



MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS DECISION GUIDE

WORKSHEETS

“ . . . except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act...”

– the Wilderness Act, 1964

Please refer to the accompanying MRDG [Instructions](#) for filling out this guide. The spaces in the worksheets will expand as necessary as you enter your response.

Step 1: Determine if any administrative action is necessary.

Description: Briefly describe the situation that may prompt action.

A Transportation Plan (Appendix M) was completed as part of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA) Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP) in July of 2005. The transportation plan identified the need to complete a Travel Plan after a more intensive field and needs determination had been completed for the CMPA. The Travel Plan more specifically addresses what types of access that is appropriate for the administration of grazing allotments in wilderness. This Minimum Decision Analysis will help provide the information necessary to determine the types of access that should be authorized for each allotment that contain portions of Steens Mountain Wilderness.

To determine if administrative action is necessary, answer the questions listed in A - F

A. Describe Valid Existing Rights or Special Provisions of Wilderness Legislation

Are there valid existing rights or is there a special provision in wilderness legislation (the Wilderness Act of 1964 or subsequent wilderness laws) that allows consideration of action involving Section 4(c) uses? Cite law and section.

Yes: No: Not Applicable:

Explain:

The Steens Act has several sections related to grazing management and wilderness:

Section 1(b) states that there are several purposes of the Act some of which are as follows:

- *“To maintain the cultural, economic, ecological, and social health of the Steens Mountain area in Harney County, Oregon.*
- *To designate the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area.*
- *To designate the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area.*
- *To provide for and expand cooperative management activities between public and private landowners in the vicinity of the Wilderness Area and surrounding lands.*
- *To maintain and enhance cooperative and innovative management practices between the public and private land managers in the Cooperative Management and Protection Area.*
- *To promote viable and sustainable grazing and recreation operations on private and public lands.*
- *To conserve, protect, and manage for healthy watersheds and the long-term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain.*
- *To authorize only such uses on Federal lands in the Cooperative Management and Protection Area that are consistent with the purposes of this Act.”*

Section 102(a) of the Steens Act states that the purpose of the Steens Mountain CMPA is, *“to conserve, protect, and manage the long-term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain for future and present generations.”*

Section 102(b) identifies several objectives related to grazing management some of which are as follows:

- *“To promote grazing, recreation, historic, and other uses that are sustainable;*
- *To ensure the conservation, protection, and improved management of the ecological, social, and economic environment of the Cooperative Management and Protection Area, including geological, biological, wildlife, riparian, and scenic resources”*

Section 202(d)(1) of the Steens Act states that, *“Except as provided in section 113(e)(2), grazing of livestock shall be administered in accordance with the provision of section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(4)), in accordance with the provisions of this Act, and in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Appendices A and B of House Report 101–405 of the 101st Congress.”* Appendix B provides guidance for wildlife management and is not as applicable to grazing management.

The guidelines of Appendix A of House Report 101-405 of the 101st Congress, provides the most specific guidance related to grazing management activities in wilderness:

“Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Wilderness Act states: ‘the grazing of livestock, where established prior to the effective date of this Act, shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations as are deemed necessary by the Secretary of Agriculture.’”

“The legislative history of this language is very clear in its intent that livestock grazing, and activities and the necessary facilities to support a livestock grazing program, will be permitted to continue in National Forest wilderness areas, when such grazing was established prior to classification of an area as wilderness.”

“Including those areas designated in 1964 by the Wilderness Act, Congress has designated a large number of wilderness areas, including areas which are managed by the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management. A number of these areas contain active grazing programs, which are conducted pursuant to existing authorities. In all such cases, when enacting legislation classifying an area as wilderness, it has been the intent of the Congress that the cited language of the Wilderness Act would apply to grazing within wilderness areas administered by all Federal agencies.

To avoid any possible confusion, however, the Committee believes it would be appropriate to reiterate the guidelines and policies (which have been set out previously in the Committee's Report on H.R. 5487 of the 96th Congress, House Report N. 96-617) that are to be utilized by BLM in implementing the relevant provisions of the Wilderness Act with respect to livestock grazing in the wilderness areas designated by this bill. It is the intention of the Committee that these guidelines and policies be considered in the overall context of the purposes and direction of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and this bill, and that they be promptly, fully, and diligently implemented and made available to Bureau of Land Management personnel at all levels and to all holders of permits for grazing in the wilderness areas designated by this bill."

