

RECREATION

Introduction

Recreational opportunities occurring within the analysis area most likely to be affected by this proposal include hiking/horse/bike trails, cross-country ski trails, the Tally Lake Campground, and other various motorized and non-motorized activities. Some of these activities are concentrated in particular areas while others are dispersed along the roads, streams, and in general forest areas.

Differences Between the DEIS and FEIS

This Recreation section of the FEIS differs from the same section in the DEIS in that analysis for the new Alternative F was included. Besides this, the section on “Areas of Special Recreational Interest” was changed to better describe which recreational areas have the potential to be directly or indirectly affected by the action alternatives. A description of the Johnson Peak Trail #176 was added to this section because it was inadvertently omitted from the DEIS. The daily cost for camping at the Tally Lake Campground was updated in the FEIS to \$11.00. A sentence was added to explain that the access road to Trail #163 would be signed to inform recreationists of log hauling on that road, if Alternative C is implemented. The snowmobile season for otherwise year-long closed roads was explained. Also, Table 3-93 was changed from a qualitative “yes or no” indicator of whether timber harvest would occur adjacent to trails to a quantitative indicator (i.e., number of units intersecting each of three trails). An analysis of unroaded areas was included in the “Areas of Special Recreational Interest” section and the “Environmental Consequences” section of this FEIS.

Information Sources

Information for this analysis was gathered through observations made during routine maintenance and surveys of recreation facilities. Trail locations and improvements were cataloged using GPS equipment and software. Road mileages reported were gathered through use of the Flathead National Forest’s GIS database.

Analysis Area

This analysis evaluates the recreation resources most likely to be affected by the proposed action. Although the Logan Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project encompasses approximately 61,000 acres over various ownerships, this analysis will focus on recreational activities specific to National Forest System lands. Because most of the management activities would be distributed throughout the project area, dispersed recreation activities may be impacted to some degree. Specific management activities planned for the Tally Lake Campground would affect more concentrated areas.

Affected Environment

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is used as a means of describing recreational settings and activities (USDA Forest Service 1986). ROS classifies the Logan Creek analysis area within a spectrum from semi-primitive to roaded natural. Visually, much of the area appears unaltered with only moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of man. What facilities there are have been located in concentrated developed areas and integrated into the natural environment. Interaction between users is high in developed areas and low to moderate in the general forest area. Open forest roads and maintained trails provide the focus for most year-round recreational activities (e.g., pleasure driving, wildlife viewing, fishing, biking, hunting, snowmobiling, firewood gathering).

Areas Of Special Recreational Interest in the Logan Creek Analysis Area

Recreational areas marked with an asterisk (*) have the potential to be directly or indirectly affected by features of the action alternatives; the other recreational areas are listed for informational purposes only.

*Tally Lake Campground

Tally Lake Campground is located on the north shore of Tally Lake and is the largest developed campground in the District. There are no private inholdings or other landowners around the lake, and no other development exists outside of the campground. The campground consists of numerous habitat types that contain many large-diameter trees such as western larch, Douglas fir, aspen, birch, cottonwood and ponderosa pine. Logan Creek flows through the campground into Tally Lake and separates the north shore campsites from camp loops A and B.

Tally Lake Campground offers a variety of facilities and is one of the most popular campgrounds on the Flathead National Forest. Occupancy during the summer season averages 65 to 70 percent. There are 39 campsites, a boat launch, dump station, host site, covered pavilion, accessible fishing pier, trail system, group picnic area, beach and sand volleyball courts. The camping season starts the middle of May and ends in late September. Cost for camping is \$11.00 per camp unit and the day use fee is \$3.00 per vehicle.

Hiking Trails

All of the following trails receive regular trail maintenance.

***Tally Mountain Trails #800 and # 163.** Trail 800 spans 20 miles, making it one of the longest trails in the Tally Lake Ranger District. The trail bisects the road system in many locations creating numerous access points throughout its entire length and connects the Tally Lake area with the Ashley Mountain area. Trail 800 can be used for a variety of activities that include mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding and limited motor biking. Due to MA 2 restrictions, motorized biking is prohibited on Trail 800 north of where it intersects with Trail 294, approximately 3.1 miles. Trail 163 is open to motorized biking and provides access to the section of Trail 800 that is also open to motorized biking.

