addressed in Section 4.2.15.
	<p>Issue: If the issue of cross-country motorized travel is significant enough to justify closures, then the issue and restrictions should also be applied to cross-country hiking and mountain climbing. Motorized recreationists relinquished cross-country travel opportunities as part of the Three-State OHV and National BLM Record of Decision. Because of this wholesale action, motorized recreationists gave up recreational opportunities such as retrieval of big game and trials bike riding in areas where cross-country travel was acceptable. Cross-country hiking and mountain climbing also create trails that provide visible evidence of human activity. Non-motorized trails and motorized trails are often equal in visual and resource impact.</p>	
	<p>Issue: Page 57 of Big Snowy Mountains Access and Travel Management Decision Notice. <i>Specifically, the following table on motorized and non-motorized roads/trails on the Lewis and Clark National Forest indicates a mix of opportunities.</i></p> <p>With the elimination of cross-country travel and millions of acres of area closures, motorized recreational opportunity can only be expressed as miles of roads and trails open to OHV visitors. Land area in acres cannot be used as a measure of motorized recreational opportunity. However, non-motorized recreational opportunities can be measured in acres of cross-country travel area available and miles of trails available. It is not equitable weigh motorized use on the same scale as</p>	

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non-motorized use. Non-motorized users are not held to the same standard as motorized use in that they are not confined to only trail access. Therefore, motorized recreational opportunities are limited to a set number of designated motorized routes while non-motorized recreational opportunities can include cross-country travel opportunities and are, therefore, unlimited. This distinction has not been adequately recognized and we request that this distinction and advantage be recognized in the analysis, formulation of motorized alternatives and decision-making.

## Issue:

The use of the existing network of motorized roads and trails is part of local culture, pioneer spirit, heritage and traditions. All of these values have ties to the land. Visitors to public lands benefit from all of the motorized roads and trails that exist today. The quality of life for the multiple-use public is being impacted by the cumulative negative effects of all motorized and access closures. The significant closing of motorized routes in the project area does not meet the basic requirement of the NEPA act of 1969 as stated in "Sec. 101 (b) (5) *achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities*". We request that the criteria for high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities include the preservation of motorized roads and trails based on the recognition of the values (ties to the land) that they provide to local culture, pioneer spirit, heritage, traditions, and recreation.

## Issue:

The proposed action promotes management of our public lands as if they are public lands close to the large urban areas in California. If and when our population is equal to California, then an alternative could reasonably consider requirements necessary to manage urban impacts. Until then, local standards and culture should be the over-arching criterion.

## Issue:

The prevailing trend of the past 35 ± years has been to close motorized recreation and access opportunities and not create any new ones. Additionally, roads or trails closed to motorized access are seldom, if ever, re-opened. The underlying objective of the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service has been to restrict the public to a few major roads within public lands. We request that the cumulative negative effects of these policies be thoroughly evaluated so that a reasonable travel management decision is made. The evaluation of cumulative negative impacts should include all associated impacts such as social, economic, cultural, and the recreation needs of motorized visitors. It should also address the dilemma facing motorized recreationists after so many closures, i.e., Where can motorized visitors go when a functional network of roads and trails is eliminated? How can the public enjoy public lands when there is a lack of adequate access and recreational opportunities? Where can our children and grandchildren recreate?

## Issue:

We are concerned about the preservation of historic mines, cabins, settlements, railroads, access routes and other features used by pioneers, homesteaders, loggers, settlers, and miners. These are important cultural resources and should not be removed from the landscape. Western culture and heritage has been characterized by opportunities to work with the land and preservation of all remnants of this culture and heritage is important. Current management practices are not adequately protecting western culture and heritage including the opportunity to work with the land. We request that the ties to the land that are part of our local western culture and heritage be protected and that the preferred travel management alternative include opportunities to visit these features as part of motorized interpretative spur destinations and loops.

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NGO-CTVA-254: See response NGO-CTVA-2.

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NGO-CTVA-255: Points of interest will be addressed through the Transportation and Travel Management Plan process.