The guidelines and policies are as follows:

1. "There shall be no curtailments of grazing in wilderness areas simply because an area is, or has been designated as wilderness, nor should wilderness designations be used as an excuse by administrators to slowly "phase out" grazing. Any adjustments in the numbers of livestock permitted to graze in wilderness areas should be made as a result of revisions in the normal grazing and land management planning and policy setting process, giving consideration to legal mandates, range condition, and the protection of the range resource from deterioration."

It is anticipated that the number of livestock permitted to graze in wilderness would remain at the approximate levels at the time an area enters the wilderness system. If land management plans reveal conclusively that increased livestock numbers or animal unit months (AUMs) could be made available with no adverse impact on wilderness values such as plant communities, primitive recreation, and wildlife populations or habitat, some increases in AUMs may be permissible. This is not to imply, however, that wilderness lends itself to AUM or livestock increases and construction of substantial new facilities that might be appropriate for intensive grazing management in non-wilderness areas."

2. "The maintenance of supporting facilities, existing in an area prior to its classification as wilderness (including fences, line cabins, water wells and lines, stock tanks, etc.), is permissible in wilderness. Where practical alternatives do not exist, maintenance or other activities may be accomplished through the occasional use of motorized equipment. This may include, for example, the use of backhoes to maintain stock ponds, pickup trucks for major fence repairs, or specialized equipment to repair stock watering facilities. Such occasional use of motorized equipment should be expressly authorized in the grazing permits for the area involved. The use of motorized equipment should be based on a rule of practical necessity and reasonableness. For example, motorized equipment need not be allowed for the placement of small quantities of salt or other activities where such activities can reasonably and practically be accomplished on horseback or foot. On the other hand, it may be appropriate to permit the occasional use of motorized equipment to haul large quantities of salt to distribution points. Moreover, under the rule of reasonableness, occasional use of motorized equipment should be permitted where practical alternatives are not available and such use would not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment. Such motorized equipment uses will normally only be permitted in those portions of a wilderness area where they had occurred prior to the area's designation as wilderness or are established by prior agreement."
3. "The replacement or reconstruction of deteriorated facilities or improvements should not be required to be accomplished using "natural materials", unless the material and labor costs of using natural materials are such that their use would not impose unreasonable additional costs on grazing permittees."
4. "The construction or new improvements or replacement of deteriorated facilities in wilderness is permissible if in accordance with these guidelines and management plans governing the area involved. However, the construction of new improvements should be primarily for the purpose of resource protection and the more effective management of these resources rather than to accommodate increased numbers of livestock."
5. "The use of motorized equipment for emergency purposes such as rescuing sick animals or the placement of feed in emergency situations is also permissible. This privilege is to be exercised only in true emergencies, and should not be abused by permittees."

“In summary, subject to the conditions and policies outlined in this report, the general rule of thumb on grazing management in wilderness should be that activities or facilities established prior to the date of an area’s designation as wilderness should be allowed to remain in place and may be replaced when necessary for the permittee to properly administer the grazing program. Thus, if livestock grazing activities and facilities were established in an area at the time Congress determined that the area was suitable for wilderness and placed the specific area in the wilderness system, they should be allowed to continue. With respect to areas designated as wilderness prior to the date of this Act, these guidelines shall not be considered as a direction to reestablish uses where such uses have been discontinued.”

B. Describe Requirements of Other Legislation

Do other laws require action?

Yes: No: Not Applicable:

Explain:

C. Describe Other Guidance

Does taking action conform to and implement relevant standards and guidelines and direction contained in agency policy, unit and wilderness management plans, species recovery plans, tribal government agreements, state and local government and interagency agreements?

Yes: No: Not Applicable:

Explain:

Under the **BLM Manual 8350 - Management of Designated Wilderness Areas (April 1983) Sections .3(G)(1) and (2)** of the manual provides the following guidance related to livestock grazing and states, *“Grazing of livestock, where established prior to the effective date of the Act designating the area as wilderness, must be permitted to continue subject to this policy and the BLM grazing regulations 43 CFR 4100. Existing grazing may include not only the utilization of the forage resource, but also the use and maintenance of livestock management improvements and facilities associated with the grazing activity at the time of designation and which are in compliance with an approved Allotment Management Plan.”* The application of the Congressional Grazing Guidelines published in House Report 96-1126 (now updated in Appendix ‘A’ of House Report 101-405 as described above) are required as part of the planning process.

