Appendix H

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Report

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
GVWR	Gross Vehicle Weight Rating
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
PRMP	Proposed Resource Management Plan
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
VRM	Visual Resource Management

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provides a framework for integrating recreation opportunities and non-recreation activities on public lands so that managers can make sound land use decisions. The BLM approach to ROS applies criteria to a land area's physical, social, and managerial parameters to describe the existing conditions that define a land area's capability and suitability for providing a particular range of recreational experience opportunities. For example, some recreationists seek an undeveloped setting emphasizing solitude and self-reliance while others seek an experience with more comfort, security, and social opportunities. The ROS framework helps provide managers guidance to ensure that recreational opportunities are provided for a wide range of users.

Typically, ROS is divided into six major classes:

- Urban/developed;
- Rural;
- Roaded natural;
- Semi-primitive motorized;
- Semi-primitive non-motorized; and
- Primitive.

These six classes describe conditions that range from high-density urban environments to primitive settings. Along this continuum physical, social, and managerial conditions will vary. Physical conditions for the urban classification include areas with relatively easy access and a high degree of human alteration, such as buildings, roads, and powerlines. In contrast, the physical environment classification is remote and relatively free of human alteration. The social environment varies from settings with abundant opportunities for solitude to areas where other people are nearly always within sight and sound. The managerial environment is the degree and type of management actions taken to control visitation. Urban/developed sites may have more on-site aids such as interpretive and directional signing whereas at primitive sites, less interpretation is desired or necessary.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This assessment was conducted during the summer of 2002-2003 field season and included: aerial overflights and photography, on-the-ground field visits, and GPS and GIS mapping. The objectives were multi-focused because this information was to be used for visual resource assessments, off-highway-vehicle (OHV) classifications, rivers and special area inventories. Aerial observations provided a landscape scale view of the conditions throughout the planning area. Aerial overflights also provided an overall picture of the recreation opportunities and the competing resources for those opportunities.

Aerial assessments documented human features, such as roads, trails, powerlines, bridges, structures, clearings, and other evidence of human use. Remoteness and accessibility from roads, trails, and settlements were also assessed. In addition to physical characteristics current and potential future activities were addressed. For example, helicopter tourism is a

large and growing industry that may compete with recreationists seeking solitude. Thus, it is important to analyze and consider resource protection, recreation values, and the demand on these resources by a variety of users.

3.0 DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM CLASSES

For the Ring of Fire Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) select classes were chosen to best represent this area. They are:

ROS Class	Setting
Primitive	Area is typically characterized by a remote unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Concentration of users is rare and evidence of other users is minimal. Sights and sounds of the road systems are nonexistent. Human-built structures are few and far between or are inconspicuous. In general, visual resources are natural and unaltered. Vegetation and soils remain in a natural state. This class may include areas accessed by aircraft and helicopter and is therefore motorized unless otherwise noted. Example: Mountains of the Haines and Skagway region, Alaska Peninsula, Neacola Mountains.
Semi-primitive non-motorized	Area is characterized by a predominantly unmodified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. Area is more accessible than primitive class, but is free of maintained motorized trails and roads. Sights and sounds of the road system are possible but from a distance. Vegetation, soils, and visual resources are predominantly natural but some effects may exist such as a foot or game trail. Example: Chugach Mountains
Semi-primitive motorized	Area is characterized by a predominantly unmodified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is moderate, and evidence of use is present but rare. Area is accessible to OHVs less than 1,500 gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and generally, is not accessible to most street four-wheel drive vehicles. Sights and sounds of the road system may or may not be dominant. Some portions of the area may be distant from road systems, but all portions are near motorized trails. Vegetation and soils are predominantly natural but localized areas of disturbance may exist such as an impacted trail. Example: Knik River Basin
Rural	Area is characterized by a substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are obvious. Sights and sounds of humans are readily evident and concentration of users is moderate to high. Areas typically are readily accessible to conventional motorized vehicles and are in areas where homes, businesses, and other structures are common. Traffic levels are fairly constant since area is populated. Large areas of extensively modified soil and vegetation exist. Example: Campbell Tract Facility and other small parcels that remain in BLM management but may be directly and cooperatively managed by State, borough, municipal, and Native entities. These will not be identified on ROS maps due to the small scale of such lands.

