

# Chapter 2 – Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action

## Introduction

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered for this analysis. It includes a description of each alternative considered. This chapter presents the alternatives in comparative form, defining the differences between each alternative and providing a clear basis for choice between alternatives by the decision maker and the public. Some of the information used to compare the alternatives is based upon the design of the alternative, and some of the information is based upon the environmental, social, and economic effects of implementing each alternative. These effects are discussed in detail in chapter 3 of this document. Maps of the alternatives are found in appendix A.

## Conditions Applicable to All Alternatives

Under all alternatives, there are certain laws and policies already in place which would remain:

- Motorized use on NFS roads and NFS trails is subject to Arizona State law.
- In accordance with 36 CFR 261.12 on NFS roads and NFS trails the following is prohibited: (c) damaging and leaving in a damaged condition any such road, trail, or segment thereof.
- In accordance with 36 CFR 261.15, use of vehicles off roads (h), it is prohibited to operate any vehicle off NFS, State, or county roads in a manner which damages or unreasonably disturbs the land, wildlife, or vegetative resources.
- The provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA: PL 96-487) that require the Forest Service to allow access to private in-holdings will continue to apply.
- As provided for in the TMR, none of the alternatives preclude the forest from closing roads, trails, or areas to motorized use through emergency closure orders.
- Counties, tribes, states, private companies and citizens may have been granted rights of access, or in some cases have been assigned jurisdiction over some roads on NFS lands. Rights that have been legally established will continue to be recognized.
- Parking would be allowed under all alternatives within one vehicle length from the edge of the road surface, where it is safe to do so.
- Where off-road motorized big game retrieval (MBGR) is proposed, it would be authorized in accordance with the annual hunting regulations published by the Arizona Department of Game and Fish for elk, mule deer and black bear. Retrieval would be authorized for late summer and fall hunts limited to individuals with hunting licenses that have legally killed an animal. Motorized retrieval of other game animals would not be allowed. No MBGR would be allowed in wilderness or primitive areas. Only one vehicle would be allowed MBGR per harvested animal.

## Consistency with the Forest Plan

The forest plan defines a set of goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines that provide direction for managing the forests and their resources (USDA FS 1987a). See appendix D for some

pertinent forest plan direction that applies to this project. All alternatives are consistent with standards and guidelines in the forest plan and are consistent with applicable laws, regulation and policy, unless noted.

## **Alternatives Considered in Detail**

In addition to no action (alternative A) and modified proposed action (alternative B), the forests developed three additional action alternatives to address the issues identified during scoping.

### **Alternative A — No Action**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations require no action to be included as a baseline, continuing with the present course of action for comparison to all action alternatives. This alternative proposes no change to the existing motorized system. The forest plan and other written direction (e.g., closure orders) would continue to guide motor vehicle use on the forests. The TMR would not be implemented, and no MVUM would be produced. No changes to the existing transportation system would be made. Cross-country travel off system roads on approximately 1.6 million acres would continue to be allowed. Existing motorized prohibitions and seasonal closures would remain in place (appendix C). It is important to note that not prohibiting motor vehicle use off the designated system would not be compliant with the TMR.

Alternative A would result in a system of 2,832 miles of NFS roads open for motor vehicle use and 156 miles of motorized NFS trails designated for motor vehicles 50 inches and less in width (table 3). Motorized big game retrieval and motorized dispersed camping would continue forestwide except where motorized restrictions exist. Maps displaying open roads and motorized trails under this alternative are found in appendix A.

### **Alternative B – Modified Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative)**

The modified proposed action (see the “Public Involvement” section for information on why the original proposed action was modified) addresses the purpose and need by providing motorized access to the forests while protecting resources. This alternative responds to “Issue 1: Restricting Motorized Access for Dispersed Camping” and “Issue 3: Impacts to Resources from Motorized Use.” Maps displaying open roads, motorized trails, and motorized areas under this alternative are found in appendix A. Seasonal road closures are displayed in appendix C.