	NGO-CTVA Comments	Responses
NGO-CTVA -256	<p>Issue: We live in this area and accept the economic compromises of living here so that we can access and recreate on our public lands. We are fortunate to have an abundance of public lands and there is no valid reason why we should not have reasonable opportunity to enjoy them. Our local culture is built on the foundation of access to visit and use these lands. Now travel planning and other initiatives are severely restricting that access and recreational opportunities. We have only one lifetime to enjoy these opportunities and these opportunities are being systematically eliminated. The impacts of lost opportunities on motorized recreationists are significant and irretrievable and irreversible. We won't be living this life again. NEPA requires adequate evaluation and consideration of irretrievable and irreversible impacts. We request that the evaluation and decision-making adequately identify and address these impacts. NEPA also requires adequate mitigation of irretrievable and irreversible impacts. We request that the decision-making provide for adequate mitigation to avoid the irretrievable and irreversible impacts of lost opportunities on motorized recreationists.</p> <p>Issue: Judge Molloy May 21, 2001 Order bottom of page 13. <i>In 1996, District Ranger Larry Timchak of the Judith Ranger District noted "While motorized users typically have a high tolerance for non-motorized recreationists, the reverse is typically not the case."</i></p>	<p>NGO-CTVA-256: The subsequent Transportation and Travel Management Planning process will address the impacts of lost opportunities for the motorized recreationists. Regarding the comments relating to irretrievable and irreversible impacts, the BLM has complied with the requirements of NEPA by analyzing cumulative impact. BLM considered past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the analysis. Refer to Chapter 4.</p>
NGO-CTVA -257	<p>We are concerned about the protection of our western culture. This culture is characterized by access to the land for multiple-uses, friendliness, good neighborliness, tolerance and sharing. Motorized access to the land provides opportunities for sightseeing, exploring, weekend drives and picnics, hiking, rock climbing, skiing, mountain biking, riding horses, camping, hunting, target shooting, fishing, viewing wildlife, OHV recreation, snowmobiling, accessing patented mining claims, gathering of firewood, rocks, natural foods, etc. and physically challenged visitors who must use wheeled vehicles to visit public lands. Both our observations and the Social Assessment for Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest found that these multiple-use visitors represent over 97% of the total visitors and that these visitors rely on motorized access. We are fortunate to have extensive public lands to support the western culture. While mechanized and multiple-use recreationists are tolerant of others as noted by the District Ranger, this does not mean that non-motorized interests should be allowed to dominate resource allocation decisions. We request that multiple-use management principles be used to protect western culture and values including access to the land for multiple-uses, friendliness, good neighborliness, tolerance and sharing.</p> <p>Issue: Our public lands are a tremendous national resource both in total area and features. Public lands should be available for conflict-free use and enjoyment by everyone. Unfortunately public lands have been turned into a conflict zone by non-motorized fanatics. What is right about this situation? It is a great disservice to the public. We request a management initiative be introduced that will return public lands for the use and enjoyment of everyone for once and for ever.</p> <p>Issue: In reality, the most significant conflict of users/user conflict/conflict of uses is not out in the woods. The most significant conflict has been created by non-motorized groups and imposed on motorized recreationists in the courtroom, in the legal filings, and by the organized campaigns and continual visits to the agencies by paid staff where non-motorized groups continually work to influence the</p>	<p>NGO-CTVA-257: See response to NGO-CTVA-1.</p>

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agency and the public against motorized recreationists. This conflict of users/user conflict/conflict of uses must be recognized and addressed by this action.

## Issue:

The environmental document should evaluate how the number of policy proposals over the past several years has overwhelmed the public. There is no way that the public could evaluate and comment on each proposed action (see partial listing of actions in Table 2). The cumulative negative impact of the overwhelming number of proposals has been decision-making that does not provide for the needs of the public and a significant reduction in multiple-use and motorized access and recreation opportunities. We request that this cumulative negative impact be adequately evaluated and factored into the decision-making for this action. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts on the public associated with the overwhelming number of NEPA actions.

## Issue:

Motorized visitors have had to devote the majority of their available energy and time addressing local and national level travel management actions. The combination of these actions has created a significant cumulative negative effect on motorized visitors by consuming their free time and money, and significantly impacting their quality of life.

