APPENDIX A – TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND ROUTE EVALUATION PROCESS USED BY BLM INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

In developing site-specific travel plans to meet its multiple-use mission, the BLM is required to follow regulations found at 43 CFR 8342. In part, these regulations (43 CFR 8342.1) require the BLM to locate routes to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, air, or other resources; minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats, with special attention being given to protect endangered or threatened species and their habitats; and minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands.

To develop travel plan alternatives that follow these regulations, the Butte Field Office Interdisciplinary Team developed an organized, systematic process to conduct route by route analysis for each travel planning area. Utilizing this process, each route was evaluated to recommend its future management status as either Open, Open/With Restrictions, Closed, or Decommissioned.

Evaluations were conducted by analyzing three identified key Resource categories (Wildlife/Habitat, Aquatics/Fisheries, and Soils), and then comparing the *level of impacts* to those resources to the *level of importance* for Human Use. Six key Human Uses categories were identified. They are: Public Use (recreation, hunting, woodcutting, etc.), Wildland/Prescribed Fire, Forest Management, Mineral/Energy Development, Private Property Access, and Range Management. Due to its importance, Public Use was rated as an individual category, while Wildland/ Prescribed Fire, Forest Management, Mineral/Energy Development, Private Property Access, and Range Management were rated together.

Although the process provided separate analysis for Resource impacts, and combined some of the Human Use analysis, each was considered equally important and "weighted" the same during comparative analysis.

In addition to its route by route analysis, the Interdisciplinary Team reviewed and consulted the public scoping comments (issues/concerns, potential solutions) generated during a series of public travel planning meetings. The public comments provided useful information for site-specific route evaluation as well as help set overall context for each travel planning area.

In order to provide a repeatable, systematic approach, Interdisciplinary Team members developed written criteria, with a range of numerical values (e.g., 0, 3, 6, 9), for use with each Resource and Human Use Worksheet. For Resource impact analysis, a numerical value of 0 indicates "No Impact", while a numerical value of 9 indicates a "High level of Impact". For Human Use analysis, a numerical value of 0 indicates "No Importance" to human use, while a numerical value of 9 indicates a "High Level of Importance" to human use.

As each Resource or Human Use specialist completed their route evaluation, the numerical values were entered on Evaluation Worksheets and tabulated, and a final "rating" of Low, Medium, or High was assigned to each route. The Low, Medium, and High ratings were derived by tabulating the maximum numerical value achieved during the analysis, and then dividing the total into thirds to arrive at the Low Medium, and High rating.

For example, seven written Wildlife/Habitat Criteria may have provided for a *possible* maximum numerical value of 52 for any given road segment within a particular travel planning area. However, assume the highest numerical value actually achieved for any road within that specific travel planning area was actually 36. To determine the rating for Low, Medium, or High, divide 36 into thirds (divide by 3). The results are as follows:

- Low = 0-12
- Medium = 13-24
- High = 25-36

Continuing with this example, assume that for a particular route, the following numerical values have been determined and entered on the worksheet:

- Big Game Habitat = 6
- Unique Habitats = 0
- Fragmentation of Habitat = 6
- Connectivity = 0
- Noxious Weeds = 4
- Relict Plant Communities = 0
- Special Status Plant Species and Habitats = 3

In this case, the numerical total for this route is 17, and will receive a rating of "Medium".

This is the same methodology that was used to complete the Aquatics/Fisheries, Soils, and Human Use route evaluations and ratings throughout the process on a "per travel planning area" basis.

After the Resource and Human Use analysis was completed for a travel planning area, the final ratings (Low, Medium, or High) for each route were entered onto the *Final Evaluation Table*. The Final Evaluation

Table provides a format to compare the Resource Impact and Human Use ratings determined for each route for the particular travel planning area. Interdisciplinary Team recommendations on route-specific management stemmed from a comparison of the Resource Impact and Human Use ratings. Recommendations included a range of options including open yearlong, open with seasonal restrictions (seasons based on site-specific needs), closed yearlong, or decommissioning. Reasons for seasonal restrictions included (but were not limited to) such rationale as minimizing winter disturbance of big game in winter range areas, providing for or preventing motorized access during big game hunting seasons, or minimizing soil erosion during wet or snowmelt periods. The Final Evaluation Table includes a space for written comments to clarify the Interdisciplinary Team's proposed management recommendations.

