

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Hyattville Travel Management and Route Designations Bureau of Land Management – Worland Field Office

WY-010-EA07-118

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Need

The proposed action would approve the Hyattville Travel Management Plan to implement the travel management decisions that were made in the Washakie Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP was completed in 1988 and designated motorized vehicle use along the west slope of the Bighorn Mountains as “limited to designated roads and trails.” The Hyattville Travel Management Plan would define and implement an appropriate network of vehicle routes for use within the Travel Management Area (TMA). This plan will ensure that an adequate and appropriate level of motorized access exists within the project area. This EA will define a system of motorized routes that provides access while at the same time recognizing the various resource concerns present within the project area.

The decision to allow use of motorized vehicles on designated roads and trails in the Hyattville TMA was analyzed in the Washakie RMP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and documented in the Washakie RMP Record of Decision (ROD). The need for the proposed action is to determine which roads and trails to designate for vehicle use and how they will be identified on-the-ground.

Management of Off Highway Vehicles (OHV's) on BLM administered public land is necessary to address public and administrative access needs, protect resources, promote public safety, and minimize conflicts among the various uses of public lands.

Since the 1988 RMP, there have been noticeable changes in the popularity and capabilities of OHV's. For example, in 1988, the OHV was a new phenomenon and their use was nowhere near as prevalent as it is today. Growth in OHV usage is increasing each year. Nationally, from 1995 to 2001, OHV sales grew from 250,000 per year to over 750,000 per year. In 2002, the first full year of Wyoming State OHV permit system, sales totaled 30,000 permits. In 2004, Sales grew 10 percent to 32,393. Along with the increasing numbers of motorized recreationists, the physical characteristics of the vehicles themselves, particularly with regard to OHV's, have changed. They have changed from the original, relatively unstable fat-tired three wheeler less than 40 inches wide, to much more stable four wheel drive four wheelers that are 48 inches wide with larger displacement engines. Along with this growth, a corresponding growth in conflicts between users has occurred. In 2006, responses to Game and Fish Department Hunter surveys,

indicated that 30 percent of comments referred to conflicts between motorized and non-motorized hunters.

1.2 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, Policies, Plans or Other Environmental Analyses

The principal Bureau permitting regulations for ORVs are found in 43 CFR 8340 and Executive Order 11644 (as amended by Executive Order 11989) issued in 1972. The principal statute law governing public land management is the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

The following national strategies were prepared to provide guidance in the travel management planning process:

National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands. U.S. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Land Management. January 2001.

National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan. U.S. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Land Management. November 2002.

Additional guidance for management of motorized vehicles on BLM-managed public lands in Wyoming is available in the following document:

Wyoming Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Strategy 2006

The following environmental assessments were completed, with public participation, in association with the Medicine Lodge Habitat Management Area.

WY -015-EA5-19 Washakie ORV trail designation for Medicine Lodge, Renner and South Brokenback walk-in hunt area. February 17, 1995

As well as a Federal Register Notice which closes portions of Paintrock Canyon to motorized vehicles.

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1.3 Conformance with land use plan

This environmental assessment is tiered to, and incorporates the following documents by reference: The Washakie Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), 1988. The RMP specifies general management direction for the eastern portion of the Worland Field Office, including management of motorized vehicles. The EIS contains background information on the existing environment and resources found in the area and environmental consequences of various management actions. These documents are available for review in the BLM Worland Field Office. The Washakie RMP provides that travel management

in areas along the west slope of the Bighorn Mountains will be managed based on “designated roads and trails”

The alternatives presented below represent a range of actions that would be in conformance with the RMP.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

1.3.1 Inventory

An inventory of the roads and trails in the planning area was completed using GPS/GIS technology, aerial photos, and historic information. The Hyattville Travel Management Area Overview Map represents all routes known to exist, that are legally open and in use as of April 2007. Some routes in remote areas may exist that are not represented. Two open house meetings during the 30 day scoping period provided an opportunity to identify routes the public are using that may have been overlooked during the inventory process. Upon completion of the travel management plan, a decision record would approve the official Hyattville Travel Management Map showing the designated network of routes. Any modifications or additions would be addressed through the appropriate level of NEPA analysis as specified in the implementation section of the plan.