This alternative would result in a system of 2,673 miles of NFS roads designated for motor vehicle use and 268 miles of NFS trails designated for vehicles 50 inches or less in width. Alternative B would:

- Amend the Apache-Sitgreaves forest plan to: (1) prohibit cross-country motorized travel off the designated system of roads, trails, and areas except as identified on the MVUM, as required by 36 CFR 261.13 and to be consistent with the language and intent of 36 CFR 212.50 and 261.13; and (2) remove obsolete references to using the resource access and travel management (RATM) process (see appendix B which summarizes the proposed changes to the forest plan).
- Designate 1 mile distance along either side of NFS roads and trails open to motor vehicles and on NFS lands adjacent to open roads managed by other State and Federal

agencies except where motorized restrictions exist, solely for the purpose of motorized big game retrieval.

- Designate five areas (totaling 459 acres) on the Black Mesa and Lakeside Ranger Districts as open to all motor vehicles.
- Designate 300-foot corridors along either side of 658 miles of road for the sole purpose of motorized dispersed camping per 36 CFR 212.51(b).
- Add 53 miles of unauthorized routes as roads open to all motor vehicles (of these, 28 miles are proposed to provide general access as well as access to existing dispersed camping locations).
- Designate 358 miles of closed roads as open to motor vehicle use.
- Convert 60 miles of closed road to motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Convert 16 miles of open road to motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Add 34 miles of unauthorized routes as motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Construct 0.8 mile of new motorized trail on the Lakeside Ranger District for vehicles 50 inches or less in width. Construct 1.3 miles of new motorized trail on the Black Mesa Ranger District for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Close 493 miles of currently open roads to motor vehicle use for resource protection.
- Restrict 77 miles of roads currently open to all motor vehicles, to administrative and permitted use only, by opening 7 miles of closed roads and adding 1 mile of unauthorized road restricted to administrative and permitted use only.

### **Alternative C**

Alternative C responds to “Issue 1: Restricting Motorized Access for Dispersed Camping” and “Issue 2: Restricting Motorized Big Game Retrieval,” and closely resembles the existing transportation system. Cross-country motorized use would be eliminated in order to make the alternative consistent with the TMR. The miles of roads designated for motor vehicle use would be similar to the existing system, and no additional roads would be closed. To compensate for prohibiting motorized travel off system routes, roads would be designated to provide general access as well as access to dispersed camping sites, and a corridor for motorized big game retrieval would be allowed. Maps displaying open roads and motorized trails under this alternative are found in appendix A. Seasonal road closures are displayed in appendix C.

This alternative would result in a system of 2,860 miles of NFS roads designated for motor vehicle use and 156 miles of NFS trails designated for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.

Alternative C would:

- Amend the Apache-Sitgreaves forest plan to: (1) prohibit cross-country motorized travel off the designated system of roads, trails, and areas except as identified on the MVUM, as required by 36 CFR 261.13 and to be consistent with the language and intent of 36 CFR 212.50 and 261.13; and (2) remove obsolete references to using the RATM process (see appendix B which summarizes the proposed changes to the forest plan).

- Designate 1 mile distance along either side of NFS roads and trails open to motor vehicles and on NFS lands adjacent to open roads managed by other State and Federal agencies except where motorized restrictions exist, solely for the purpose of motorized big game retrieval.
- Add 28 miles of unauthorized routes as roads open to motor vehicle use (provides general access as well as access to existing dispersed camping locations).

## **Alternative D**

Alternative D was developed to address “Issue 1: Restricting Motorized Access for Dispersed Camping,” “Issue 2: Restricting Motorized Big Game Retrieval,” and “Issue 3: Impacts to Resources from Motorized Use.” This alternative increases motorized access for dispersed camping through corridors and designated routes. This alternative adds miles of unauthorized routes as roads and motorized trails, designates areas, includes corridors for motorized big game retrieval, and closes roads for resource protection. Maps displaying open roads, motorized trails, and motorized areas under this alternative are in appendix A. Seasonal road closures are displayed in appendix C.