***Johnson Peak Trail #176.** This 2.5-mile trail is very popular with mountain bikers and is also open to hikers, horse riders, and other non-motorized users. It originates at the end of Road 2904 on the north, goes over Trixie Pass, and ends at Road 9502 on the south.

Boney Gulch Canyon Trail #801. This trail begins at the Tally Lake Road 913 and terminates at the Reid Divide where it intersects with Trail 800. This trail is steep with a number of switchbacks. It has become increasingly popular with mountain bikers and hikers due to its close proximity to the Tally Lake Campground and the towns of Whitefish and Kalispell. Motorized use is prohibited along its entire length due to MA 2 restrictions. It is a moderate to difficult climb and is 3.0 miles long.

***Tally Gorge Trail #294.** Trail 294 also provides access to Trail 800. Mountain bikers, horseback riders and hikers typically use this trail. It is located in the MA 2 non-motorized use area. This trail has been given a moderate difficulty rating and is 1.2 miles in length. In the past Trail 294 has been used by motorcycles to access Trail 800. However, that use not in compliance with the Forest Plan. To meet the intent of the Forest Plan and to serve the motorized public, Trail 163 is the trail the riders should use to access the motorized segment of Trail 800.

***Tally Overlook Trail #804.** Trail 804 starts inside the Tally Lake Campground off the road system that services the north shore campsites. This trail offers a great opportunity to view Tally Lake from a vista point. It has a moderate difficulty rating and is 1.2 miles in length.

Stove Pipe Canyon Trail #196. This trail can be accessed at the south end of Tally Lake off Forest Road 2924. This trail leads to a small area along the lakeshore. It is rated easy and is 1 mile in length.

Tally Ridge Trail #458. This trail can be accessed from the Stovepipe Canyon Trail #196. It climbs the eastern side of Tally Lake to the ridge and traverses down the lake. This trail does not connect with the north shore of Tally Lake. It stops about a mile from the campground, so it is necessary to backtrack to the trailhead or bushwhack a mile and then ford Logan Creek. Difficulty of the trail is moderate over its 3.5-mile length.

Round Meadows Cross-Country Ski Trails #45. Round Meadow ski trails, located 12 miles northwest of Whitefish, offer the public a rural ski setting with vistas of the Whitefish Mountain Range, Big Mountain, and Logan Creek. This popular trail system has nine miles of cross-country ski trails, a developed parking area and toilet facilities. Used year-round by hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and in the winter, skiers, it continues to grow in popularity. Recently, a grant was received to upgrade the trails by improving grooming of the cross-country ski trails and adding a single track trail for mountain bikers, hikers and horses. These improvements began in 2003.

Ashley Mountain Trail #31. This trail offers alpine views from the top and connects to several other District trails. It is popular with horseback riders, mountain bikers, hikers and motorized bikers. It originates at the junction of Forest Road 9784 and Road 9601. It has a 500-foot elevation gain, is rated moderate in difficulty, and is 4 miles in length.

Fishing

Although fishing is not frequently observed within the area, there are plenty of opportunities available for the angler. Logan, Oettiker, Taylor, Meadow, Bill, Cyclone, Reid, Sanko, and Evers Creeks provide numerous fishing opportunities within the drainage. Forest Service roads paralleling Logan Creek and its tributaries provide convenient access to the streams. Fishing in this area can be characterized by a feeling of solitude that is provided by the reduced number of anglers.

It is the potentially high number of fish that can be caught, rather than their individual size that makes fishing these streams attractive. Eastern brook trout are the most common fish caught in streams above Star Meadow while rainbow trout are more common below this point. Native westslope cutthroat trout are also found in the watershed, but are seldom caught. Generally, the high reproductive rate of the eastern brook trout and state fish and game laws allow for numerous fish to be taken per day; however, the common size of such fish is typically less than 12 inches.