Additionally, this cumulative negative effect has led to the loss of opportunity for motorized recreationists to further the awareness and education of other motorized visitors in areas such as proper riding ethics, safety, and environmental protection. This cumulative negative effect has also reduced the opportunity for motorized recreationists to improve and maintain existing motorized opportunities. This cumulative negative impact includes reduced maintenance of trailheads and trails and reduced ability to undertake mitigation projects to protect the environment and public safety. We request that these cumulative negative effects be addressed in the analysis, preferred alternative and decision-making.

## Issue:

With the agency's commitment in the current management plan to the application of "Limits of Acceptable Change" (LAC) for determining management strategies there is an inherent obligation on the agency's part to provide specific direction that certain measures, such as visitor education and the provision of new facilities, would be implemented before limiting use. A common thread in LAC application nation-wide is that these regulations apply to all visitors, not to specific groups. Why are motorized recreationists being disenfranchised from this directive? There has not been an adequate attempt by the agency to educate the public that areas and trails in the project area or anywhere else must be shared by all users and that new facilities are needed to address the needs of motorized recreationists. The decision for this project must correct this deficiency.

## Issue:

Motorized recreationists are very concerned that a reasonable alternative will not be adequately addressed in the environmental document and decision-making and that the process is predisposed. To prevent this from happening again, we request a Multiple-Use Review Board be established to assure that the decision-making reflects the multiple-use management goals and the needs of the public. We request that a Multiple-Use Review Board look into all past travel management decisions within public lands to determine whether all decisions have adequately considered the needs of multiple-use and motorized recreationists. Where decisions have not adequately

NGO-CTVA-258: The BLM utilized input from Cooperating Agencies and a Resource Advisory Council subgroup to assist in the development of alternatives.

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NGO-CTVA -259	<p>considered the needs of multiple-use and motorized recreationists, we request that the reasons be identified and that corrective actions be taken.</p> <p>Issue: Oftentimes, the text and maps in travel management documents do not effectively communicate or describe to motorized visitors the trails and roads that they are accustomed to visiting. Therefore, motorized visitors do not realize that the Agency proposes to close many of the roads and trails that have been used for decades by generations of motorized visitors.</p> <p>The public has not developed a clear understanding as to what is about to happen to the roads and trails that they routinely visit because the travel management process has not effectively communicated the extent of the roads and trails proposed for closure. Instead, the public will go out to their favorite road and trail and find it closed to their use after the proposed action is enacted.</p> <p>It will take different approaches to effectively communicate to the public, which roads and trails are subject to the proposed action. For example, one alternative communication method could include posting of the roads and trails proposed for closure with signs for a period of 1 year prior to the EIS process stating "Road or Trail Proposed for Closure, for more information or to express your opinion please call xxx-xxxx or send written comments to xxxxx."</p> <p>Other methods could include the use of information kiosks and trail rangers as discussed in other sections. We request a commitment by the agencies to these sorts of direct communications with motorized visitors to reach and involve them. NEPA does not preclude these types of methods and, in fact, requires the process to be user friendly.</p>	NGO-CTVA-259: Regarding maps, the BLM has furnished maps or figures suitable for an RMP analysis.
NGO-CTVA -260	<p>Issue: Current management philosophy seems to be that the only way to address a problem is by closing access to public lands. Eliminating opportunities does not solve problems. An approach that is more reasonable to the public including motorized visitors is to maintain recreation opportunities by addressing problems through mitigation measures such as education, signing, seasonal restrictions, user fees, and structural improvements such as water bars, trail re-routing, and bridges. There may be problems with certain motorized roads and trails but we should work to solve and mitigate them and not to compound them by enacting more closures. We request the agencies to support and use mitigations and education as a means to address and mitigate problems rather than closures.</p> <p>Issue: Most problems associated with visitors can be addressed by education. Education should be the first line of action and all education measures should be exhausted before pursuing other actions. There are situations where education is far more effective than law enforcement. The elimination of much needed recreational opportunities is not reasonable without first exhausting all possible means of education to address the problem. Educational programs could include use of mailings, handouts, improved travel management mapping, pamphlets, TV and radio spots, web pages, newspaper articles, signing, presentations, information kiosks with mapping, and trail rangers.</p> <p>Restrictions or closures are not always obvious to the public. Education can also be in the form of measures such as the use of jackleg fences with signs at the end of motorized trails in sensitive areas so that public is made aware of the end of the motorized trail and the surrounding area closure. The use of public education to address problems may require effort and time but it is more</p>	NGO-CTVA-260: Road types and quality would be analyzed through the Travel and Transportation management Plan process.