This alternative would result in a system of 2,730 miles of NFS roads designated for motor vehicle use and 302 miles of NFS trails designated for vehicles 50 inches or less in width. Alternative D would:

- Amend the Apache-Sitgreaves forest plan to: (1) prohibit cross-country motorized travel off the designated system of roads, trails, and areas except as identified on the MVUM, as required by 36 CFR 261.13 and to be consistent with the language and intent of 36 CFR 212.50 and 261.13; and (2) remove obsolete references to using the RATM process (see appendix B which summarizes the proposed changes to the forest plan).
- Designate ¼-mile distance along either side of NFS roads and trails open to motor vehicles and on NFS lands adjacent to open roads managed by other State and Federal agencies except where motorized restrictions exist, solely for the purpose of motorized big game retrieval.
- Designate five areas (totaling 459 acres) on the Black Mesa and Lakeside Ranger Districts as open to all motor vehicles.
- Designate 300-foot corridors along either side of 2,034 miles of road for the sole purpose of motorized dispersed camping per 36 CFR 212.51(b).
- Designate 415 miles of closed roads as open to motor vehicle use.
- Add 37 miles of unauthorized routes as roads open to all motor vehicles (provides general access as well as access to existing dispersed camping).
- Convert 64 miles of closed road to motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Convert 19 miles of open road to motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Add 62 miles of unauthorized routes as motorized trails for motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width.

- Construct 1.3 miles of trail for motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width on the Black Mesa Ranger District.
- Close 479 miles of currently open roads to motor vehicle use for resource protection.
- Restrict 75 miles of roads currently open to all motor vehicles, to administrative and permitted use only, by opening 5 miles of closed road, and adding 11 miles of unauthorized roads restricted to administrative and permitted use only.

## **Alternative E**

Alternative E was developed to address “Issue 1: Restricting Motorized Access for Dispersed Camping” and “Issue 3: Impacts to Resources from Motorized Use.” This alternative adds miles of NFS roads and trails but includes minimal miles of corridors to access dispersed camping locations. This alternative closes roads for resource protection and would not allow corridors for motorized big game retrieval. Maps displaying open roads and motorized trails under this alternative are found in appendix A. Seasonal road closures are displayed in appendix C.

This alternative would result in a system of 2,473 miles of NFS roads designated for motor vehicle use and 206 miles of NFS trails designated for vehicles less than 50 inches in width. Alternative E would:

- Amend the Apache-Sitgreaves forest plan to: (1) prohibit cross-country motorized travel off the designated system of roads, trails, and areas except as identified on the MVUM, as required by 36 CFR 261.13 and to be consistent with the language and intent of 36 CFR 212.50 and 261.13; and (2) remove obsolete references to using the RATM process (see appendix B which summarizes the proposed changes to the forest plan).
- Designate 300-foot corridors along either side of 118 miles of road for the sole purpose of motorized dispersed camping per 36 CFR 212.51(b).
- Add 64 miles of unauthorized routes as roads open to all motor vehicles (provides general access and access to identified dispersed camping locations).
- Designate 220 miles of closed roads as open to motor vehicle use.
- Convert 14 miles of closed road to motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Convert 14 miles of open road to motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Add 20 miles of unauthorized route as motorized trails for vehicles 50 inches or less in width.
- Construct 1.3 miles of trail for motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width on the Black Mesa Ranger District.
- Close 559 miles of currently open roads to motor vehicle use for resource protection.
- Restrict 84 miles of roads currently open to all motor vehicles, to administrative and permitted use only, by opening 5 miles of closed road and adding less than 1 mile of unauthorized road restricted to administrative and permitted use only.

## **Mitigation Common to All Action Alternatives**

The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA define mitigation as measures that avoid, minimize, reduce, rectify, or compensate for impacts to the physical environment resulting from Federal actions (40 CFR 1508.20). Mitigation measures would be done as part of implementing the decision to lessen any potential damage to natural or cultural resources. In addition to the "Conditions Applicable to All Alternatives" section in this chapter, forest plan requirements (standards and guidelines) as well as mitigation would be applied to all action alternatives (appendix D).

## **Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study**

Federal agencies are required by NEPA to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). The Forest Service and public developed alternatives that were not analyzed in detail. Comments received in response to the proposed action provided suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. Some of these alternatives may have been outside the scope of consideration, duplicative of the alternatives considered in detail, or determined to be components that would cause unnecessary environmental harm. Therefore, five alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed consideration for reasons summarized below.