Snowmobiling

Roads closed yearlong or seasonally to motorized use have a legal snowmobile season from December 1 to April 1 or May 15 (the later date due to elk security concerns in some areas). There are no managed or groomed snowmobile trails within the analysis area, and there is little data available on use patterns. During some years, residents within the project area must rely on snowmobiles as a means of ingress/egress to their property. Snowmobiling by non-residents occurs at modest levels.

Open/Closed Roads

The majority of recreation within the analysis area occurs on roads, both open and closed. Primary activities associated with the use of the road system include pleasure driving, hunting, snowmobiling, berry picking, OHV users, mountain biking, and firewood gathering.

Roads are primarily used for firewood gathering. The network of roads open year-round and seasonally, along with the supply of dead lodgepole pine, offers firewood gathering opportunities for the surrounding communities of Whitefish, Kalispell, and Olney. The increasing number of year-around and seasonal residents in the Logan Creek watershed also utilize the roads for firewood gathering.

The open and closed road system in the Logan Creek analysis area is an essential part of big game hunting season. Road use is high during this time of year around the Tally Lake Campground and within the Logan Creek drainage in general. The spring bear season also sees higher levels of road use, but to a lesser degree than the fall hunting season. The open road system allows hunters to access areas by motorized vehicles from where they may continue on by non-motorized means, either traveling cross-country or on roads that have been closed seasonally or year-around. The closed road system provides easy walking, horseback riding, or mountain biking access that facilitates game retrieval.

Unroaded Areas

Within or near the project area, there are no unroaded lands identified as inventoried roadless areas in the 1977 Roadless Area Review and Evaluation process (RARE II). In addition, there are no congressionally designated wilderness areas, research natural areas, or wild sections of designated wild and scenic rivers. There are two unroaded lands greater than 1000 acres in size in or near the Logan Creek area that have the potential to provide natural or remote recreation experiences. These areas are described below. Clear guidelines do not exist to identify these areas. Exhibit L-2 describes our process to determine these unroaded areas and maps displaying their location and size.

The first unroaded area is 3327 acres and is located in the vicinity of Johnson Peak at the north end of the project area. The majority of this area lies in the Good Creek drainage and outside of the Logan Creek area. A unique feature of this area is several rock outcrops giving commanding views of the area. Another feature is a portion of the unroaded area was “roller thinned” in the late 1960s by bulldozers. Characteristics of this area include:

- *Natural integrity, apparent naturalness, and remoteness* – Most of the area is undisturbed and contains a diversity of plant and animal communities. The core of this unroaded area is inaccessible by trail and can only be accessed by “bushwhacking,” thus giving a sense of remoteness and natural integrity to the visitor. The area only appears natural in the foreground and middle-ground view.
- *Solitude* – There are opportunities for solitude due to the distance to roads or motorized trail and the amount of screening provided by the dense vegetation. While viewing the surrounding landscape from rock outcrops, evidence of human influence on the landscape is easily apparent.
- *Primitive recreation opportunities* – Few opportunities exist for a truly primitive experience due to the small size of the area. The area could be traversed by foot in less than a day.
- *Manageability and Boundaries* – Boundaries for this area are in the form of roads or motorized trail and are easily identified. The small size of the area makes it of questionable value as a wilderness unit.

The other unroaded area is 1400 acres and is located on the west side of Tally Lake. A unique feature of this area is the many park-like openings on south-facing slopes that contain shrubs, grasses, and a few scattered trees. Characteristics of this area include:

- *Natural integrity, apparent naturalness, and remoteness* – Most of the area is undisturbed and contains a diversity of plant and animal communities. The core of this unroaded area is accessible by non-motorized trail. The area only appears natural in the foreground and middle-ground view.
- *Solitude* – There are opportunities for solitude due to the distance to roads or motorized trail and the amount of screening provided by the dense vegetation.
- *Primitive recreation opportunities* – Few opportunities exist for a truly primitive experience due to the small size of the area.
- *Manageability and Boundaries* – Boundaries for this area are in the form of roads or motorized trail and are easily identified. The small size of the area makes it of questionable value as a wilderness unit.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Forest Plan (pg. II-21, #1, #2, #10, #11, #13) established Forest-wide recreation goals that relate directly to the Logan Creek analysis. Listed here are the goals and objectives that provide the framework for managing the recreation resources in the Logan Creek area.