One of the management objectives for wilderness in the **Steens Mountain CMPA RMP** is to manage livestock grazing in the wilderness under the stipulations of the Congressional Grazing Guidelines provided by Appendix A of House Report 101-405 of the 101st Congress (Page RMP-75). Management direction for the wilderness also provides for reasonable access to grazing permittees on established routes within Steens Mountain Wilderness for the administration of grazing permits and that specific authorizations would be analyzed in a separate EA (Page RMP-76). The Travel Plan EA would meet analysis needs to provide the specific authorizations.

The **Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan** provided for the continued use of Service/Permit Use Routes by livestock operators to administer their BLM grazing permits (Page P-51), pending site-specific analysis. Management direction (Page P-53) related to maintenance of range improvements in the wilderness states, *“Existing grazing management projects will be maintained if they continue to support livestock grazing. Projects not functioning to support grazing, wildlife, or wild horses will be abandoned and the sites rehabilitated (e.g. removal of fencing in the No Livestock Grazing Area).”*

D. Describe Options Outside of Wilderness

Can this situation be resolved by an administrative activity outside of wilderness?

Yes: No:

Explain: This situation specifically involves the administration of grazing within wilderness.

E. Wilderness Character

Is it necessary to take administrative action to preserve wilderness character, as described by the qualities listed below?

Untrammeled, Undeveloped, Naturalness, Outstanding Opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, or other Unique components that reflect the character of this wilderness:

Yes: No:

Explain: Though not directly necessary to support the public purposes for wilderness, travel access decisions associated with the administration of grazing permits in Steens Mountain Wilderness have the potential to affect the wilderness characteristics described above. The travel plan will help clarify the types of permittee access that should be authorized under grazing guidelines for wilderness.

F. Describe Effects to the Public Purposes of Wilderness

Is it necessary to take administrative action in support of the public purposes for wilderness (as stated in Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act) of recreation, scenic, scientific, education, conservation, and historical use?

Recreation, Scenic, Scientific, Education, Conservation, and Historical Use:

Yes: No: Not Applicable:

Explain: Though not directly necessary to support the public purposes for wilderness, travel access decisions associated with the administration of grazing permits in Steens Mountain Wilderness have the potential to affect the public purposes for wilderness. The travel plan will help clarify the types of permittee access that should be authorized under grazing guidelines for wilderness.

Step 1 Decision: Is any administrative action necessary?

Yes: No: More information needed:

Explain: Travel access is an important component of grazing management for permittees in the administration of their allotments. It is even more critical to provide clear guidance when grazing occurs within designated wilderness. Developing travel access guidelines for grazing allotments in Steens Mountain Wilderness is needed to provide for the continuation of grazing activities as required by the Steens Act and the Wilderness Act, but in a manner consistent with grazing management guidelines for wilderness.

If action is necessary, proceed to Step 2 to determine the minimum activity.

Step 2: Determine the minimum activity.

Description of Alternatives

For each alternative, describe what methods and techniques will be used, when the activity will take place, where the activity will take place, what mitigation measures are necessary, and the general effects to the wilderness resource and character.

Background Information Common to all Alternatives

There are 14 grazing allotments (See Map TP-6) that contain part of Steens Mountain Wilderness. Below is a list of each allotment and the acres of wilderness in that allotment.

Allotment Name	Acres of Allotment in Wilderness*	Percent of Allotment in Wilderness
Alvord	5,126	47
Alvord Peak	5,232	99
Carlson Creek	8,761	88
Chimney	373	2
East Ridge	398	5
Fields	11,577	70
Frazier Field	8,975	43
Hardie Summer	38	<1
Mann Lake	1,190	11
Mann Lake FFR	814	22
Roaring Springs FFR	4,997	35
Scharff FFR	577	11
Serrano Point	11,015	99
South Steens	16,609	18
Total	75,682	

*Due to geographic database updates and realty actions related to land exchanges and acquisitions, there have been changes since the Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Plan was completed in July of 2005.

Of the 14 grazing allotments, nine have been identified as needing guidance related to travel access management. Below is a summary of each of the nine allotments. Permit routes are a type of "Service/Permit Use Route" described in the Steens Mountain CMPA RMP as routes used only for the administration, facility service, property maintenance, or those associated with an authorized permit. Motorized public use is not allowed. Most permit routes inside the wilderness were established routes open to the public prior to wilderness designation (See Map TP-6). Grazing management activities associated with the use of permit routes include salting, cattle monitoring, range improvement monitoring and maintenance.

