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## ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

The following travel management guidelines and mitigation measures are common to all alternatives.

1. Designated roads and trails would be available for use by both motorized and non-motorized means of transportation unless otherwise indicated at site location (*RMP decisions 6041, 6075*).
2. Cross-country or off-route travel *is allowed* to occur in the Sand Hills area for the following activities, so long as new routes are not created and resource damage does not occur.
  - a. Motorized travel up to 300 feet from roads for camping, recovering game animals, collecting firewood, picnicking, or other uses that do not require specific authorizations or permits (*RMP decisions 6038, 6075*).
  - b. During the hunting season, individuals possessing a valid WGFD “Disabled Hunter Permit” or “Disabled Hunter Companion Permit” would be allowed to use an OHV to hunt and retrieve harvested big game and trophy game animals beyond 300 feet without additional authorization (*RMP decision 6041*).
  - c. Muscle-powered activities such as hiking, back-packing, and snow-shoeing are allowed to occur off existing routes (*RMP decision 6040*).
  - d. Over-snow vehicles are allowed when snow cover is sufficient to prevent resource damage (*RMP decision 6041*).
  - e. Other necessary tasks that require OHV off-route travel would be allowed as long as resource damage does not occur. These tasks include, but are not limited to, activities such as maintaining range improvements, animal husbandry activities by grazing lessee and his or her agents, and surveying ROW or other work-related tasks authorized by, or which lead to the issuance, of a permit or authorization. The authorized officer may allow necessary tasks without issuance of a formal permit (*RMP decision 6075*).
3. All permitted surface-disturbing activities and permits which include off-road travel would include the mitigation measures outlined in appendix C.
4. Travel on roads designated as limited to authorized use only would be restricted to those grazing lessees that own and maintain the rangeland improvement projects associated with the route and maintenance of those improvements.
5. All historic trail ruts on BLM-administered public lands (historic trails will be inventoried and closed to OHV use as they are identified as having integrity of trail) (*RMP decision 6075*).

## **NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

The Casper RMP (BLM 2007) requires that motorized travel be limited to designated roads and trails. These designations have never been completed. OHV travel is occurring on all existing roads and trails within the Sand Hills planning area. This alternative is not viable because it does not conform to national OHV standards nor with current management plan; therefore, it is not analyzed further.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE (A)**

Alternative A consists of designating all existing roads and trails into the transportation system. New motorized routes would be integrated into the system to allow legal access for new landowners. Under this alternative, there could be up to 25 new access points. The boundary of the planning area would not be adjusted to include public lands to the southwest, limiting the planning area to a total of 17,630 acres.

Primitive roads cross the majority of the Sand Hills TMA at several locations and would be made available for all manner of OHV use. These roads would not be required to meet minimum BLM road standards, although repairs would be made where necessary to prevent further erosion.

The BLM would seek to obtain walk-in area agreements and if successful would construct a trailhead and parking area on the public land near the access location. Non-motorized transportation would be allowed on all designated routes within the TMA and would not be restricted to the developed routes. Cross-country travel would be allowed as long as resource damage does not occur. Additionally, the BLM would seek suitable locations for a new non-motorized trail system.

ROWs authorized for the development of existing leases would be approved at the lowest maintenance level necessary to protect soils and existing vegetation and to maintain consistency with safe vehicle operation. Rights-of-way would be shared whenever possible and would be reclaimed to the lowest standard required for facility management.

In order to accurately analyze the impacts of alternative A, all inventoried routes have been included in the totals regardless of surface ownership. The vast majority of all routes were described as primitive roads with a total distance of 207 miles. There are 97 miles of roads on private land, 29 miles on Wyoming state lands, and 83 miles on public lands. Alternative A would designate the entire 83 miles of BLM-administered routes for OHV use. These designated routes would remain available to adjacent landowners and persons obtaining permission to cross private lands. Traces of the Bozeman Trail identified within the analysis area, would be closed. Map 5 depicts the transportation system as described under alternative A.

Under this alternative, the BLM would not make any recommendations to the state of Wyoming related to the transportation network. The existing road network would be maintained.