- #1 Use the ROS (Recreation Opportunity Spectrum) as a guide to provide the full array of recreation opportunities of the Forest.
- #2 Encourage Forest visitors not desiring a wilderness setting to use non-wilderness National Forest System lands which can provide for their recreation needs.
- #10 As per Executive Order 11644, through the Flathead National Forest Travel Planning Direction (Appendix C), and in conformance with the ROS designations for specific areas, designate use restrictions on roads, trails, and specific areas along with designating areas for ORV (Off-road Vehicle) use.
- #11 Retain the existing capacity of National Forest developed recreation sites on the Flathead National Forest during the next 10 years. The quality of the developed recreation opportunities available would be improved through “full-service” maintenance (2) or redesign and reconstruction of existing sites to better accommodate present and future needs. Some slight capacity changes may occur as a result of these improvements; however, the changes would provide a better service to the public. No expansion of campground capacity would be permitted if the expansion competes with campgrounds in the private sector.
- #13 System trails located in resource development areas must be included in the project environmental analysis. Any decision to abandon the trail must be clearly documented. To the extent possible, trails should be protected during activities, and when it is not practical to preserve an existing trail, the trail should be relocated temporarily or permanently.

Environmental Consequences

The effects on the recreation resource are mostly associated with changes in access due to proposed harvest and road reclamation activity. The following evaluation of effects will focus on how the proposed changes to the road system would affect recreation opportunities.

Effects of the No-Action Alternative

If Alternative A is selected, an extension of the existing Trail 804 would not be constructed. Hikers would continue to hike Trail 804 as an out-and-back trail and not a connecting loop. If Alternative A is selected, unit 200 would not be underburned, so the Tally Lake Campground would not be closed for up to three days during the underburning.

Alternative A would involve no road reclamation, so no reduction in miles of public road would occur. In addition to no changes in existing road management, no new system roads would be built that could provide non-motorized access. There would be no road improvements; i.e., no drainage work, surfacing, and grading of existing road that could improve recreation access.

There would be no tree thinning operations in the Tally Lake Campground. Douglas-fir trees in the campground would remain susceptible to Douglas-fir bark beetle. The opportunity to establish desirable tree species and tree density would be foregone. There would be no change to the characteristics of unroaded areas.

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects Common to All Action Alternatives

New Trail Construction - An additional 2000 feet of new trail would be added to the District's trail system (see Exhibit L-1 for a map). This new segment would be a continuation of Trail 804 (Tally Overlook) and would make this trail a loop instead of an out-and-back trail. This trail segment does not cross any streams, wetlands, or sensitive wildlife areas. It would provide an opportunity for campers to hike a loop trail within the developed campground.

Prescribed Burning Near Tally Lake Campground - Unit 200, located near the Tally Lake Campground, is proposed for an underburn. The Tally Lake Overlook Trail #804 passes through unit 200. If the unit is burned after the Tally Lake Campground is opened to the public for the season, it would be advisable for public health and safety reasons to close the campground for approximately three days. Trail 804 would be closed up to one week during the burning of the unit.

Prescribed Burning Near Tally Mountain - Units 202 and 202.1, located near Tally Mountain, are proposed for prescribed fire. Trails #800 and #801 pass very near the largest possible extent of the proposed burn and very likely would not be affected. This prescribed burn is primarily in Management Area 2A, an area of nonmotorized recreation emphasis. The purpose of the burn is to maintain and enhance openings in the conifer cover for wildlife forage. The burn would not affect nonmotorized recreation opportunities except for the short period of time that the burn is active when the area is closed for public safety.

Timber Harvesting in Tally Lake Campground - Timber harvesting is proposed for units 139 and 140 in the Tally Lake Campground to improve the vigor of residual trees thereby reducing insect infestations and improving tree species composition and stand structure for long-term benefits. See the Vegetation section for a more detailed discussion of this proposal. The harvesting operations would take place in the early spring or late fall when use of the campground is at a minimum. Only portions of the campground would be closed for safety at one time. Access to Tally Lake through the campground would be maintained. Use of the campground during the early spring or late fall is typically low, and no recreationists should be displaced. Campers and day-use people may be inconvenienced by log truck traffic and noise from the logging operation.