Alvord: The annual permit period for this allotment is from March 1 through February 28. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness from April through June. Fencing is the only known grazing related facility within wilderness for this allotment. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

Alvord Peak: The annual permit period for this allotment is from March 1 through November 30. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness approximately 2.5 months each year, with the timing of use varying from year to year. All of the permit routes in wilderness for this allotment lead to water reservoirs. Water reservoirs are the known grazing related facilities within wilderness for this allotment and this allotment is heavily dependent on water reservoirs as a water source. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

Carlson Creek: The annual permit period for this allotment is from April 15 through May 31. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness during this entire period, but rotate between pastures.

Fencing is the only known grazing related facility within wilderness for this allotment. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

Fields: The annual permit period for this allotment is from February 15 though November 30. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness approximately five months each year, with the timing of use varying from year to year. Fencing, spring developments and a spring development pipeline are the known grazing permit related facilities within wilderness for this allotment. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

Frazier Field: The annual permit period for this allotment is from April 1 though September 30. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness during this entire period, but rotate between pastures. Water reservoirs, a spring development, and fencing are the known grazing related facilities within wilderness for this allotment. This allotment only has two springs as live waters sources, so it is heavily dependent on the reservoirs as a water source. During the late summer, water availability for a pasture can change within a few days, potentially requiring the quick relocation of the cattle to other areas where water is available. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

Mann Lake: The annual permit period for this allotment is from March 1 through June 15. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness during this time period. Fencing is the only known grazing related facility within wilderness for this allotment. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along the one permit route.

Roaring Springs FFR: The annual permit period for this allotment is year round. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness from June through October. Fencing is the only known grazing related facility within wilderness for this allotment. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

Serrano Point: The annual permit period for this allotment is from April 1 though June 15. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness during this entire period, but rotate between pastures. Fencing and a spring development are the known grazing related facilities within wilderness for this allotment. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

South Steens: The annual permit period for this allotment is from April 1 though October 31. Cattle are generally present near or within wilderness during this entire period, but rotate between pastures. Fencing, water reservoirs, a structure used during branding and a spring development are the known grazing related facilities within wilderness for this allotment. There is also a salt cache near several of the reservoirs. This allotment is heavily dependent on water reservoirs as a water source. There are also several areas in wilderness where salt is placed, primarily along permit routes.

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

Emergencies: An emergency situation is defined as one where there is a threat to human life, property (including livestock) or public land resources. Emergency activities utilized would be the minimum necessary to address the situation and rehabilitation and restoration work would follow where needed. Any emergency motorized vehicle or equipment used in wilderness would require prior notification and approval by the authorized BLM official where possible. Should prior notification not be possible, contact would be made with the authorized BLM official within 72 hours following the emergency entry.

Range Improvement Maintenance and Replacement: The BLM must give prior approval for the maintenance or construction of range improvements or any surface-disturbing work in wilderness. At the time of the request, the BLM would complete a site specific minimum decision analysis to determine if action is necessary and what is the minimum tool(s) to be used. This decision would be documented prior to the work taking place in a Categorical Exclusion under 1.6 of the U.S. Department of Interior's 516 Departmental Manual Chapter 2, Appendix 1 for "*Routine and continuing government business, including such things as supervision, administration, operations, maintenance, renovations, and replacement activities having limited context and intensity, (e.g., limited size and magnitude or short-term effects).*" Generally the need for major repairs or maintenance of range improvements is expected to be infrequent (5 to 15 years) unless a major event such as fire, flood or heavy snow increases expected maintenance, repair or replacement schedules. When possible, work would be done to minimize the potential for encounters with visitors.

Alternative A: Current Use and Alternative B: Most Use

Description: Under this alternative, current motorized travel access related to the administration of grazing permits and the maintenance of range improvements in the wilderness would continue. Permit routes currently utilized in wilderness follow old closed routes (See Map TP-6) most of which appear to be two-track roads that existed prior to the designation of the wilderness in 2000. The maintenance of range improvement could continue using the minimum tool necessary under a site specific minimum decision analysis. Any repair work needed on permit routes would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and would be the minimum tool necessary under a site specific minimum decision analysis and not to exceed conditions in place at the time the wilderness was designated.

Alvord: The permittee currently makes approximately five motorized vehicle trips into the wilderness each annual grazing season on permit routes for activities associated with the distribution of salt, checking cattle, and checking fences and minor fence repair.

Alvord Peak: Because all permit routes in the wilderness lead to water reservoirs, the permittee currently makes approximately 10-20 motorized vehicle trips each annual grazing season on permit routes to check water availability. Other activities such as the distribution of salt, checking cattle, checking fences and minor fence repair are also accomplished during these trips.

Carlson Creek: The permittee currently makes approximately five motorized vehicle trips into the wilderness each annual grazing season on permit routes for activities associated with the distribution of salt, checking cattle, checking fences and minor fence repair.