### **Original Proposed Action**

The original proposed action released in October 2007 would have designated 2,868 miles of open road and motorized trails, 409 miles of motorized dispersed camping corridors (within 300 feet from designated roads), seven motorized use areas (1,433 acres) and identified a 1-mile corridor along designated roads for MBGR. Public comments indicated the proposed action did not provide adequate motorized opportunities and access for dispersed camping.

After consideration of the input received during those meetings, the forest supervisor added a modified proposed action. The modified proposed action released in February 2008 proposed to designate 2,961 miles of roads and motorized trails, 938 miles of motorized dispersed camping corridors (within 300 feet from designated roads), eight areas designated for motor vehicle use (5,989 acres) and identified a 1-mile corridor along designated roads for MBGR. Based on public comment on the modified proposed action, the team developed what is currently described as alternative B. Therefore, the original proposed action was eliminated and not further analyzed in detail.

### **An Alternative that Increases the Transportation System to Approximately 7,000 Miles**

Many public comments suggested an alternative that opened all existing closed roads increasing the transportation system to approximately 7,000 miles. Additions to the existing transportation system at this magnitude were not considered manageable and would not have passed the TMR 212.55 criteria for the designation of roads, trails, and areas.

Over 3,000 miles of NSFRs would have required additional field surveys to determine effects on heritage sites. At least 85 known archaeological sites would have been adversely affected.

Moving forward with this alternative would have been difficult to comply with Executive Order 11593, the Southwestern Region travel management protocol with the Arizona State Historical Office (AZ SHPO), and with forest plan direction specific to authorized off-road vehicle use (camping corridors) in areas with high heritage site density. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) would have been difficult to implement due to the magnitude of surveys and the amount of mitigation needed to minimize adverse effects.

Approximately 830 miles of road would have been within the habitat of some protected terrestrial and aquatic threatened and endangered species, and approximately 280 miles of roads would have intersected threatened and endangered fish habitat. Endangered Species Act (ESA) and National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requirements in terms of species recovery and viability would have been difficult to achieve. Additionally, this alternative would have designated roads in the Blue Range Primitive Area and in inventoried roadless areas.

Additionally, the cost of maintaining this road system would not have been feasible given the current and expected budgets for road maintenance. The forests are in a current position of having a large backlog of deferred maintenance for the existing road system. For these reasons, this alternative would not meet the purpose and need and was not analyzed in detail.

### **An Alternative that Bases the Motorized Transportation System Solely on Annual Funding for Road Maintenance**

The interdisciplinary team considered an alternative based solely on existing funding for road and motorized trail maintenance. Designated NFS roads would be 28 percent of the existing system, totaling 850 miles. This would be considered a sustainable road system from an economic standpoint. Under this alternative, all annual maintenance needs could potentially be met for designated roads and motorized trails assuming continued maintenance funding at current levels. Maintenance that is not annual or routine (deferred) would still not be accomplished unless additional funding is secured. This road system would have only provided for essential administrative access, access to key recreation sites, and a very limited seasonal road system for hunting access. In addition, the motorized trail system would be less than the existing system and would not meet expectations from the public and extensive recreation desires for motorized travel on NFS lands.

An alternative based solely on funding would not meet the purpose and need and would not provide needed access for effective and efficient administration and use of the forests. For these reasons, this alternative was not analyzed in detail.

### **An Alternative that Uses the Minimum Road System Based Solely on TAP Recommendations**

The travel analysis process (TAP) was completed in 2008, and in part, identified the minimum road system needed to manage the forests. It recommends approximately 1,180 miles of roads designated open to motor vehicles. Comments were received from the public from 2005 through 2008, which indicated a strong desire for increased motorized access for dispersed camping and motorized big game retrieval that exceeded the minimum road system. This alternative did not respond to these needs brought up by the public and would, therefore, not meet the purpose and need to recognize historic and current uses of the forests. In contrast, public input was received desiring a smaller road system than existing, and in response, the range of alternatives that were

analyzed in detail consisted of three alternatives (alternatives B, D, and E) that would result in a system with fewer miles of open roads than the current system, while still meeting the purpose and need.

The travel management rule focuses on motor vehicle use on NFS roads, trails and areas, rather than a road system (36 CFR 212.51(a)) and does not require a forest to adopt the minimum road system as an objective or desired condition. The purpose and need of the proposed action for this analysis is to meet the requirements of the travel management rule. For these reasons the minimum road system was eliminated from detailed study.