Proposed Timber Harvest Adjacent to Trails by Alternative – Table 3-93 below provides a quick reference as to what trails within the analysis area would have vegetation removed adjacent to a trail. No attempt is made here to quantify or qualify the effect of nearby cutting; it is only to document that there would be a change in the current condition as the result of the proposed action and the other action alternatives.

The management of MA 2C allows salvage harvesting from existing roads. Timber harvest adjacent to a trail that is surrounded by thick vegetation can "open" the trail and provide some

views of the surrounding terrain that otherwise would not be possible. Some users of the trails would perceive this to be a benefit, while others may have the opposite opinion.

Table 3-93. Number of Harvest Units Intersecting Trails in the Logan Creek Analysis Area.

	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E	Alt. F
Trail 176	0	1	1	0	1	0
Trail 163	0	1	1	0	1	1
Trail 800	0	7	6	5	5	5

Unroaded Areas – The indicators used to determine effects to unroaded areas from activities proposed in the action alternatives are acres of vegetation treatment, miles of new road construction, and changes to the unroaded characteristics described in the Affected Environment section above. The following table describes the acres of vegetation treatment and miles of road construction in each of the unroaded areas by alternative.

Table 3-93a. Vegetation Treatment and Road Construction in Unroaded Areas.

Unroaded Area and Alternative	Acres of Timber Harvest	Acres of Underburning	Miles of Road Construction
Johnson Peak			
Alternative B	126	0	1.4
Alternative C	22	0	0
Alternative D	22	0	0
Alternative E	126	0	1.4
Alternative F	126	0	1.4
West Tally			
Alternative B	0	183	0
Alternative C	0	183	0
Alternative D	0	183	0
Alternative E	0	183	0
Alternative F	0	183	0

Effects to the Johnson Peak unroaded area from Alternatives B, E, and F are from timber harvesting using skyline and ground-based systems and from 1.4 miles of permanent road construction. These activities have the potential to reduce the size of the unroaded area and reduce the value of the area's characteristics such as natural integrity, remoteness, solitude, and opportunities for primitive recreation. Alternatives C and D propose ground-based timber harvest on 22 acres with no road construction. This harvesting is proposed for the far eastern edge of the unroaded area and would have little to no effect on the area's characteristics.

Effects to the West Tally unroaded area from all action alternatives result from proposed underburning of approximately 183 acres. No roads would need to be constructed for this activity. Because underburning is designed to replicate historic fire events, it would not reduce the values of the characteristics of this unroaded area.

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects Specific to Alternatives B, D, E, and F

Road Restrictions - Alternatives B, D, E, and F would impose similar restrictions on the current road system regarding the change from open yearlong roads to closed yearlong roads. The proposal to restrict between 6.9 and 7.5 miles of road currently available for public use would not affect developed recreation opportunities such as trailheads, campgrounds, and non-motorized recreation within the analysis area. These road restrictions involve segments of roads across the Logan Creek analysis area determined to be unnecessary for the District's travel plan or important for wildlife security. With these changes the opportunities for driving for pleasure are diminished. These closed roads would be available for hiking, walking pets, horse riding, and mountain biking, or any other non-motorized recreation activity. Subsequently, motorized recreation opportunities such as driving those forest roads, motorized hunting, and motorcycle riding, and ATV access would be reduced by the same amount.

Additionally, successful big game hunters utilizing these restricted areas would need to rely more on backpacking of game or use of non-motorized game transportation systems such as mountain bikes or horses. With the quieter, less intrusive methods of travel, opportunities for wildlife viewing may improve.

Firewood cutting opportunities are reduced due to the additional miles of road closed and rehabilitated. However, the Forest Service has the latitude to temporarily open the closed roads specifically to allow firewood cutting when this does not substantially impact wildlife conservation measures or the management of other resources.

Snowmobile use would not be affected by roads that are proposed to be changed from open yearlong to closed yearlong to motorized access because snowmobiling is allowed on closed roads from December 1 to April 1 or December 1 to May 15, depending on the location. However, these dates may change when the snowmobile amendment to the Flathead National Forest Plan is completed.