4.0 RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM PRESCRIPTION TABLES

Physical Criteria – Resources and Facilities

	Primitive	Semi-Primitive non-motorized	Semi-Primitive motorized	Rural
Remoteness	High opportunity for solitude and self reliance More than 5 miles from any road No improvements within sight	Moderate opportunity for solitude and self reliance Within 5 miles of a road Human improvements may be within distant sight or sound	Moderate opportunity for solitude and self reliance Adjacent to or easily accessible to access points or trail systems Human improvements may be within distant sight or sound.	Low opportunities for solitude High feeling of safety On or near primary roads near a town or city
Naturalness	Undisturbed natural landscape	Naturally appearing landscape, modifications not readily noticeable Trails may or may not be present	Naturally appearing landscape, modifications not readily noticeable Trails are evident but not dominant to landscape	Natural or viewable landscape visibly modified by human development
Facilities	Generally none, but may contain remote cabins and single track game trails. Cross-country travel is unrestricted	Non-motorized foot trails that are somewhat maintained	Motorized trails (may have seasonal or other restriction) that are maintained	Modern facilities available either on-site or within a short driving distance

Social Criteria - Visitor Use and Users

	Primitive	Semi-Primitive non-motorized	Semi-Primitive motorized	Rural
Social Encounters	Little probability of visual or direct social encounter Small group size (<3)	Moderate possibility of visual or direct social encounter Group size (<5)	Moderate possibility of visual or direct social encounter. Likely to be of similar recreational interest Group size (<5)	High probability of social encounters Group size highly variable People frequently in view
Evidence of Use	Footprints or evidence of old camp site	Footprints and some vegetative trampling Increased frequency of camp sites or human use	Footprints, motorized vehicle tracks, airstrips, engine noise Increased frequency of camp sites and tracks deeper into the back country	Well improved trails hide footprints or tracks but social trails are evident Increased likelihood of trash

Administrative – Management Controls and Service Settings

	Primitive	Semi-Primitive non-motorized	Semi-Primitive motorized	Rural
Visitor Services	Basic maps Primarily self researched and guided Guided opportunities depending upon services requested	Maps with locations of known trails identified Guided opportunities depending upon services requested	Maps with locations of known trails identified and regulations associated with those trails Guided opportunities depending upon services requested	Community bulletins, newspaper ads, radio broadcasts and other multi-media mediums to alert recreation opportunities Numerous guides readily available
Management Controls	No visitor controls No use limits Enforcement presence very rare	No visitor controls or use limits Enforcement presence rare but available	Visitor controls in areas that have specific restrictions Potential use limits Enforcement presence rare but available	Rules clearly posted Routine enforcement patrols
User Fees	None (Fees associated with Commercial Use Permit Required)	None (Fees associated with Commercial Use Permit Required)	None (Fees associated with Commercial Use Permit Required)	Where applicable (Fees associated with Commercial Use Permit Required)

5.0 SUMMARY

The Ring of Fire planning area spans a large geographic area ranging from Southeast Alaska to the Aleutian Islands. BLM-managed lands are quite fragmented, making it difficult to provide and apply long-term recreation management prescriptions unique to a specific area. To this end, the ROS applications are fairly general. Figures 3.6-1 through 3.6-3 in Appendix A show the ROS prescriptions based on the earlier described resource assessments and other resource uses such as OHV use, visual resource management (VRM) values and special area classifications.

Because a large portion of the BLM-managed lands within the planning area are selected for conveyance, many recreation management prescriptions are also made cooperatively with neighboring land management agencies, private landowners, and the public.

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