Fields: The permittee currently makes approximately five motorized vehicle trips into the wilderness each annual grazing season on permit routes for activities associated with the distribution of salt, checking cattle, checking spring developments, checking fences and minor fence repair.

Frazier Field: The permittee currently makes approximately five motorized trips into the wilderness each annual grazing season on permit routes that do not lead to water reservoirs for activities associated with distribution of salt, checking cattle, checking fences and minor fence repair. Due to this allotment's dependence on water reservoirs, routes leading to water reservoirs often require 15 trips a grazing season to be sure that adequate water remains available.

Mann Lake: The permittee currently makes approximately five motorized vehicle trips into the wilderness grazing season on permit routes for activities associated with the distribution of salt, checking cattle, and checking fences and minor fence repair.

Roaring Springs FFR: The permittee currently makes approximately five motorized vehicle trips into the wilderness each annual grazing season on permit routes for activities associated with the distribution of salt, checking cattle, and checking fences and minor fence repair. For both this allotment and South Steens the permittee makes approximately 10-15 helicopter landings in the wilderness each grazing season to check fence, water developments and to open gates along the no livestock grazing area fence to allow for wildhorse passage when cattle are not present and to close gates when cattle are turned out. This helicopter use also occurred prior to the designation of the wilderness in 2000.

Serrano Point: The permittee currently makes approximately six to eight motorized vehicle trips into the wilderness each grazing season on permit routes for activities associated with the distribution of salt, checking cattle, checking spring developments, checking fences and minor fence repair.

South Steens: The permittee currently makes approximately five motorized trips into the wilderness each grazing season on permit routes that do not lead to water reservoirs for activities associated with distribution of salt, checking cattle, checking fences and minor fence repair. Due to this allotment's dependence on water reservoirs, routes leading to water reservoirs often require 10 to 20 trips a grazing season to be sure that adequate water remains available. As described under Roaring Springs FFR allotment, this permittee does utilize helicopter trips.

Effects

Wilderness Character:

Untrammeled: This alternative is not expected to manipulate or control natural processes in the wilderness.

Undeveloped: This alternative would not create any new developments.

Naturalness: Only minimal reclamation of the permit routes would occur. The routes would appear to casual observers as a primitive two-track route receiving occasional use. The presence of a moving or parked vehicle, vehicle tire tracks or a helicopter could reduce visitors' perceived naturalness. These effects would be limited to the local area surrounding the vehicle or each route. Generally, visitors traveling cross country would not as easily observe permit route conditions except upon direct encounter. However, visitors traveling at higher elevations may be able to observe permit routes, depending on vegetative and topographic screening.

Opportunities for outstanding primitive and unconfined types of recreation: BLM defines primitive and unconfined recreation as "non-motorized and undeveloped types of activities." The utilization of motorized vehicles on permit routes would not affect the types of activities available, but could potentially affect the quality of the experience, especially related to naturalness and solitude which are each addressed separately for this alternative. The most common recreation activities in Steens Mountain Wilderness where grazing still occurs include hunting, day hiking, primitive camping, backpacking, wildlife observation and photography. Typically visitor use is low from late November through April due to inclement weather conditions and limited access on roads leading to the wilderness. Depending on weather conditions, a temporary increase may occur during school spring breaks (usually in March and April). At lower elevations where access is not blocked by snow, visitation increases in May and June. As temperature increases in July and August, several dispersed campsites along roads leading up to the wilderness are used with likely day hikes and some overnight use of the wilderness. Use is generally highest in September and October and into early November during deer, antelope, elk and upland game bird hunting seasons and when scenic fall colors are present. Hunters and other visitors are also likely walking along permit routes as trails and would continue to do so.

Opportunities for outstanding solitude: It is assumed that most visitors to this wilderness do not expect to directly encounter or hear nearby motorized vehicles (includes helicopter use for the purposes of this analysis). Where encounters did not occur, visitors would experience no effects to solitude from the use of motorized vehicles in grazing management activities. The presence of a moving or parked vehicle would potentially negatively affect visitors' sense of solitude. Intrusions on solitude associated with vehicle use potentially include noise, dust, and the presence of a vehicle. Visual intrusions would be expected to last only minutes, but may last longer if the vehicle is observed from higher elevations that do not have topographic or vegetative screening. Noise intrusions would also be expected to last only minutes, but may last longer depending on the amount of topographic and vegetative screening. As described above, visitation is low from late winter to early spring and four of the nine allotments have cattle out of the wilderness by mid-June every year, avoiding the highest visitor use season.