Additional System Road Changes - System road construction varies from 2.7 miles to 4.7 miles, and there would be 4.3 to 5.4 miles of temporary road construction (Table 3-94). The system and temporary road construction would not affect the developed recreation opportunities in the analysis area. There would be activity adjacent to Trail 800 in the Bill Creek Area during timber removal. This temporary road segment would be used during timber hauling and then closed and revegetated after the timber sale is completed. New system roads would be added to the District's road system, but not be available for motorized recreation activities.

Road Rehabilitation - The changes in road rehabilitation for the action alternatives B, D, E, and F vary between 124 miles to as high as 141 miles (Table 3-94). This rehabilitation would facilitate safer removal of timber, improve drainage features thus improving water quality, and provide a better road for recreational access to the Forest. Recreation users would have a long-term benefit from the road rehabilitation in smoother road surfaces and better drainage on the roads. This adds to public safety and enjoyment while driving on Forest system roads.

The road rehabilitation done on the timber haul routes intersect Trail 800 nine to ten times. These haul routes are not new roads or trail intersections; they are existing and part of the

District's transportation system. The upgrade would better facilitate the driving recreating public once the hauling of logs is completed; however, during the hauling period both motorized and non-motorized recreating publics need to be aware of log trucks to ensure their safety. There should be no long-term effects to Trail 800 from these proposals.

Additional signing along the haul route on the segment of Trail 163 would be necessary to inform users of logging activities if Alternatives B, E, or F were selected. (NOTE: The unit that this haul route would access was dropped from Alternative D.)

Road Reclamation – All the action alternatives propose reclamation of between 16 and 17 miles of system road (Alternatives B, C, and D propose 16.2 miles; Alternatives E and F propose 16.6 miles). This reclamation would not affect the developed camping and non-motorized recreation opportunities within the analysis area. The reclaimed roads are short segments that do not access the developed trailheads on the District. These newly reclaimed roads would be available for hiking, walking pets, horse riding, and mountain biking, or any other non-motorized recreation activity. Motorized recreation opportunities such as driving those forest roads, motorized hunting, and motorcycle and ATV access would be reduced by the same amount.

Seasonal Trail Closure to Motorized Users – A feature of Alternative F was designed to improve elk security. In Alternative F (as in Alternative C), motorized use of Trail 800 would change from motorized to non-motorized during the big game hunting season for approximately 12.7 miles.

Table 3-94. Proposed Changes in Roads.

Feature	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	Alt. E	Alt. F
Road Reclamation	0	16.2 miles	16.2 miles	16.2 miles	16.6 miles	16.6 miles
Change in Road Restriction, Open yearlong to closed year-round*	0	6.9 miles	6.9 miles	6.9 miles	7.5 miles	7.5 miles
Temporary Road	0	5.4 miles	3.6 miles	4.3 miles	4.9 miles	4.5 miles
System Road Construction	0	4.4 miles	2.7 miles	2.7 miles	4.7 miles	3.8 miles
Road Rehabilitation	0	141 miles	99 miles	124 miles	138 miles	133 miles
Change in Road Restriction, Open year-round to closed year-round to public motorized access.	0	0	0.7 miles	0	0	0

* snowmobiles allowed December 1 to May 15

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects Specific to Alternative C

System Road Changes Under Alternative C – There are 2.7 miles of proposed system road construction and 3.6 miles of temporary road construction proposed for Alternative C. These new roads would not affect the developed recreation opportunities that exist on the District. There would be timber harvest operations adjacent to Trail 800 in the Bill Creek Area. This temporary road segment would be used during timber hauling and then closed and re-vegetated after the timber sale is completed. The new system roads would be added to the District’s road system but not available for motorized recreation activities. The haul route on the access road to Trail 163 would be signed to inform users of log hauling in Alternative C.