## **THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (B)**

The preferred alternative strives to provide a transportation system that would meet the needs of the users while removing unnecessary routes in order to preserve natural resources. Under this alternative, the planning area boundary would be adjusted to include public lands located to the west and southwest increasing the TMA by 2,460 acres for a total of 20,090 acres of public surface. This would include an RMP amendment as TMA boundaries are defined at that level.

Alternative B designates specific routes that are commonly used and provides adequate transverse motorized access to all persons having legal admittance into the area. Designated routes would be available to all and would be signed accordingly. Repairs would be made to sections of designated routes with drainage or other erosion problems. Improvements would be as minimal as possible in order to preserve the natural appearing landscapes. Primitive routes necessary for maintenance of livestock and habitat improvement projects would be designated for authorized use only. Authorized use would be limited to those persons responsible for the project and use would be limited to project maintenance purposes only.

The BLM would seek to obtain right-of-way agreements across private land to allow non-motorized access through the Sand Hills TMA. If successful, the BLM would construct a trail head and parking area on the public land near the access location. Non-motorized transportation would be allowed on all designated routes within the planning area.

Rights-of-way authorized for the development of existing leases would be approved at the lowest maintenance level necessary to protect soils and existing vegetation and would use the designated transportation system to the greatest extent possible. Rights-of-way would be shared whenever reasonable to do so and would be reclaimed when no longer necessary.

On public surface, this alternative would designate 28 miles of primitive roads open to motorized use. The BLM would designate 12 miles of primitive roads as limited to authorized use only. A total of approximately 8 miles of existing travel routes on BLM lands would be closed. There would be a total of 34 miles of primitive roads within the analysis area that would not be impacted by this alternative. Traces of the Bozeman Trail identified within the analysis area, would be closed.

The BLM would work with the Wyoming state land board to reduce the overall number of roads on adjoining state trust lands. The intention of working more closely with the state land board would be to maintain the integrity of the transportation network, meet user needs, and reduce the overall impacts to the existing environment. Recommendations for motorized travel on state lands would include limiting motorized travel on 1 mile of ways to authorized users only, designating 11 miles of existing routes as open to motorized travel, and closures on 9 miles. BLM would provide no recommendations on a total of 9 miles of existing routes on state lands. Map 6 depicts the transportation system as described under alternative B.

## **THE PRESERVATION ALTERNATIVE (C)**

As described in alternative B, the planning area boundary would be adjusted to include public lands located to the southwest extending the total public surface to 20,090 acres.

Alternative C would reduce the total number of miles designated for motorized use within the transportation network. The major access roads would be upgraded to meet minimum BLM road standards and would be made available for use by all persons with legal access to the area. The remaining primitive roads would not be required to meet minimum BLM road standards and would be designated for authorized use only. Authorized use would be limited to persons responsible for maintaining rangeland improvement projects. Alternative C does not provide motorized access across the planning area.

The BLM would seek to obtain right-of way agreements through private lands to provide walk-in access. If successful, the BLM would construct a trail head and parking area on the public land nearest to the access location. Walk-in access would be allowed throughout the planning area.

Rights-of-way authorized for the development of existing leases would be approved at the lowest maintenance level necessary to protect soils and existing vegetation and still be within proper safety levels. Rights-of-way would be shared whenever possible and would be reclaimed as soon as possible.

On public surface, alternative C would designate 16 miles of existing routes as open to motorized travel. Additionally, 10 miles of primitive roads would be limited to authorized use only, and 27 miles of the existing transportation system would be closed. Reclamation efforts would be initiated when adequate re-growth does not occur naturally. A total of 35 miles would not be impacted by this alternative. Traces of the Bozeman Trail identified within the analysis area, would be closed.

The BLM would work with the Wyoming state land board to reduce the overall number of roads on adjoining state trust lands. The intention of working more closely with the state land board would be to maintain the integrity of the transportation network, meet user needs, and reduce the overall impacts to the existing environment. Recommendations for motorized use of Wyoming state lands, under alternative C would include 4 miles of ways being limited to authorized use only, 7 miles of existing routes being open to motorized use, and 13 miles of existing routes being closed. There is an additional 7 miles of existing routes on the state properties for which the BLM would provide no recommendations. Map 7 depicts the transportation system as described under alternative C.