1.3.2 Criteria and Route Assessment

The consideration of route designations and route closures were developed through public participation and by the BLM Worland Field Office. This information was then used by an interdisciplinary team to assess the route inventory map and make initial road use recommendations. The following are guidelines used by the team in conducting their analysis:

A: Provide a road network with a density which allows for adequate public access while reducing conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users and conflicts between people and wildlife

B: Areas with Steep slopes and highly erodible soils or shallow soils should be considered for closure. Roads which climb more than 25 percent slopes should be closed pursuant to the Washakie RMP. Attempts to minimize the number of creek crossings as well as vehicle traffic in wetland areas should be considered.

C: Retain routes which provide opportunities for loop tours.

D. Routes which conflict with wildlife security areas, migration corridors, and sage grouse leks should be considered for closure.

E. Retain routes which provide access to range improvements and adjacent land owners. Determine if route requires administrative access only or general access to the public.

F. Routes that are an undue safety risk for vehicle travel should be considered for closure.

1.3.3 Public Involvement

The travel management designation decision that limited motorized travel along the west slope of the Bighorn Mountains to designated roads and trails was made with public participation during the Washakie RMP planning process.

Public involvement was requested for the Hyattville Travel Management planning process to identify the specific routes to be designated for use and the actions necessary to implement the designation on-the-ground. A scoping notice was mailed on March 29, 2007 to a mailing list of 48 interested parties for a 30-day review and comment period beginning on April 2, 2007 and ending on May 1, 2007

A news release was published in the Northern Wyoming Daily News on March 31, 2007 and the Basin Republican Rustler on April 5, 2007, and posted on the BLM Worland Field Office website, announcing the planning process and the open house meetings.

Two open house meetings were held. The first was on the evening of April 12, 2007 in Hyattville Wyoming. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 people. The second meeting was held on April 16, 2007 at the Worland BLM Field Office. This meeting was attended by approximately 7 people. A total of 13 written comments were received during the scoping period. Three comments addressed issues that are outside of the planning area. Two comments were for additional management of roads, three comments addressed a need for seasonal closures or vehicle limitations on roads, and five comments addressed a desire to maintain existing conditions.

On April 17, 2007, notification letters were sent to representatives of the Arapaho, Crow, Northern Cheyenne, and Shoshone tribes for consultation.

The comments generated during the scoping period were considered during development of the alternatives for this environmental assessment (EA) and specific suggestions were incorporated into the action items within the travel management plan where appropriate.

1.4 Decisions to be Made

The Authorized Officer (AO) must select a preferred alternative to become the final Travel Management Plan for the Hyattville TMA and the associated route designation map.

The AO must also determine whether or not the proposed action could result in significant impact to the human environment. If not, this determination would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI.) If the impacts could be significant, an environmental impact statement would be necessary.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 Alternative 1: Existing Routes Remain Open (No Action)

Alternative 1, the no action alternative would be a continuation of existing conditions. Travel would be allowed on existing roads and trails with no specific route designations, travel management plan, or rehabilitation efforts. An appropriate network of vehicle routes would not be analyzed or designated, leaving the area susceptible to route proliferation due to cross-country travel. Visitor use levels and resource concerns would continue to increase, as is the current trend. ORV management necessary to address public and administrative access needs, protect resources, promote public safety and minimize conflicts among various uses of public lands would not be implemented. The ORV designations in the Washakie RMP of “limited to designated roads and trails” would not be implemented. See Hyattville TMA Alternative 1 Map.

This alternative allows for 165 miles of roads with a road density of 2.66 miles of road per square mile of BLM administered land.

2.2 Alternative 2 – Designated Route System. Preferred Alternative

Alternative 2, would approve a Travel Management Plan for the Hyattville TMA area and associated implementation actions would close all non-essential routes. This plan allows for main travel routes known as the Transportation System Roads as well as stem routes which provide access to adjacent property owners or range improvements. The travel management designation, “limited to designated roads and trails” would be implemented according to the Hyattville TMA Alternative 2 Map showing the road use recommendations as either “Open” or “Closed”. (See Attachment 1: Route analysis)

The objectives that would be met by implementing the proposed action include:

- Stopping the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails
- Designating roads based on criteria established in Section 1.3.2
- Implement a clearly defined road network that is understandable to the public, provides necessary access, minimizes resource degradation, and is enforceable.
- Include routes on the BLM asset management system to allow for road maintenance and where necessary establish easements.