As an example, assume the following final ratings for a particular route:

- Wildlife/Habitat Impact Rating – Low
- Aquatics/Fisheries Impact Rating – Low
- Soils Impact Rating – Medium
- Human Use Rating – High

For this example, the overall level of Resource impacts is Low, while the overall level of importance to Human Use is High. In this case, the Interdisciplinary Team would likely propose to manage the route as Open, or perhaps Open/Restricted (seasonal restrictions) if Soil erosion were an issue. For a different route, the overall level of Resource Impacts might be High, while the overall importance to Human Use might be low; resulting in an Interdisciplinary Team proposal for Closure. In the above examples, there are no conflicts between the Resource Impact and Human Use ratings.

However, a wide range of variations for Resource/Human Use ratings is possible, and in some cases required discussion and negotiation by the Interdisciplinary Team to arrive at a proposed management decision. For example, there were a number of routes where Resource Impacts and Human Use needs both rated out as High. These situations required group discussion and negotiation in order to arrive at a proposed management solution.

Note: Near the end of BLM's "route by route" review process, a number of additional routes were identified in the Boulder-Jefferson and Lewis and Clark County NW TPAs through the use of aerial photography, orthoquads, and other GIS technology. The vast majority of these routes are very short, less than 1/10th mile in length. Due to time constraints, the ID team decided to forgo complete analysis of these routes (using the process described above. Proposed management decisions for these additional routes were based on professional knowledge, and ID team analysis and recommendations made for adjacent routes.

Rating Criteria Used for Route by Route Evaluation

The following written criteria were used throughout the five travel plan areas for route by route evaluation and proposed management decision (Open, Open/With Restrictions, Closed, or Decommissioned). For some travel planning areas (Upper Big Hole, Lewis and Clark County NW), additional Wildlife criteria were needed to evaluate Unique Habitats, Sensitive Species (Sage Grouse, Northern Goshawk), and Threatened and Endangered Species (lynx, grizzly).

Resource Impact Evaluation Criteria

Wildlife

1. **Big Game Habitat**

   0 = Segment does not lie within or intersect elk/ deer winter range.

   8 = Segment lies within or intersects elk/deer winter range.

2. **Fragmentation of Habitat**

   This factor addresses the role of each road segment in the context of fragmenting large blocks of habitat (1 square mile). The factor looks at the spatial location and density of roads. Use moving windows roads analysis to determine road densities in analysis area.

   2 = Segment is in an area of relatively unfragmented habitat.

   12 = Segment is within road density of 0.5-1.5 mi/ sq mi.

   9 = Segment is within road density of 1.6-2 mi/sq mi.

   6 = Segment is within road density of >2 mi/sq/mi.

   3 = Segment is within road density of >3 mi/sq/mi

3. **Connectivity**

   This factor primarily addresses the fragmentation and loss of habitat within connectivity corridors or riparian areas. (Based on American Wildlands corridor analysis).

   0 = Segment is not within a connectivity corridor or riparian reserve.

   3 = Segment intersects a low quality connectivity corridor.

   6 = Segment intersects a moderate quality connectivity corridor or riparian reserve.

   9 = Segment intersects a high quality connectivity corridor or riparian reserve.

4. **Noxious Weeds**

   0 = Segment has no known infestations of noxious or non-native invasive weeds

   4 = Density: Trace-5%; And Extent: Patchy = less than 0.1acre

   8 = Density: 5-25%; Or Extent: Infestations 0.1-5 acres

   12 = Density: 25-100%; Or Extent: 5+ acres and soils susceptible to invasion.

5. **Relict Plant Communities**

   0 = Segment does not cross any relict plant communities

   4 = Segment crosses a relatively intact relict plant community

6. **Special Status Plant Species and Habitats**

   0 = Segment does not cross any known special status plant species communities or potential habitat

   3 = Segment crosses potential special status plant species habitat

   6 = Segment crosses known special plant status species communities or habitat.

Aquatics/Fisheries Evaluation Criteria

1. **Stream Crossings on non fish-bearing streams**

   This factor addresses the extent to which the road segment lies within riparian areas, disconnect streams from their floodplains, and prevent development of riparian vegetation.

   0 = Segment is ridge top or mid-slope with no stream crossings

   2 = Segment is mid-slope with few (1-2) stream crossings

   4 = Segment is mid-slope with numerous (>3) stream crossings

2. **Riparian Vegetation**

   0 = Segment is outside of riparian vegetation

   2= Segment slightly impacts riparian vegetation

   4 = Segment moderately impacts riparian vegetation

   6 = Segment highly impacts riparian vegetation. Segment is within a riparian area and/or parallel to a creek

3. **Proximity to Fish Populations**

   This factor addresses how direct any road effects would be to fish stocks. Features used to judge the "likelihood" of effects to fish stocks included stream crossings over fish-bearing streams, stream crossings over non fish-bearing streams that were in close proximity to fish-bearing streams, and effects to riparian vegetation along fish-bearing streams.