Heritage and Cultural Resources: There are no expected effects to heritage and cultural resources. Permittees would be utilizing established routes that received motorized vehicle use for many years prior to the designation of the wilderness. Any work requiring ground disturbing activities would require prior approval from BLM.

Maintaining Contrast and Skills: This alternative would not provide a contrast to methods of travel outside of wilderness in the CMPA.

Special Provisions: No additional special provisions identified.

Safety of Visitors, Personnel, and Contractors: This alternative would provide the greatest potential for safety if the permittee utilizes motorized vehicles in a safe and appropriate manner, given that they would be able to more easily carry survival and communication related equipment and supplies. They would also

be spending much less time in the wilderness. Under the same conditions, it is not expected that the safety of visitors would be affected.

Economic and Time Constraints: Permittees would be able to continue to utilize motorized vehicles in the administration of the allotments, with little or no change to economic and time constraints.

Additional Wilderness-specific Comparison Criteria: The supplemental values of scenic, geologic, historic and vegetative qualities would not be affected.

Alternative # C: Reduced Use

Description: Motorized vehicle (including helicopter use) access would not be authorized for any grazing management activities associated with salting and checking water developments. The maintenance of range improvement could continue using the minimum tool necessary under a site specific minimum decision analysis.

Effects

Generally the need for major repairs or maintenance of range improvements is expected to be infrequent (5 to 15 years) unless a major event such as fire, flood or heavy snow increases expected maintenance, repair or replacement schedules. When possible, work would be accomplished outside of peak use season or during weekdays.

Wilderness Character:

Untrammelled: This alternative is not expected to manipulate or control natural processes in the wilderness.

Undeveloped: This alternative would not create any new developments.

Naturalness: Overall, naturalness in the wilderness would increase over many years, as vegetation returns to the permit routes and they become more natural in appearance. The potential for encounters with motorized vehicles or equipment would be unlikely to occur on an annual basis and would only be for infrequent uses associated with emergencies or the maintenance of range improvements if approved following a minimum decision analysis.

Opportunities for outstanding primitive and unconfined types of recreation: Effects to types of primitive and unconfined recreation activities would not be expected. Effects related to sight and sound disturbances of motorized vehicles associated with grazing management to the quality of the recreation experience would be low as described for solitude below. Hunters and other visitors are also likely walking along permit routes as trails and would continue to do so while the routes are still observable. Visitor use patterns would be expected to remain the same as those described for Alternatives A and B.

Opportunities for outstanding solitude: Due to the timing and limited number of trips and visitor use patterns associated with the allotments, it would be expected visitors would not encounter permittees using motorized vehicles or equipment in the wilderness on an annual basis. The potential for encounters related to grazing management would only be during very infrequent use associated with emergencies or the maintenance of range improvements. Effects to solitude associated with motorized vehicle use would be very low to none. The number of permittee trips needed by horseback would greatly increase to still meet salting needs, because many more horseback trips would be needed to distribute the weight of the salt, than compared to what a motorized vehicle could carry in a single trip. This could negatively affect overall solitude for visitors seeking to be free of the sight and sound of others. Again these effects would be expected to be temporary lasting minutes, unless overnight trips become necessary for some permittees as a result of the increased travel time.

Heritage and Cultural Resources: There are no expected effects to heritage and cultural resources. Permittees would be utilizing established routes that received motorized vehicle use for many years prior to the designation of the wilderness. Any work requiring ground disturbing activities would require prior approval from BLM.

Maintaining Contrast and Skills: This alternative would provide the most contrast to methods of travel given that permittees would be utilizing horseback or foot travel for their usual annual operational activities in wilderness, when compared to the use of motorized vehicles outside of wilderness.

Special Provisions: No additional special provisions identified.

Safety of Visitors, Personnel, and Contractors: The potential for human injury would be higher for this alternative given that the work would involve more physical challenge and risk associated with walking, riding a horse, and using pack stock. The time spent in the wilderness would be much greater and capacity of carrying emergency related supplies would be more limited.

Economic and Time Constraints: Under this alternative the longer trips and additional trips, primarily associated with salting and the additional time for checking water reservoirs, would be needed to accomplish grazing management work in wilderness. This could require weeks worth of additional work in most of the allotments.