The route designations would apply only to BLM administered public land and would be clearly identified by maps, information signs, and route markers. While the BLM cannot make route designation decisions on land other than that managed by the BLM, it is inevitable that the decisions made on BLM administered lands will affect the adjacent land owners. BLM has attempted to take this into consideration. Further, even when a route is designated as open, if it is accessed solely through private lands, or lands administered by other agencies, the public would have to legally access the BLM lands to use the route. On the attached maps, some routes are shown on lands adjacent to BLM, and BLM does not intend to imply that these routes are open to public use or uses. They are only included for connectivity and reference purposes.

The travel management plan identifies specific action items to implement the designations and achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Maps: Produce an official travel management map to document route designations.
- Signs and Markers: Identify the designated routes on-the-ground in a clear and consistent manner to facilitate compliance and enforcement of the route designations.
- Education and Information: Provide clear and consistent information related to the route designations and the implementation process that will help ensure public understanding and compliance with the designations.
- Barriers: Use physical barriers if necessary to discourage use and allow rehabilitation of closed routes.
- Rehabilitation: Apply rehabilitation techniques to closed routes where necessary to speed the healing process, discourage use of closed routes through law enforcement practices, and minimize the impact on visual resources.
- Monitoring: Identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated resource needs for environmental monitoring.
- Enforcement: Identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated resource needs for compliance and enforcement related to the route designations.
- Maintenance: Document maintenance standards and needs.
- Implementation: Implement the action items specified in this plan in a consistent and timely manner.
- Specific Projects: Throughout this planning process, potential travel and access related projects were identified. The objective of this section of the plan is to document the projects to be implemented with this plan and the ideas for future consideration through the appropriate planning processes.

This alternative provides for 99 miles of open roads with a road density of 1.5 miles of road per square mile of BLM administered land.

2.3 Alternative 3 – Seasonal Closures / Vehicle type restrictions.

Alternative 3 would approve a Travel Management Plan for the Hyattville TMA and associated implementation actions which would implement a designated route system from June 1st through November 31st. The plan would also implement a seasonal closure period beginning on December 1 and ending on May 31 which would restrict travel to Transportation system roads only. This would provide large blocks of land that would have no motor vehicle use during certain times of the year when wildlife is most vulnerable to disturbance. The travel management designation, “limited to designated roads and trails” would be implemented according to the Hyattville Alternative 3 Map, showing the road use recommendations in the following categories, “Open” or “Seasonally closed”.

The objectives that would be met by implementing the proposed action include:

- Stopping the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails
- Implement a clearly defined road network that is understandable to the public, provides needed access, minimizes resource degradation, and is enforceable.
- Provide large areas without motor vehicle use for non-motorized uses and wildlife security areas during critical times of year.

The route designations would apply only to BLM administered public land and would be clearly identified by maps, information signs, and route markers. While the BLM cannot make route designation decisions on land other than that managed by the BLM, it is inevitable that the decisions made on BLM administered lands will affect the adjacent land owners. BLM has attempted to take this into consideration. Further, even when a route is designated as open, if it is accessed solely through private lands, or lands administered by other agencies, the public would have to legally access the BLM lands to use the route. On the attached maps, some routes are shown on lands adjacent to BLM, and BLM does not intend to imply that these routes are open to public use or uses. They are only included for connectivity and reference purposes.

The travel management plan identifies specific action items to implement the designations and achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Maps: Produce an official travel management map to document route designations.
- Signs and Markers: Identify the designated routes on-the-ground and the period of closure in a clear and consistent manner to facilitate compliance and enforcement of the route designations. Where necessary sign routes that are closed with an appropriate type of sign.
- Education and Information: Provide clear and consistent information related to the route designations and the implementation process that will help ensure public understanding and compliance with the designations.
- Barriers: Use physical barriers if necessary to discourage use and allow rehabilitation of closed routes.
- Rehabilitation: Apply rehabilitation techniques to closed routes where necessary to speed the healing process, discourage use of closed routes, and minimize the impact on visual resources.
- Monitoring: Identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated resource needs for environmental monitoring.
- Enforcement: Identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated resource needs for compliance and enforcement related to the route designations.
- Maintenance: Document maintenance standards and needs.
- Implementation: Implement the action items specified in this plan in a consistent and timely manner.
- Specific Projects: Throughout this planning process, potential travel and access related projects were identified. The objective of this section of the plan is to document the projects to be implemented with this plan and the ideas for future consideration through the appropriate planning processes.