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reasonable than the use of closures. We request the full use of education to address visitor problems. Additionally, individual motorized recreationists and groups can be called upon to assist with the implementation of the educational process.

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## Issue:

An alternative to motorized closures in many cases would be to keep motorized opportunities open and use education on principles such as those found in the Tread Lightly program and Blue Ribbon Coalition Recreation Code of Ethics and Principles to address and eliminate specific issues associated with motorized recreationists. These efforts could include the use of pamphlets, information kiosks, and presentations. Education can also be used to address and eliminate issues associated with non-motorized recreationists by encouraging their use of reasonable expectations, reasonable tolerance of others, and reasonable sharing of our land resources.

To date, educational measures have not been adequately considered, evaluated or implemented. We request that educational measures be incorporated as part of this proposed action and that the cumulative negative impact on motorized recreationists of not using education in all past actions involving motorized recreational opportunities be addressed. Additionally, we request that an adequate mitigation plan be included as part of this action to compensate for past cumulative negative impacts associated with inadequate use of education measures in past actions.

NGO-CTVA-261: BLM will continue to work with partnerships such as the Nevada Outdoor School and others, to promote Leave No Trace! principles. See D-R 2.1.

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## Issue:

In addition to the education initiative discussed above, we also request that the agency undertake a special management initiative that would evaluate areas where the public is not following the designated system of routes. This initiative should include evaluations before and after the respective travel plan, forest plan or resource management plan. In order to adequately understand the needs of the public, it is important for the agency to determine why the public is resisting the plan in effect. Reasons may include an attractive destination or loop that was not adequately addressed and an overall inadequate level of opportunities. This management initiative should also include a mitigation process to allow use of these routes where logical and reasonable. One example is the Globe-Sailor-Branham Lakes area in the South Fork Boulder River drainage in the Deerlodge National Forest. A long-time motorized route was closed 20 years and the public is still struggling to accept it. There are no other similar atv opportunities in the area. There are several high quality non-motorized routes in the area so there is an imbalance. It appears to be logical and reasonable to use the existing historic mining route to meet the needs of the public for a high quality motorized opportunity in this area.

NGO-CTVA-262: See response to NGO-CTVA-56.

## Issue:

Management of public lands to maximize wild game populations at the expense of other uses is not reasonable and does not meet the requirements of multiple-use laws and policies. We support hunting but we question why hunting's impact on wildlife is acceptable and non-destructive viewing by motorized visitors is not acceptable. We are concerned that public lands that were designated for multiple-use management are not being managed for multiple-use as required under:

1. The Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 528 et seq.) defined Multiple-Use as *"The management of all the various renewable surface resources of the national forests so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people..."*. Outdoor recreation is the first stated purpose of the act.

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2. Public Law 88-657 states that *“the Congress hereby finds and declares that the construction and maintenance of an adequate system of roads and trails within and near the national forests and other lands administered by the Forest Service is essential if increasing demands for timber, recreation, and other uses of such lands are to be met; that the existence of such a system would have the effect, among other things, of increasing the value of timber and other resources tributary to such roads; and that such a system is essential to enable the Secretary of Agriculture (hereinafter called the Secretary) to provide for intensive use, protection, development, and management of these lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield of products and services”.*
3. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) states that *“(7) goals and objectives be established by law as guidelines for public land use planning, and that management be on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law; and, (c) In the development and revision of land use plans, the Secretary shall -- (1) use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield set forth in this and other applicable law;”.*
4. The BLM Strategic Plan FY 2000 to 2005 states that: *“To achieve this mission, the Bureau of Land Management follows these principles: Manage natural resources for multiple use and long-term value, recognizing that the mix of permitted and allowable uses will vary from area to area and over time.”*

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We request careful consideration of the multiple-use needs of the public and implementation of the objectives of multiple-use laws and policies as part of the proposed action.

NGO-CTVA-263: See NGO-CTVA-1.