   0 = Segment is not near fish-bearing waters.

   3 = Segment has 1-2 stream crossings over a fish-bearing stream.

   6 = Segment has 2-3 stream crossings over a fish-bearing stream.

   9 = Segment is directly adjacent to a fish-bearing stream, parallel to the creek or has 4 or greater stream crossings.

Soil Evaluation Criteria

1. **Accelerated Erosion**

   Soils that are resistant to erosion:

   0 = Low impact. The area the route travels through has slopes ranging from 0-15%.

   6 = Medium impact. The area the route travels through has slopes ranging from 15-30%.

   9 = High impact. The area the route travels through has slopes greater than 30%.

   Soils with granite parent material

   6 = Medium impact. The area the route travels through has slopes ranging from 0-30%.

   9 = High impact. The area the route travels through has slopes greater than 30%.

   Soil Impact Rating (minimum = 0, maximum = 9)

   Low Impact = 0-3

   Moderate Impact = 4-6

   High Impact = 6-9

Resource Use Evaluation Criteria

Private Property access, Public Utility (Right of Way) access, and private property easements granted to BLM

1. **Need for Access to private property, public utility right of ways, and private property easements providing access to BLM lands.**

   0 = Route does not contribute in any way to access private property, public utility right-of-way, or private property easement providing access to BLM lands.

   3 = Route serves as secondary access to private land, public utility right of way, or private property easement providing access to BLM lands.

6 = Route serves as primary access to private property, public utility right of way, or private property easement providing access to BLM lands.

Forest Management Evaluation Criteria

1. **Access for Timber Production and silviculture.**

0 = Route does not access or is not needed to access potential forest management or treatment project units, such as areas with no forest or woodland or stands located in regulated management locations like wilderness study areas, nor does the route provide access for personal use of forest materials by the public.

3 = Route is not anticipated to be needed for BLM planned forest management activities or treatment within 20 years, or provides access to isolated stands of forest with no current public access.

6 = Route provides access to public forest or woodland available for public use such as firewood gathering or Christmas tree, or is expected to be needed for vehicle access to forest management or treatment units within 20 years, or currently provides access for inventory or monitoring activities.

9 = Route provides vehicle access to an existing BLM contract area or current or currently planned forest management activities such as forest product sales, pre-commercial thinning, forest residue treatment, site preparation, plantings, insect/disease suppression or fire restoration, or provides access for project follow-up or trespass investigation activities.

Mineral/Energy Development Evaluation Criteria

1. **Need for Access for Mineral/Energy development**

0 = Route does not access, or will not be needed to access mineral/energy development.

3 = Route would not be needed to access mineral/energy development within 20 years.

6 = Route is expected to be needed to access mineral/energy development within 20 years.

9 = Route is currently used to accesses mineral/energy development.

Range Management Evaluation Criteria

1. **Need for Permittee Access (for range management, and/or maintenance repairs to range facilities)**

0 = Route does not access range improvements, is not used for range management.

6 = Route provides access to range improvements, and/or is needed for range management.

Wildland/Prescribed Fire Evaluation Criteria

1. **Need for Access for fire suppression, fuels management**

0 = Low intensity area

6 = Moderate intensity area.

9 = High intensity area.

Public Use Access Evaluation Criteria (Recreation, Hunting, Woodcutting, etc.)

1. **Need/Level of Public Use**

0 = No known public use

3 = Receives little public use, does not access any developed recreation sites (facilities, trailheads) known points of interest, or destination points.

6 = Receives moderate use, used to access hunting areas, developed recreation sites (facilities, trailheads), known points of interest, or destination points.

9 = Receives high use, provides primary access to hunting areas, developed recreation sites (facilities, trailheads), known points of interest, or destination points.

COMMUNITY BASED COLLABORATIVE WORKING GROUPS

During spring 2004, BLM identified and prioritized nine site specific areas needing travel planning. Five of the nine areas were identified as High Priority, and are being addressed concurrently with the RMP revision. The remaining four areas were identified as Moderate Priority, and will need to be addressed after the RMP, due to time constraints.