This alternative provides 165 miles of roads during the open period with a road density of 2.66 miles of road per square mile of BLM administered land. During the road closure period, this alternative provides 44 miles of open roads with a road density of 7 tenths (0.7) miles of road per square mile of BLM administered lands.

2.4 Alternative 4 – Close non-transportation system routes.

Alternative 4 would approve a Travel Management Plan for the Hyattville TMA and associated implementation actions which would designate all roads within the planning area. This plan allows for access via main travel routes known as the Transportation System Roads. All two track roads off of these main routes would be closed. The travel management designation, “limited to designated roads and trails” would be implemented according to the Hyattville TMA Alternative 4 Map, showing the road use recommendations in the following categories, “Open” or “Closed”.

The objectives that would be met by implementing the proposed action include:

- Stopping the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails
- Provide large blocks of land that do not have motor vehicle routes.
- Having a clearly defined road network that is understandable to the public, provides needed access, does not cause resource degradation, and is enforceable.
- Provide wildlife security areas during critical times of year such as spring parturition periods for big game and also protection of sage grouse leks.

The route designations would apply only to BLM administered public land and would be clearly identified by maps, information signs, and route markers as specified in the travel management plan. While the BLM cannot make route designation decisions on land other than that managed by the BLM, it is inevitable that the decisions made on BLM administered lands will affect the adjacent land owners. BLM has attempted to take this into consideration. Further, even when a route is designated as open, if it is accessed solely through private lands, or lands administered by other agencies, the public would have to legally access the BLM lands to use the route. Some routes are shown on lands adjacent to BLM, and BLM does not intend to imply that these routes are open to public use or uses. They are only included for connectivity and reference purposes. Several routes shown on private property have been removed from the maps at the request of the private land owners.

The travel management plan identifies specific action items to implement the designations and achieve the following goals and objectives:

- Maps: Produce an official travel management map to document route designations.
- Signs and Markers: Identify the designated routes on-the-ground in a clear and consistent manner to facilitate compliance and enforcement of the route designations. Where necessary sign routes that are closed with an appropriate type of sign.
- Education and Information: Provide clear and consistent information related to the route designations and the implementation process that will help ensure public understanding and compliance with the designations.
- Barriers: Use physical barriers if necessary to discourage use and allow rehabilitation of closed routes.
- Rehabilitation: Apply rehabilitation techniques to closed routes where necessary to speed the healing process, discourage use of closed routes, and minimize the impact on visual resources.
- Monitoring: Identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated

resource needs for environmental monitoring.

- Enforcement: Identify specific actions, including timeframes, methods, and anticipated resource needs for compliance and enforcement related to the route designations.
- Maintenance: Document maintenance standards and needs.
- Implementation: Implement the action items specified in this plan in a consistent and timely manner.
- Specific Projects: Throughout this planning process, potential travel and access related projects were identified. The objective of this section of the plan is to document the projects to be implemented with this plan and the ideas for future consideration through the appropriate planning processes.

This alternative provides 44 miles of open roads with a road density of 7 tenths (0.7) miles of road per square mile of BLM administered lands.

2.5 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Study

An alternative would be to close all routes in the travel management planning area to motorized vehicle use. This alternative would maximize stability of the soils and vegetation in the area and would minimize disturbance to wildlife. However, this alternative would not meet the variety of access needs that have been identified, and would not be consistent with the travel management objective in the Washakie RMP *“To enhance and expand opportunities for recreation while intensively managing areas with high recreation values”*. This alternative would not fulfill the purpose and need for the travel management plan, therefore no further analysis of this alternative is necessary.

An alternative would be to change the designation of the travel management planning area as open to cross-country travel. This alternative would not be consistent with the RMP decision which applies to the designation of areas “limited to designated roads and trails.” The decision to limit travel along the west slope of the Bighorns was made with public participation during the Washakie RMP planning process. The travel management designations can only be changed through the land use planning process during an RMP amendment or revision. The purpose of this travel management plan is to implement the existing decision. This alternative would be beyond the scope of this implementation process, therefore no further analysis of this alternative is necessary.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Resources and features not present, and not discussed in this EA, include: Wilderness Study Areas, hazardous waste, Class I visual management areas, Class I Airsheds, prime or unique farmlands, Wild and Scenic Rivers, wild horses and Wilderness. There are no known important land uses, or proposals for use, that occur in the area such as mineral extraction that would be affected by, or have the potential for cumulative impact with these alternatives.

