
4.11 RECREATION/SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Proposed Action

Direct Impacts

Impacts to dispersed recreational users could result from increased traffic on local roads, increased noise levels, decreased air quality, and decreased visual quality within the viewshed during construction and operation. Also, both construction and operational noise and visual disturbances may decrease the local presence of avian and mammalian wildlife, potentially decreasing wildlife viewing opportunities.

Most of the impacts would occur during the construction phase of the project and would be temporary. Given the small area that would be affected compared to the surrounding areas available for dispersed recreational uses, impacts would be limited.

Vulcan Power would not restrict public access to the main north-south road or to Simpson Pass east-west routes. Road closures would be necessary in the event of an off-highway vehicle race. Vulcan Power would comply with road closures and resume activities when roads reopened.

Indirect Impacts Based on a Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario

Future actions based on the reasonable development scenario could result in indirect impacts. Development, production, and closeout initiated under a lease agreement should not contribute to any of the geothermal areas a significant number of new residents who could increase the use of existing recreational facilities; therefore, there is a low potential risk of impacts from increasing the use of existing recreational facilities.

Implementing the Proposed Action could result in the eventual development of energy resources in the lease areas and in areas of dispersed recreational resources. Development in all areas would reduce the amount of natural landscape as well as the amount of areas available for recreationists seeking solitude; however, the lease areas are only a small portion of the surrounding landscapes. The creation of new roads would increase opportunities for people to access public lands and create trails and routes that currently do not exist and would be considered a beneficial impact. The creation of new trails on otherwise undeveloped, unspoiled natural areas would also be considered an adverse impact.

Subsequent NEPA analysis would determine the actual impact to recreation and special designations.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would have no impacts to recreational uses of the project area.