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## Issue:

The roads and trails in the project area are not new or “user created” travelways. These roads and trails have existed for many years. The public has relied on them for access for many years and for many purposes. This pattern of use is well established. A reasonable travel management alternative would use area closure to prevent the creation of unwanted trails by visitors and, at the same time, allow the public to use all of the existing motorized routes. Too many management actions have been enacted without the development of this reasonable alternative. The cumulative negative impact of the travel management process on motorized access and recreation opportunities has been significant. We request that the preferred alternative be based on the existing motorized routes that are considered important resources by motorized recreationists.

NGO-CTVA-264: Existing recreation and OHV areas were analyzed under Alternative A.

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## Issue:

A reasonable Travel Management alternative would maintain existing travelways that provide motorized recreationists with a system of loops and destinations. The preferred alternative should provide access to motorized looped trail systems, spurs for exploration and destinations, and motorized access to areas located outside the project area. We request that the cumulative negative effect of reduced recreation and access opportunities for motorized visitors within the project area be adequately considered in the document and decision-making. The cumulative negative effect of eliminating motorized access to loop trail systems, provide exploration opportunities and destinations outside of the project area should also be adequately considered in the document and decision-making.

NGO-CTVA-265: See response NGO-CTVA-2.

## Issue:

Current management trends are attempting to restrict public access to narrow corridors along major roads. This management trend is widespread among all agencies. If allowed to continue, this trend

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will concentrate over 95% of the visitors to less than 10% of the area. The cumulative negative impact from concentrating visitors to narrow corridors will result in poor management of public lands and unreasonable access to public lands and recreational opportunities. We request the evaluation of the cumulative negative impacts from management goals that tend to concentrate visitors to narrow corridors and reduce recreation opportunities for motorized visitors. Other associated negative impacts that should also be evaluated include loss of dispersed recreation opportunities, reduced quality of recreation, loss recreation diversity, and unequal of recreation opportunities.

## Issue:

OHV and other motorized recreationists seek the challenge and sense of exploration that primitive roads and motorized trails provide. The preferred travel management alternative should not restrict motorized access and recreation to narrow corridors along a few major roads. This restriction would not provide for the type of experiences that most motorized visitors are seeking and, therefore, does not meet the needs of motorized visitors. We request that the analysis and decision-making avoid restricting motorized access and recreation opportunities to narrow corridors along major roads.

## Issue:

In the past, timber harvests have been conducted without consideration for maintaining existing motorized trails through the area. Therefore, motorized recreation opportunities have been eliminated as part of timber sales. The Little Blackfoot and Telegraph Creek areas are examples of motorized closures does as part of timber harvests that have fragmented the motorized road and trail system. Now as mitigation measure to offset the significant impact from the cumulative effect of all past actions, motorized trail systems should be developed using timber sale roads and trails. Existing timber sale roads and trails should be inter-connected by construction of new trail segments or rehabilitation of existing trail segments to provide mitigation for lost motorized recreation opportunities. Connector trails should be constructed to avoid dead-end trails. These systems could provide recreation opportunities for a variety of skill levels and visitors.

## Issue:

In some cases conflict of uses has been created by Visitors Maps that are not consistent with Travel Plan maps. All visitors (motorized and non-motorized) need to clearly understand what areas, roads or trails are open for motorized travel and what areas, roads, or trails are closed to motorized travel. We have experienced a number of misunderstandings by both non-motorized and motorized visitors. We recommend that the Travel Plan Map and Visitors Map be the same and that this combination map should include as much detail as possible (such as contour information) so that the public can better determine the location of roads and trails that are open or closed.

## Issue:

There is a significant need to standardized signs within and across all agencies. For example, there are often misunderstandings about seasonal motor vehicle restrictions due to the "No" symbol with the actual closure period shown below in small text that is often not seen or understood. When a picture of a motorcycle, 4x4, ATV and snowmobile are shown at the trailhead with a circle and red strike through them, it portrays to the non-motorized user that this trail is closed to motorized users. Many people do not notice the dates that are associated with the sign showing when the motorized closure applies. This confusion created by the agencies signs creates many of reported conflicts between users which are then used against motorized recreationists. A standardized multiple use sign for these areas must be posted to clearly inform people of the uses allowed in these areas. This

See response to NGO-CTVA-22-xii.

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NGO-CTVA-266: See response to NGO-CTVA-33