### **An Alternative that Adds Roads to the Blue Range Primitive Area**

There were recommendations to designate unauthorized roads along the Blue River to access around 13 favored dispersed camping locations. Along NFSR 281 Y and V, recommendations were to open the two closed roads, about 3 miles long and located within the Blue Range Primitive Area (BRPA). The BRPA was established on June 21, 1933, by the Chief of the Forest Service and was recommended for wilderness designation by President Nixon in 1972. Although it is not a designated wilderness, the BRPA is managed as such under FSM 2320.3(11), which states “Manage primitive areas as wilderness areas consistent with 36 CFR 293.17 until their designation as wilderness or other use is determined by Congress.” The forests must give due consideration to the wilderness resource value under 16 USC 529, and manage the BRPA consistent with the forest plan. Management of the BRPA is subject to PL 98-406, Section 103(b)(4) requiring management of the BRPA for the purpose of protecting its “suitability for wilderness designation.”

The current regulation generally prohibits roads, motorized travel, commercial timber harvest, and special use occupancy involving permanent structures in primitive areas. However, the regulation allows for continued use of existing roads and roads necessary for a statutory right of ingress and egress under appropriate conditions. The roads in question are considered unauthorized and the forest supervisor does not have the authority to designate roads within the BRPA. For this reason, this alternative was not analyzed in detail.

### **Comparison of Alternatives**

This section provides a comparison of alternatives (tables 3 and 4) and a summary of the alternatives with the environmental consequences. Information in tables 3 and 4 is focused where effects can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively between alternatives. Further discussion of effects on resources by alternative can be found in chapter 3.

**Table 3. Comparison of elements between all alternatives**

Action Proposed	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E
<b>National Forest System Roads (miles)</b>					
Add unauthorized roads to system	0	53	28	37	64
Open closed NFS roads	0	358	0	415	220
Close NFS roads to all motor vehicles	0	493	0	479	559
Restrict currently open NFS roads to administrative and permitted use only	0	77	0	75	84
<b>Total Miles of Open NFS Roads</b>	<b>2,832</b>	<b>2,673</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>2,730</b>	<b>2,473</b>
<b>Total Miles of Closed NFS Roads</b>	<b>3,373</b>	<b>3,866</b>	<b>3,373</b>	<b>3,852</b>	<b>3,932</b>
<b>National Forest System Trails (miles)</b>					
Convert closed NFS roads to trails for motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width	0	60	0	64	14
Convert open NFS roads to trails for motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width	0	16	0	19	14
Add unauthorized roads as NFS trails for motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width	0	34	0	62	20
Construct new NFS trails for motor vehicles 50 inches or less in width	0	2	0	1	1
<b>Total Miles of Motorized NFS Trails</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Motorized Off-Road Travel</b>					
Create 300-foot wide corridors (from either side of road) for the sole purpose of dispersed camping.	Allowed forestwide except where motorized restrictions exist (1.6 million acres).	Corridors designated along 658 miles of NFS roads (48,000 acres).	No corridors, however, unauthorized routes added which provide access to existing camping sites up to 28 miles (2,000 acres).	Corridors designated along 2,034 miles of NFS roads (148,000 acres).	Corridors designated along 118 miles of NFS roads (8,500 acres).

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Action Proposed	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E
<p>Motorized big game retrieval (MBGR) areas for elk, mule deer, and black bear late summer and fall hunts.</p>	<p>Allowed forestwide except where motorized restrictions exist (1.6 million acres).</p>	<p>A 1-mile distance designated from both sides of NFS roads and NFS trails and on NFS lands adjacent to open roads managed by other agencies except where motorized restrictions exist (1.2 million acres).</p>	<p>A 1-mile distance designated from both sides of NFS roads and NFS trails and on NFS lands adjacent to open roads managed by other agencies except where motorized restrictions exist (1.2 million acres).</p>	<p>A ¼-mile distance designated from both sides of NFS roads and NFS trails and on NFS lands adjacent to open roads managed by other agencies except where motorized restrictions exist (700,000 acres).</p>	<p>Not allowed.</p>
<p>Designate areas for motor vehicle use (number/acres).</p>	<p>Allowed forestwide (1.6 million acres).</p>	<p>5 areas/459 acres</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>5 areas/459 acres</p>	<p>0</p>