Permittees would need to utilize pack animals to distribute salt. Each block weighs fifty pounds or can be given to cattle in granular form (50–100 pound bags) which is more easily assimilated. Current estimates are that cattle consume 2-5 pounds of salt per month each, depending on growth stages of vegetation, if cattle are lactating, and other circumstances. Requiring ranchers to haul in these quantities of salt on horseback would be time-consuming, economically costly, and in some areas, very difficult depending on the large amounts of salt that would be needed. If adequate salt is not provided an animal's ability to convert forage to body weight would be affected, reducing milk production and corresponding reduced calf weight at weaning. Magnesium deficiencies would also occur and could cause sickness (grass tetany) or death.

The time spent checking of water developments would also increase. Timely knowledge about water availability in allotments that heavily depend on water reservoirs is critical to a permittee's ability to move cattle out of an area or pasture before their health is at risk.

All of this additional work would also be taking place during the busiest time of the year for permittees, potentially requiring the hiring of additional staff. The skill level of those doing the work would need to be higher, including the ability to pack bulky and heavy loads. If the hiring of staff was needed, there would also be an increase in workload and costs associated with employee administration, especially for those operations which do not currently have hired help. Permittees might also need to acquire new or additional pack stock or pack equipment. This additional cost and workload, could jeopardize the long term viability of grazing on these allotments.

Additional Wilderness-specific Comparison Criteria: The supplemental values of scenic, geologic, historic and vegetative qualities would not be affected.

Alternative # D: Proposed Action

Description: Under this alternative, the use of motorized vehicles would only be authorized where there is no practical alternative for doing the work using nonmotorized or nonmechanized forms of travel. Permit routes currently utilized in wilderness follow old closed routes (See Map TP-6) most of which appear to be two-track roads or historical roads that existed prior to the designation of the wilderness in 2000. The maintenance of range improvement could continue using the minimum tool necessary under a site specific minimum decision analysis. Any repair work needed on permit routes would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and would be the minimum tool necessary under a site specific minimum decision analysis and not to exceed conditions in place at the time the wilderness was designated.

Alvord, Carlson Creek, Fields, Mann Lake, Serrano Point Allotments, Roaring Springs FFR:

Under this alternative, permittees would be able to distribute large quantities of salt with a motorized vehicle along permit routes in their allotment given that it would not be practical to do this work on horseback, considering the weight requirements and the number of trips needed. Other activities such as checking cattle, range improvements or minor range improvement repairs could also take place on these trips. Any other trips needed would be conducted with nonmotorized or nonmechanized forms of travel. Road conditions near to or adjacent to the wilderness are relatively good for truck and horse trailer access for these allotments.

Alvord Peak, South Steens, Frazier Field: Under this alternative, permittees would be able to distribute large quantities of salt with a motorized vehicle along permit routes in their allotment given that it would not be practical to do this work on horseback, considering the weight requirements and the increased number of trips needed. Other activities such as checking cattle, range improvements or minor range improvement repairs could also take place on these trips. Any other trips needed would be conducted with nonmotorized or nonmechanized forms of travel.

In these three allotments, permittees would be able to continue to utilize motorized vehicles to check water reservoirs as needed. All three of these allotments rely heavily on water reservoirs, and checking water levels is a critical need that is time sensitive. Frazier Field relies almost exclusively on water reservoirs and checking them by foot or horseback would require several more trips from the base property which is 75 miles away and would most likely require hiring staff. For Alvord Peak and South Steens Allotment, both of which are administered by the same permittee, horse use would add several weeks of work with an additional 32 miles round trip for Alvord Peak and 33 miles round for South Steens, due to poor road conditions limiting access to a horse trailer. Foot access would still add weeks of work due to the number of water reservoirs and water holes to be checked. It would not be practical to require foot or horse use for this critical and time sensitive need. Generally this permittee utilizes either a motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle for these trips. In areas where helicopter use occurred prior to wilderness designation, it could be authorized to continue in place of other motorized trips for authorized activities.

Effects

Utilizing motorized vehicles on permit routes (See Map TP-6) for large quantity salting activities would generally involve three trips during the grazing season. Utilizing motorized vehicles on permit routes with water reservoirs (See Map TP-6) would generally involved 10 to 20 trips per grazing season.

Wilderness Character:

Untrammeled: This alternative is not expected to manipulate or control natural processes in the wilderness.

Undeveloped: This alternative would not create any new developments.

Naturalness: Some reclamation of the permit routes may occur. Most routes would appear to casual observers as two-track routes receiving occasional use. Effects to naturalness from permit routes with water reservoirs would be the same as Alternatives A and B. Most of the permit routes do not have water reservoirs and would be expected to receive less use. As a result, the return of additional vegetation, especially grass species, would be more likely to occur than under Alternatives A and B. The chance for encounters and disturbance to visitors' perceived naturalness would be reduced due to lower number of expected trips than in Alternatives A and B.