1) Helena (focus area- Scratchgravel Hills) - *High Priority*

2) East Helena (focus area- North Hills) - *High Priority*

3) Lewis and Clark Country Northwest (focus area- Marysville) - *High Priority*

4) Boulder/Jefferson City - *High Priority*

5) Upper Big Hole River - *High Priority*

6) Missouri River Foothills - *Moderate Priority*

7) Jefferson County Southeast - *Moderate Priority*

8) Broadwater County South - *Moderate Priority*

9) Park/Gallatin - *Moderate Priority*

Given their relative importance, a series of public scoping meetings were held for the five *High Priority* travel planning area during November and December 2004, and January 2005. The primary purpose of the meetings was to solicit site-specific issues and concerns, as well as potential solutions; to be used to help establish criteria governing decisions for travel planning. (e.g., issue/concern – noise/dust impacts from motorized OHV use near housing area; solution – restrict/prohibit OHV use near housing area, establish minimum distance, criteria – establish/determine minimum distance from housing areas).

During the meetings, it became apparent that three of the travel planning areas - Lewis and Clark County Northwest (Marysville), Helena (Scratchgravel Hills), and East Helena (North Hills) were particularly important to the public and travel planning. Meetings for these three areas were well attended; interest in the Scratchgravel Hills required a second meeting.

Given the level of public interest, BLM decided to solicit the assistance of three community-based collaborative working groups, one for each travel planning area. Assisted in part by Tetra Tech (RMP contractor), the groups were intended to work under the direct supervision and guidance of the Western Montana Resource Advisory Council (RAC).

Several press releases and letters of interest were issued by Tetra Tech during May 2005, soliciting applicants for each of the three travel planning areas. The mission of the collaborative working groups was to "assist in developing a travel management plan mutually agreeable to both the collaborative working groups and BLM". Membership criteria included: Montana residency, familiarity with the travel planning area(s), and a willingness to work collaboratively with people of differing viewpoints. In addition, in accordance with the Western Montana Resource Advisory Council criteria, members were selected from three different interest categories in order to provide for balanced representation.

BLM anticipated enough public interest to support three balanced working groups, composed of either six or nine people total. Without BLM intervention, Tetra Tech was tasked with selecting group membership (for subsequent approval by the RAC), and coordinating and facilitating all of the group meetings. No BLM employees participated in the working groups.

In late May, however, it became apparent that the RAC would not be able to sponsor the collaborative subgroups, due to time constraints and other unforeseen events. BLM contacted the Lewis and Clark County commissioners, who graciously agreed to sponsor the collaborative working groups under their direct guidance and supervision.

Due to a shortage of interested candidates, only two (rather than 3) balanced collaborative working groups were able to be selected, each composed of nine members. Given its group membership, interest, and local knowledge, one of the groups was tasked with assisting the BLM develop travel management for both the Helena (Scratchgravel Hills) travel planning area as well as the East Helena (North Hills) travel planning area, while the second group was selected to assist the BLM with the Lewis and Clark travel planning area (Marysville).

The Lewis and Clark County Commission sponsored and oversaw the working group process. Michael McHugh, the Lewis and Clark County land planner, represented the county and chaired both working groups throughout the process. Each group held a series of six meetings during June and July, 2005. Each meeting was assisted by Tetra Tech, and attended by BLM staff only to answer questions and provide information from the BLM's Interdisciplinary Team as needed. In addition, BLM provided a full range of maps and other travel planning information used by its own interdisciplinary travel planning team, including its preliminary travel planning recommendations based on the route by route rating process described above (if requested by working groups), for each of the three travel areas. However, since no BLM employees participated on the working groups and the BLM did not facilitate the process, the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) did not apply to the working groups.

Working group recommendations were based on consensus. In the end, the working groups were able to arrive at complete consensus for the Marysville and North Hills areas, but only partial consensus for the Scratchgravel Hills area.

From August 2005-October 2005, the BLM Interdisciplinary team met and finalized a range of alternatives (A-D) for each of the five travel planning areas addressed with the RMP revision. With the exception of some minor changes, community based collaborative working group proposals were incorporated into Alternative B, which eventually became the Preferred Alternative.

BUTTE FIELD OFFICE TRAVEL PLAN VARIANCE PROCESS/APPLICATION FORM

Travel plan variances are requests by the public, commercial interests, interagency personnel, or BLM personnel to temporarily use motorized vehicles on closed roads, seasonally restricted roads, and cross country (off road) use. The following process (see flowchart below) has been developed to address requests for motorized travel not already authorized by a prior decision based on analysis in an existing EIS, EA, or the provisions of a permit, lease, memorandum of understanding, or right of way. It is also intended to provide additional oversight for uses already generally

authorized under the 2003 Statewide OHV ROD and Instruction Memorandum #MT-2001-004 regarding administrative uses.