**Table 4. Summary of environmental consequences by alternative**

	<b>Alternative A No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B Preferred Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>
<b>Transportation</b>					
<b>Motorized Access (NFS roads, NFS trails, off-road travel)</b>	No change from current road and trail system, and cross-country travel would remain forestwide.	Road system decreases by 159 miles (5.6 percent).	Road system increases by 28 miles (1 percent).	Road system decreases by 102 miles (3.6 percent).	Road system decreases by 359 miles (12.7 percent).
		Trail system increases by 112 miles (72 percent).	No change in trails.	Trail system increases by 146 miles (94 percent).	Trail system increases by 49 miles (31 percent).
		Off-road travel limited to: 300-foot corridors for dispersed camping, 1-mile distance for MBGR, and five areas.	Off-road travel limited to: roads providing access for dispersed camping, 1-mile distance for MBGR.	Off-road travel limited to: 300-foot corridors for dispersed camping, ¼-mile distance for MBGR, and five areas.	Off-road travel limited to: 300-foot corridors for dispersed camping.
<b>Maintenance Costs</b>	Roads: \$4.7M	Roads: \$4.6M (\$167,963 less cost, decrease by 3.5 percent)	Roads: \$4.7M (\$3,836 more cost, increase by 0.1 percent)	Roads: \$4.6M (\$155,603 less cost, decrease by 3.3 percent)	Roads: \$4.5M (\$223,049 less cost, decrease by 4.7 percent)
	Trails: \$70K	Trails: \$120K (\$50,400 more cost, increase by 72 percent)	Trails: \$70K	Trails: \$136K (\$65,700 more cost, increase by 94 percent)	Trails: \$93K (\$22,500 more cost, increase by 31 percent)
	Additional one-time implementation cost: NA	Additional one-time implementation cost (adding unauthorized roads): \$70K	Additional one-time implementation cost (adding unauthorized roads): \$14K	Additional one-time implementation cost (adding unauthorized roads): \$50K	Additional one-time implementation cost (adding unauthorized roads): \$60K

		Alternative A No Action	Alternative B Preferred Alternative	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<b>Public Safety</b>		Safety concerns from continued use of unauthorized (user-created) roads and motorized trails.	Improved safety by maintaining unauthorized roads and trails added to the system (87 miles added).	Improved safety by maintaining unauthorized roads added to the system (28 miles added).	Improved safety by maintaining unauthorized roads and trails added to the system (99 miles added).	Improved safety by maintaining unauthorized roads and trails added to the system (84 miles added).
<b>Road Density (miles per square mile)</b>	<b>Open</b>	0.9	0.91	0.91	1.2	0.83
	<b>Closed</b>	1.9	1.88	1.91	1.88	1.87
<b>Recreation</b>						
<b>Impacts to Motorized Users</b>		No change in motorized recreation opportunities.	Motorized cross-country travel would be eliminated. It would be illegal to drive off the designated route system. Motorized recreation opportunities would still exist across the forests with alternatives B and D offering the most motorized trails and areas, and alternatives C and D offering the most miles of open roads.			
<b>Impacts to Non-motorized Users</b>		Continued motorized cross-country travel and unauthorized routes. Existing non-motorized uses would remain.	Motorized travel limited to designated road and trail system and more opportunities for finding areas of natural appearance and low levels of human contact. Elimination of motorized cross-country travel would provide more areas for non-motorized recreation only. All existing non-motorized uses would remain.			
<b>Noise</b>		Motorized travel allowed forestwide.	Motor vehicles limited to designated route system. Elimination of motorized cross-country travel would provide many areas where motor vehicles would not be allowed, thus related noise would be reduced.			
<b>Conflicts (motorized and non-motorized users)</b>		Mixed uses allowed forestwide.	There would be an increase in areas available for non-motorized travel, resulting in less mixed user conflicts. However, incompatible recreation conflicts would occur in popular areas located close to motorized routes.			
<b>Wilderness, Primitive Area (BRPA), and Roadless Areas (IRA)</b>						
<b>Impacts to Wilderness Characteristics (miles NFS roads)</b>		No change to characteristics. 40 miles IRA 0.2 miles BRPA	No change to characteristics. 31 miles IRA 1.2 miles BRPA	No change to characteristics. 40 miles IRA 1.2 miles BRPA	No change to characteristics. 31 miles IRA 1.2 miles BRPA	No change to characteristics. 23 miles IRA 1.2 miles BRPA