3.1 General Area Description

3.1. The Hyattville TMA is located east of Hyattville, Wyoming. The 39,738 acre (62 square mile) of BLM administered land planning area is bordered on the north and west by the Alkali Road (BLM road 1111), on the south by the Hyattville Logging Road (BLM Road 1117), on the east by the Bighorn National Forest boundary. This TMA excludes the Spanish Point Karst Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), the Medicine Lodge Habitat Management Area (HMA), the Medicine Lodge Wilderness Study Area (WSA), and the Paint Rock road management area.

3.2 Hydrology

3.2. Hyattville TMA watersheds include Military Creek, Luman Creek, Laddie Creek, Paintrock Creek, Wet Medicine Lodge Creek, and Dry Medicine Lodge Creek. Route designation decisions will attempt to minimize the number of creek crossings as well as vehicle traffic in wetland areas.

3.3 Soils, Vegetation, Forage and Grazing

3.3.1. Soils: The Washakie RMP sets a resource objective for soils to stabilize soils, increase vegetative production and maintain water quality. In general, if routes are to be closed, and where there is a decision to be made between two routes, the route which causes the least amount of soil disturbance should remain open based on criteria found in section 1.3.2.

The soils in the travel management area are as varied as the landscape on which they formed. Steep slopes combined with the soils that have naturally erosive characteristics, and shallow soils, place much of the travel management area at high risk to long term damage from unregulated off road vehicle use.

The soil maps for the travel management area are based on slope, surface texture and its influence on erosivity, and soil depth. A hazard rating (slight, moderate and severe) has been assigned to each soil map unit based on the interaction of these three characteristics. Most of the Hyattville TMA is rated as severe, due largely to steep slopes and shallow soils. These ratings do not necessarily imply that the entirety of any given map unit is either suitable or unsuitable for off road vehicular traffic; rather they are intended to depict areas where limitations, or lack thereof, are known to exist.

3.3.2 Vegetation : Amount of noxious and invasive weeds could potentially be reduced due to a reduction in transportation mechanisms should Alternatives 2, 3 or 4 be implemented.

3.3.3 Forage: Under Alternatives 2, 3 and 4, a slight increase in forage amount would be possible due to reclamation of routes that are either closed or during the season of closure, usually being in spring when forage production is highest.

3.3.4 Range: Under the Washakie RMP, permittees are allowed to drive off road for necessary tasks that do not cause environmental damage. This EA does not alter that decision.

3.3.4.1 The Hyattville TMA encompasses the following Grazing Allotments:

Spanish Point 00064, Anthony Timber 00222, Red Hills 00094, Medicine Lodge 00143, Cold Springs 00003, Matthews Ridge 00058, Forks 00095, Rannels 00142, Paint Rock Canyon 00092, Southside Group 00005, North House 00059, Parker 00221, Lower Weber 00002, Sheep Springs 00065, Myers Spring 00066, East Alkali 00217, East Hyattville 00213.

3.4 Wildlife

3.4.1 The Hyattville TMA is a very broken and rough area topographically and generally provides good escape cover for wildlife during hunting season. According to interagency species distribution maps, this area supports mule deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, chukar, sage grouse and blue grouse. Elk use the area yearlong, but a large portion of habitat representing about the upper fourth of the area is designated as crucial winter range. Mule deer use the area yearlong, while the total area is designated as regular winter range. Pronghorn sporadically use the lower foothills on a yearlong basis. Sage grouse use the lower and mid elevations yearlong and nest, brood, and rear young in the upper mountain sagebrush communities and wet meadows. Blue grouse occur in the conifer communities and upper mountain wet meadows.

3.5 Recreation

The Hyattville TMA is immediately east of Hyattville and approximately 30 miles north east of Worland. The location of this area makes it ideal for a wide variety of recreational activities. Popular activities include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, ATV driving, hunting, fishing, rock hounding, photography and study of the area archeology and history. The public and commercial outfitters use the area for big game, small game and bird hunting. In addition to the general public, there are Special Recreation Permits that authorize commercial guided recreational activities in the Hyattville TMA. This area draws numerous hunters from outside of Wyoming who tend to stay either in motels or large camps for a week or more.

Use of motorized vehicles in the area has occurred since the 1940s, mainly associated with livestock grazing and hunting. With the advent of four-wheel drive vehicles, more use has been made of the area for recreational driving and sightseeing. ATVs were first used in the area in the late 1970s and early 1980s and are becoming more popular for off-highway driving. In the 1990s hill climbing and recreational off-road driving began to create new routes. Advancements in vehicle technology have allowed increasing motorized access to previously inaccessible areas. ORV recreation is becoming more popular and this trend is expected to continue as the population and tourism within the Worland Field Office area continue to increase. There may be an increased interest in ORV recreation due to the new Wyoming State ORV sticker program, and the associated maps and public outreach efforts.