Opportunities for outstanding primitive and unconfined types of recreation: Effects to types of primitive and unconfined recreation activities would not be expected. The utilization of motorized vehicles on permit routes would not affect the types of activities available, but could potentially affect the quality of the experience, especially related to naturalness and solitude which are each addressed separately for this alternative. Hunters and other visitors are also likely walking along permit routes as trails and would continue to do so. Visitor use patterns would be expected to remain the same to those described for Alternatives A and B.

Opportunities for outstanding solitude: Due to the timing and limited number of trips and visitor use patterns associated with the allotments, it would be expected that most visitors would

not encounter permittees using motorized vehicles or a helicopter in the wilderness. The potential for encounters would be greater on routes with water reservoirs in South Steens and Frazier Field Allotments, but would be expected to be less than the 10-20 trips each season given that an encounter would not likely occur during each trip. If an encounter occurs, effects to solitude would be temporary (minutes) in nature as described for Alternatives A and B. Encounters in the Alvord Peak Allotment would also be expected to be low to none in any given year, because this area of the wilderness receives very little if any regular use by visitors, due to access limitations.

Heritage and Cultural Resources: There are no expected effects to heritage and cultural resources. Permittees would be utilizing established routes that received motorized vehicle use for many years prior to the designation of the wilderness. Any work requiring ground disturbing activities would require prior approval from BLM.

Maintaining Contrast and Skills: This alternative would provide some contrast to methods of travel for those trips where permittees utilize horseback or foot travel in the wilderness when compared to the use of motorized vehicles outside of wilderness.

Special Provisions: No additional special provisions identified.

Safety of Visitors, Personnel, and Contractors: This alternative would still provide a high degree of safety, given that the number of trips into the wilderness would not be greatly increased by the need to pack in salt on horseback or check water reservoirs. If motorized vehicle use is performed in a safe manner, it is not expected that the safety of visitors would be affected.

Economic and Time Constraints: Under this alternative activities that could not be practically accomplished through the use of horseback or on foot would still utilize motorized vehicles. Critical cattle health and survival needs associated with the provision of salt and water would still be met. There would be an increase in the amount of time needed for other operational activities, but would likely be less than a few days for each allotment and would not require the hiring of additional staff.

Additional Wilderness-specific Comparison Criteria: The supplemental values of scenic, geologic, historic and vegetative qualities would not be affected.

Step 2 Recommendation: What is the Minimum Activity?

The recommended alternative is: Alternative D

Describe the rationale for selecting this alternative:

- As provided for under Appendix A, Congressional Grazing Guidelines, Alternative D would authorize occasional use of motorized vehicles, where such use occurred prior to wilderness designation, for which there are not practical alternatives on foot or horseback in this particular wilderness.
- No significant adverse impacts are expected to the natural environment.
- Effects to wilderness character are expected to be relatively low given the limited number of trips and the timing of the trips relative to visitor use patterns.
- Alternative D provides for viable and sustainable grazing and is not expected to result in the slow phasing out of grazing activities in wilderness where provided for in the Steens Act.
- Alternative D supports maintaining the cultural, economic, ecological, and social health of the Steens Mountain area in Harney County, Oregon.

Describe any monitoring and reporting requirements:

- Develop monitoring methodology with photographs for permit route conditions utilizing existing baseline road information where available.
- Continue ongoing monitoring work in identifying and taking action in areas where unauthorized motorized vehicle use is occurring. Historically this use has been associated with the recreational use of motorized vehicles (all terrain and full size four wheel drives) in the summer and fall.
- Any reports of encounters between the public and permittees would be tracked as part of the annual monitoring summary report for the wilderness.

Please check any Wilderness Act Section 4(c) uses approved in this alternative:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> mechanical transport | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landing of aircraft |
| <input type="checkbox"/> motorized equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> temporary road |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> motor vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> structure or installation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> motorboats | |

Be sure to record and report any authorizations of Wilderness Act Section 4(c) uses according to agency procedures.

Approvals	Signature	Name	Position	Date
Prepared by:	<i>/signature on file/</i>	Laura Dowlan	Outdoor Recreation Planner, Wilderness	3/21/07
Recommended:	<i>/signature on file/</i>	Fred McDonald	Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist	4/11/07
Approved:	<i>/signature on file/</i>	Karla Bird	Field Manager, Andrews/Steens Mountain Resource Area	4/11/07