Alternative C is comparable to the other action alternatives in regards to road reclamation and open yearlong roads to closed yearlong. It does have an additional 0.7 miles of open yearlong to closed seasonal restriction. This restriction of 0.7 miles affects the early and late season opportunities for driving for pleasure and for motorized hunting access. This is a very small amount and should not create a noticeable change in access. The amount of roads being rehabilitated is the least amount due to a reduction in number of timber harvest units being proposed. It also has the least amount of new and temporary road construction for all action alternatives.

Road Rehabilitation - Alternative C proposes the least amount of road rehabilitation at 99 miles. This rehabilitation would facilitate safer removal of timber, improve drainage features thus improving water quality, and provide a better road for recreational access to the Forest.

Other Differences - In addition to differences in road management from the other action alternatives, there are two other differences in Alternative C designed to improve elk security. Motorized use of Trail 800 would change from motorized to non-motorized during the big game hunting season for approximately 12.7 miles. In addition, there would be a motorized closure on the Johnson Peak Trail #176 during hunting season, approximately 4.8 miles in length. This would provide better elk security along the Reid Divide and the Johnson Peak area. During the other seasons there would not be any additional restrictions to motorized or non-motorized use. Mountain bikers, hikers, horse riders and non-motorized hunters would have an increase in trail miles available to them devoid of motorized use during the hunting season. With quieter, less intrusive methods of travel, opportunities for wildlife viewing may improve.

Firewood gathering opportunities are the same as in Alternatives B, D, E, and F. There would be a reduction in miles in roads due to the additional miles of road closures and rehabilitation. However, the Forest Service can temporarily open closed roads specifically for firewood cutting when this does not substantially impact wildlife conservation measures or the management of other resources.

Snowmobile use would not be affected by roads that are proposed to be changed from open yearlong to closed yearlong to motorized access because snowmobiling is allowed on closed roads from December 1 to April 1 or December 1 to May 15, depending on the location. However, these dates may change when the snowmobile amendment to the Flathead National Forest Plan is completed.

REGULATORY CONSISTENCY

The proposed activities in all alternatives comply with the recreation standards and guidelines of the LRMP with exceptions noted below in italics. The management areas specific to recreation affected by activities involve 2A, 2C, 4, and 15B. Particulars of LRMP consistency are listed below.

- Trail 163- The road segment on Trail 163 would need to be signed for safety concerns for recreationists. After the hauling is completed, it is important that the trail corridor, tread, and exiting signs be as good or in better shape than prior to hauling.
- Trail 800- There would be 9 to 10 log haul routes intersecting Trail 800. Signing for public safety is extremely important. There should not be any change to the actual trail corridor or tread due to hauling.
- The one developed site within the Logan Creek analysis area is the Tally Lake Campground. The retention of trees during the proposed treatment of Units 139 and 140 would be at the high dispersed retention level thus meeting the MA 4 timber management standards of hazard tree removal and timber stand improvement.
- Closure of roads, seasonal closures, and rehabilitation of roads meet the intent of #10 in the Forest Recreation Standards.
- Management Area 2A emphasizes semiprimitive, nonmotorized recreation opportunities. Vegetation treatment units in MA 2A are 202 and 202.1. Prescribed fire may be used to enhance resource values and reduce hazardous fuel accumulation. Proposed treatments for units 202 and 202.1 are consistent with these standards.
- Management Area 2C emphasizes roaded, natural appearing recreation opportunities. Proposed vegetation treatment units located all or partially in MA 2C include 20, 69A, 70, 71, 71A, 72, 73A, 75, 88, 99, 99A, 110, 124A, 137, 137A, and 302. *Timber management standards for MA 2C allow for removal of timber salvage from existing roads when recreation values can be protected or enhanced. All of these units meet the salvage requirement with the exception of Unit 20. If Unit 20 (as it is currently proposed for treatment) is a component of the selected alternative, a project-specific temporary forest plan amendment would need to be prepared for the Record of Decision. Additionally, temporary roads numbers 13 (accesses Units 99, 99A, 100, 100A) and 18 (accesses Units 137, 137A) are proposed for construction in MA 2C. If these units and roads are components of the selected alternative, a project specific temporary forest plan amendment would need to be prepared for the Record of Decision.*
- Management Area 15B emphasizes timber management with special consideration for cross-country skiing use of the area. All proposed activities are consistent with this consideration.