3.6 Visual Resources

Visual resources are discussed in detail in the Washakie RMP Draft EIS on page 19. 60 percent of the Hyattville TMA falls within Class II Visual Resource Management (VRM) rating,

15 percent falls within VRM Class III, and 25 percent is within VRM Class IV. VRM management classes determine the amount of modification allowed to the basic elements of the landscape. Class II is described as: “Changes in any of the basic elements caused by management activity should not be evident in the characteristic landscape. Contrasts are seen but must not attract attention”. Generally the project area is considered back country with natural appearing landscapes having modifications that are not readily noticeable. Livestock facilities and roads are the predominate features that provide contrasts to the natural landscape.

3.7 Cultural and Historical Resources

Tribal representatives on the Northern Wyoming Native American Consultation list will be mailed a separate notification letter regarding this Environmental Assessment and are invited to identify any concerns about sites significant to the history, culture, or religion of Native Americans within the project area pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (P.L. 89-665; 80 Stat. 915; 16 U.S.C. 470) or any sacred sites pursuant to Executive Order 13007 signed May 24, 1996. Any information provided in response will be taken into consideration during development of the Final Plan and Decision Record.

A variety of inventories to determine the presence or absence of cultural resource have been conducted in the planning area of this environmental assessment over the last 20 years. Mostly these inventories have been in response to energy, highway, range, and realty related activities requiring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Known site types provide a cross section of Wyoming and Big Horn Basin Archaeology and range in age from 11,000 years ago to relatively recent Historic time. Known prehistoric site types include camp and habitation sites, rock shelters, lithic scatters, cairns, sites with ceramics, rock alignments, isolated hearths, trails, stone circles, quarries, graves, and rock art. There are likely additional types which have not yet been identified and there are many more known sites that have not yet been recorded or evaluated. Known Historic period site types include a ditches and canals, trails and roads, stage and wagon routes, bridges, homesteads, corrals and livestock facilities, barns, trash dumps, graves/cemetery, and historic inscriptions. It is also likely that other Historic period site types exist but have not yet been identified and there are many more known sites that have not yet been recorded or evaluated.

Illegal collection of artifacts (both prehistoric and Historic), defacement of rock art and Historic inscriptions, illegal digging in prehistoric and Historic sites (aka Pot Hunting), rock collecting, recreational activities (both controlled and uncontrolled), livestock operations, construction, and other legal and illegal activities have contributed to the degradation of the resource on the Public Lands. This trend is not diminishing but increasing in amount and severity. Designation of routes is expected to facilitate identification of areas where unauthorized use or destruction of cultural resources is occurring.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.0.1 Mandatory Critical Elements

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Air Quality	4.4.1	4.4.2	4.4.3	4.4.4
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Not Present			
Cultural Resources	No Effect			
Prime or Unique Farmlands	Not Present			
Flood Plains	Not Present			
Native American Religious Concerns	4.2.1	4.2.2	4.2.3	4.2.4
Hazardous Wastes	Not Present			
Water Quality	4.3.1	4.3.2	4.3.3	4.3.4
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	4.3.1	4.3.2	4.3.3	4.3.4
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Not Present			
Wilderness	Not Present			
Environmental Justice	No Effect			
Invasive, Non-Native Species (Weeds)	4.5.1	4.5.2	4.5.3	4.5.4
Threatened or Endangered Species	Not Present			

4.1 Land Use

4.1.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

Current access routes and levels of trespass onto private land would remain the same or slightly increase based on expectations of continued growth of motorized recreation.

4.1.2 Alternative 2 Designated Routes Preferred Alternative

Designation of routes would help to reduce trespass on private land in the area. The maps, signs and markers, education and information associated with implementation of the plan would provide a means to educate the public about the location and access status of private lands.

4.1.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closures

Current routes of access would remain the same as is currently available except for periods of closure. During those periods, Routes that provide access to private lands and rights-of-way holders would remain available for use are not expected to affect the private landowners or Right-of-Way holders.