Variance requests that cannot be approved due to issues raised during review would be subject to the NEPA process, or Documentation of NEPA adequacy (DNA). A DNA is documentation of whether or not there is existing NEPA documentation to cover the proposal. If the variance request cannot pass this "test", additional NEPA documentation is required.

The process is initiated by the program lead requesting the variance, or who has received a request from the public. After completing the basic information on the variance form, the flow chart should be circulated among the respective specialists for consultation and overall review.

Example requests for variances include (but are not limited to):

- Access to private property (patented mine claim, mining claim location and assessment work, seasonal cabin)
- Casual use mineral exploration (refer to 43 CFR 3809.5)
- Permit lease administration (firewood collection, recreation)
- Agency administrative work
- Contract work or contract administration
- Other permit leases

Flowchart

(Please document your responses, as needed, in the space next to the question. Use "N/A" for issues and concerns not applicable to the request).

Does the request provide reasonable use of public lands? — **No-----No Variance**
Must be Yes to continue
|
Yes
|
Are there reasonable, alternative routes available? — **Yes-----No Variance**
Must be No to continue
|
No
|
Is the activity in a WSA?
(Exceptions – Grandfathered rights, valid existing rights, use of an existing way) — **Yes-----No Variance**
Must be No to continue
|
No
|
Is the road safe to use during the requested time period? — **No-----No Variance**
Must be Yes to continue
|
Yes
|
Can the activity be postponed until the road or area is open to motorized use? — **Yes -----No Variance**
Must be No to continue
|
No
|
Can resource impacts be sufficiently mitigated?
(Winter range, spring calving habitat, Threatened and Endangered species habitat, sensitive species habitat, sensitive soils, soils susceptible to erosion, water quality, spread of noxious weeds, etc.) — **No-----No Variance**
Must be Yes to continue
|
Yes
|
Can social conflicts (as analyzed) be sufficiently mitigated? — **No ----- No Variance**
Must be Yes to continue
|
Yes

Yes – Variance may be approved by Authorized Officer (refer to Variance Request Form for signature)

Respective Program Reviewers:

Program Lead	Signature	Date
CULTURAL		
FORESTRY		
REALTY		
WILDLIFE/T&E		
GEOLOGY		
SOIL/WATER/AIR		
HAZMAT/AML		
RANGE/WEEDS		
RECREATION/WILDERNESS/VRM		
RIPARIAN		
FIRE/FUELS		
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT		

USDI BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT Authorization No._____
Butte Field Office
106 North Parkmont
Butte, Montana, 59701
Telephone 406-533-7600

AUTHORIZATION FOR MOTORIZED USE OF ROAD, TRAIL, OR AREA WITH TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

When approved by the authorized officer, this permit authorizes:

Name: _____

Address: _____
(City, State) (Zip)

Telephone Number (s): _____

(List additional authorized users on back of form)

To use the following road (s), trails, or area with travel restrictions (indicate entry locations and travel areas):
_____
_____
_____

In order to conduct the following operations:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Dates/Time of Use:
_____
_____

Number and Type(s) of Vehicles:
_____
_____

(See other side)

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Standard Stipulations

Copy of variance to be kept with authorized vehicle (s) and displayed in window.

Variance restricted to authorized (listed) individuals only

Permittee shall notify BLM of any changes under this authorization

Post sign or notice (on gate or beginning of restricted road) stating reason for use. Close/Lock gates when entering and leaving closure area

Vehicle use limited to ingress and egress only, using the authorized route, and minimum number of vehicles and trips.

No off road travel allowed, unless specifically authorized under this variance.

Avoid wet areas; travel only when ground is dry to prevent ruts and resulting erosion

Wash vehicles prior to use on BLM lands to prevent introduction of weeds

During fire operations - May use ATVs and engines on any existing road or trail that accesses treatment area. Off road use restricted for fire holding, mop up, and any related suppression needs. Off road vehicle use should be avoided during the general rifle hunting season. No new trails are to be created

During hunting season - Vehicles shall not be used for hunting purposes on BLM lands. Use limited to ingress/egress only after dark or between the hours of 11 AM to 3 PM (with the exception of emergencies).

I (we) acknowledge that I (we) am (are) required to comply with any conditions or stipulations of the authorized officer when the permit is issued:

_____

(Applicant signature/date)

Butte Field Office Manager Action

Special Stipulations (if any):

_____ Variance Approved

This application is hereby approved subject to the Standard stipulations and Special stipulations (if any) listed above:

_____

(Signature/date)

_____ Variance Denied

This application has been denied for the following reasons:

See attached letter.

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4, and the enclosed Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (at the above address) within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition (request) pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 8342 for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.