	Alternative A No Action	Alternative B Preferred Alternative	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<b>Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>					
<b>Impacts to Eligibility of Wild and Scenic Rivers (miles of roads and trails)</b>	No change in eligibility. 76.9 miles in WSR corridors.	No change in eligibility. Addition of 8 miles and closure of 4.7 miles in WSR corridors, resulting in 80 miles total.	No change in eligibility. Addition of 0.8 mile in WSR corridors resulting in 77.7 miles total.	No change in eligibility. Addition of 9.3 miles and closure of 4.4 miles in WSR corridors resulting in 82 miles total.	No change in eligibility. Addition of 4.4 miles and closure of 17.2 miles in WSR corridors resulting in 64 miles total.
<b>Scenery Management</b>					
<b>Impact on Visual Quality Objective (VQO) Thresholds in the Forest Plan</b>	Would exceed VQO thresholds in retention and partial retention areas due to continued use of unauthorized roads and motorized trails.	Variations in acres of VQOs would all be below thresholds			
		Less variations in acres of VQO than alternative A.	Less variations in acres of VQO than alternatives A, B, and D.	Less variations in acres of VQO than alternatives A and B.	Less variations in acres of VQO than alternatives A, B, C, and D.
<b>Socioeconomics</b>					
<b>Change in Jobs and Incomes from Motorized Recreation Related Activities</b>	No change	Since there would be limited change in activities related to jobs and economics, there would be no measurable direct and indirect effects on the economy relative to the scale. The employment and income figures representing the contribution of current activities to the economy of the assessment area (six counties) would be unchanged or changed so slightly they cannot be evaluated.			
<b>Vegetation</b>					
<b>Impacts to Plants from Off-road Travel</b>	Allowed forestwide, continued crushing from vehicles and burying of plants with sediment.	Beneficial effect to plants from elimination of motorized cross-country travel. Limited effects from crushing and burying plants with sediment in areas where motorized off-road travel would occur (dispersed camping corridors, within MBGR distances, and areas).			
		Less effect than alternative A	Less effect than alternatives A and B	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and C.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, C, and D.

	<b>Alternative A No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B Preferred Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>
<b>Noxious Weeds</b>	High potential for spread and establishment of weed seeds forestwide from cross-country travel, and potential to spread off NFS land along road and trail drainages.	Reduced potential to spread weed seeds. Potential to spread seeds would exist in areas where off-road travel is allowed (dispersed camping corridors, MBGR areas, and areas) and drainages along roads and trails.			
		Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternatives A and B.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and C.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, C, and D.
<b>Soils</b>					
<b>Soil Productivity</b>	Miles of road and trail surfaces remove soil productivity.	Miles of road and trail surfaces and acres of areas for motor vehicle use remove soil productivity.			
		Less effect than alternatives A and D	Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and D
<b>Soil Erosion*</b>	650 miles of roads and trails and 580,000 acres on erosive TES soils, 230 miles of roads and trails and 390,000 acres on slopes over 40 percent	No change from current miles of roads and trails on erosive TES soils and steep slopes			
		A total of 5,800 acres on erosive TES, no acres on steep slopes.	No acres on erosive TES soils or steep slopes.	A total of 25,000 acres on erosive TES, 125 acres on steep slopes.	A total of 1,800 acres on erosive TES, no acres on steep slopes.
		Less effect than alternatives A and D.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, D, and E.	Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and D.
<b>Watershed</b>					
<b>Peak Runoff Amounts to Drainages*</b>	Around 2,700 stream crossings, around 900 miles of roads and trails, and 400,000 acres within 300 feet of surface water.	Around 2,500 stream crossings.	Around 2,700 stream crossings.	Around 2,500 stream crossings.	Around 2,300 stream crossings.
		A total of 880 miles and 7,500 acres within 300 feet of surface water	A total of 930 miles and no acres within 300 feet of surface water.	A total of 900 miles and 32,000 acres within 300 feet of surface water.	A total of 800 miles and 1,600 acres within 300 feet of surface water.
		Less effect than alternatives A and D.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and D.	Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and D.