4.1.4 Alternative 4 Closure on Non-transportation system roads

Designation of routes would help to reduce trespass on private land in the area. The maps, signs and markers, education and information associated with implementation of

the plan would provide a means to educate the public about the location and access status of private lands. This would be found to a greater extent than that found in Alternative 2.

4.2 Native American Religious Concerns

4.2.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

Current levels of access would be maintained.

4.2.2 Alternative 2 Designated Routes Preferred Alternative

There would be a reduction in the number of access routes available to the public. There may be a reduction in the Tribes ability to access areas of interest with motorized traffic. Looting and other unauthorized use would be easier to detect if vehicles are used.

4.2.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closures

During the spring season there would be very little access to large areas. There may be a reduction in the Tribes ability to access areas of interest with motorized traffic. Looting and other unauthorized use would be easier to detect if vehicles are used.

4.2.4 Alternative 4 Closure of Non-transportation system roads

There would be a reduction in the number of access routes available to the public than that found in Alternative 2. There may be a reduction in the Tribes ability to access areas of interest with motorized traffic. Looting and other unauthorized use would be easier to detect if vehicles are used.

4.3 Hydrology

4.3.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

There will be no change in use and current impacts to hydrological resources caused by motor vehicles will continue. Siltation of streams and water sources will continue at the current level and see a gradual increase over time as the level of use gradually increases. Impacts to stream beds and banks will continue at the present rate with a slight increase expected in the future.

4.3.2 Alternative 2 Designated Routes Preferred Alternative

Route closures which traverse hydrological resources will reduce the amount of impact to hydrological resources. As these routes naturally rehabilitate the amount of siltation will also be reduced. Stream beds and banks will eventually stabilize. Access routes which remain open and have an interaction with hydrological resources will see a continued level of impacts to hydrological resources.

4.3.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closure

With a spring season of closure, hydrological resources will receive little impact during the time period when water levels are highest and soils have a greater tendency to be wet. During other times of year, travel would resume to current levels. Motorized travel is highest during the fall hunting season and impacts would occur at their current levels.

The fall hunting season normally experiences rain or snow fall events which coincide with this increase in use. These events can cause a large increase in impacts to hydrological resources through increased siltation and disturbance to stream beds and banks.

4.3.4 Alternative 4 Closure of Non-transportation system roads

Route closures which traverse hydrological resources will reduce the amount of impact to hydrological resources. As these routes naturally rehabilitate the amount of siltation will also be reduced. Stream beds and banks will eventually stabilize. Main routes which remain open and have an interaction with hydrological resources will see a continued level of impact to hydrological resources. This alternative provides for the minimum amount of disturbance to hydrological resources.

4.4 Air Quality

4.4.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

The greatest impacts to air quality caused by motorized traffic is from traffic repeatedly breaking up the road surface which allows dust to be mobilized through the passage of vehicles and by wind. This alternative allows use at current levels and therefore impacts to air quality will continue at their present rate with a slight increase predicted in the future.

4.4.2 Alternative 2 Designated routes Preferred Alternative

There will be a slight decrease in impacts to air quality. This alternative allows the majority of routes which are used on a repetitive basis to remain open. These are the routes which likely make the greatest contribution to air quality impacts. Routes that are not considered to be access routes will be closed and will naturally rehabilitate in the future. Therefore the contribution these closed routes provide to air quality impacts will be eliminated.

4.4.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closure

This alternative will see a reduction in the amount of airborne dust created because during the period of closure during the spring, low vegetation will grow on routes and help to stabilize the soil. After the area is open to motorized vehicle travel, the vegetation will be eliminated and there will then be an increase in airborne dust.

4.4.4 Alternative 4 Closure of Non-transportation system roads.

This alternative will have the greatest reduction in the amount of airborne dust and soils. As closed routes rehabilitate and the soil is stabilized, the only airborne dust generated will be from the main access routes.

4.5 Soils, Vegetation, Forage and Grazing

4.5.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

Current access routes would remain the same within the planning area. This alternative

will allow for the vehicular transportation of weeds to a larger area. Several routes would remain open which are steeper than 25 percent slope as well as other routes which traverse thin and unstable soils. The continued use of these routes will allow for continued soil erosion in the future. Grazing permittees will see no change in access to range facilities.