	<b>Alternative A No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B Preferred Alternative</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>
<b>Water Quality</b>	Increased peak runoff from road/trail proximity to surface water result in increased sediment and decreased water quality.	Decreased peak runoff from road/trail proximity to surface water would result in reduced effects of sediment loading to water quality.			
		Less effect than alternatives A and D.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and D.	Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and D.
<b>Air Quality</b>					
<b>Fugitive Dust Generation</b>	No measureable effect from roads, trails, or motorized cross-country travel.	No measurable effect.			
		Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, D, and E.	Less effect than alternative A.	Less effect than alternatives A, B, and D.
<b>Wildlife and Rare Plants</b>					
<b>Federally Listed Species (4) and Critical Habitat (2)</b>	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of Mexican wolves; not likely to adversely affect (NLAA) for MSO and critical habitat, southwestern willow flycatcher and critical habitat, and Chiricahua leopard frog.				
<b>Sensitive Species (58), MIS (17), and Migratory Birds (34)</b>	Sensitive species: may impact individuals or habitat, but not likely to contribute trend toward Federal listing (MIH); MIS: maintain forestwide habitat and population trends, action alternatives may improve trends from reduced off-road travel; migratory birds: no effect to populations, action alternatives may improve some habitats.				
<b>Summary of Wildlife Impacts</b>	Greatest likelihood of vehicle interactions with wildlife from cross-country travel and impacts from human disturbance and resource damage.	Elimination of cross-country travel, designation of motorized use areas, corridors, MBGR 1-mile distance, and closing roads result in less area of disturbance than alternative A.	Elimination of cross-country travel, no motorized use areas, no corridors, and MBGR 1-mile distance result in less area of impacts than alternatives A, B, D, and E.	Elimination of cross-country travel, designation of motorized use areas, corridors, MBGR ¼-mile distance, and closing roads would result in less area of disturbance than alternative A.	Elimination of cross-country travel, no areas, fewer corridors than alternatives B and D, no MBGR, and closing more roads than alternatives B and D, results in less area of disturbance than alternatives A, B, and D.

	Alternative A No Action	Alternative B Preferred Alternative	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
<b>Fisheries</b>					
<b>Aquatic Habitat</b>	Aquatic habitat for fish results in negative effects under all alternatives due to added sediment in drainages from the presence of roads and trails near surface water, road/stream crossings, and off-road travel; the amount of impacts varies by alternative based on the routes proposed (the action alternatives greatly reduce areas open to off-road travel, benefitting all fish species). Alternative B has fewer impacts than A; alternative C has fewer impacts than A, B, D, and E; alternative D has fewer impacts than A; alternative E has fewer impacts than A, B, and D.				
<b>Federally Listed Species and Critical Habitats – seven fish listed as threatened or endangered, one candidate species, four have critical habitat</b>	Seven species may effect, likely to adversely affect (LAA). One species may effect, not likely to adversely affect (NLAA).	Seven species (LAA) One species (NLAA)	Seven species (LAA) One species (NLAA)	Seven species (LAA) One species (NLAA)	Seven species (LAA) One species (NLAA)
	Three critical habitats LAA, one critical habitat NLAA.	Three critical habitats, LAA one critical habitat NLAA.	Three critical habitats LAA, one critical habitat NLAA.	Three critical habitats LAA, one critical habitat NLAA.	Three critical habitats LAA, one critical habitat NLAA.
<b>Forest Service Sensitive Species – five fish species</b>	All alternatives “may impact individuals or habitats, but would not likely contribute to a trend toward Federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species” (MIIH).				
<b>Cultural Resources</b>					
<b>Potential Impact to Sites</b>	No adverse effect, high potential from unauthorized routes and motorized cross-country travel.	No adverse effect			
		Less potential for impacts than alternatives A and D.	Less potential for impacts than alternatives A, B, D, and E.	Less potential for impacts than alternative A.	Less potential for impacts than alternatives A, B, and D.

\*Miles include roads and trails on NFS lands, not just routes under FS jurisdiction, unlike other resources.