4.5.2 Alternative 2 Designated Routes Preferred Alternative

There are 17 livestock grazing allotments within the geographic area covered by this plan. The permittees have been contacted regarding this draft Environmental Assessment. Implementation of the travel management designation is not expected to impact livestock grazing operations. Forage would be increased on rehabilitated routes, and less livestock disturbance would be caused by vehicular travel. Public information and education may need to include such items as: not trespassing on private lands; protecting natural resource values and any improvements on both private and public lands; no harassment of livestock or destruction of private and public improvements; and gates left open or closed, as they were found. This alternative will reduce the amount of linear miles by which weed seeds can be transported by vehicular means.

4.5.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closure

During closure periods, the implementation of the travel management plan is not expected to impact livestock grazing operations. Less vehicular traffic would cause less disturbance to livestock. During periods when the area is open, use would remain approximately the same as is currently experienced. Seasons of closure have taken into consideration livestock use dates and are not expected to interfere with livestock operations.

4.5.4 Alternative 4 Closure of Non-Transportation system roads

There are 17 livestock grazing allotments within the geographic area covered by this plan. The permittees have been contacted regarding this draft Environmental Assessment. Implementation of the travel management designation is not expected to impact livestock grazing operations. Forage would be increased on rehabilitated routes, and less livestock disturbance would be caused by vehicular travel. Public information and education may need to include such items as: not trespassing on private lands; protecting natural resource values and any improvements on both private and public lands; no harassment of livestock or destruction of private and public improvements; and gates left open or closed, as they were found. This alternative will provide the least amount of linear miles by which weed seeds can be transported by vehicular means.

4.6 Wildlife

4.6.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

There will be no change from current uses and interactions between wildlife and motorized vehicles. As levels of use gradually increase over time and as routes gradually proliferate, interactions between wildlife and motorized vehicles will also gradually

increase. Under this alternative, travel management could not be used as a tool to increase the elk harvest to reach population objectives.

4.6.2 Alternative 2 Designated routes Preferred Alternative

There will be a decrease in the interaction between wildlife and motorized vehicles. There will also be the creation of areas where there will not be motorized access. These areas will be used by wildlife as security areas and will generally be free from motorized disturbance. Routes closed by this environmental assessment will eventually rehabilitate creating more forage and vegetation for wildlife. In the TMA, increased security areas will reduce stress on deer populations during the hunt and spring parturition period and if deer populations increase, positive benefits to deer will also increase.

Almost all of this proposed travel management area is either crucial winter range for elk, mule deer or both. The area is also important sage-grouse habitat with 3 known leks, as well wintering, nesting, and some brood rearing habitat. Sage-grouse, mule deer and particularly elk are vulnerable to motor vehicle disturbance and a reduction in road densities would increase the size of security areas for big game and sage grouse, and would enhance and increase viable habitat for these species. This increase in the amount of security habitat, particularly at the lower extent of the big game winter range, should enhance big game use and distribution into this area, and result with enhanced harvest levels and overall hunting experience for big game, as well as increased nesting success and population levels for sage-grouse. These same benefits could potentially be seen in numerous other species inhabiting this area.

4.6.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closure

This alternative provides large tracts of land for security and protection from disturbance during the winter and for wildlife corridors. During the period when these areas are open to motorized traffic, normal vehicle use will continue allowing motorized access during hunting periods. The period of closure would provide for wildlife security during critical times such as spring parturition (birthing) periods and also for the protection of important seasonal grouse habitats. This period of closure would begin on December 1st and end on May 31st.

4.6.4 Alternative 4 Closure of Non-transportation system roads

There will be less disturbance to wildlife than Alternative 2 provides. This alternative provides larger areas of security and creates more space where wildlife will be free of motorized disturbance. Routes closed by this environmental assessment will eventually rehabilitate creating more forage and vegetation for wildlife. In the Hyattville TMA, increased security areas will reduce stress on deer populations during the hunt and during spring parturition periods and if deer populations increase, positive benefits to deer will also increase

4.7 Recreation and Visual Resources

4.7.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

Access at the current level will be maintained. OHV use is expected to continue to grow and user created routes will continue to proliferate. Conflicts between different types of recreation users is expected to continue and will likely grow as use increases.

4.7.2 Alternative 2 Designated Routes Preferred Alternative

Route proliferation would be stopped through enforcement of the route designations and public education. Some routes that currently exist and do not provide access to non-BLM parcels of land would be closed. Closure of routes would reduce the opportunities for ORV recreation in some areas. Recreational opportunities would be created for non-motorized users. Non-motorized hunting opportunities would also be increased. There would be fewer routes available to motorized users for hunting from roads, which is a popular activity within the TMA.

4.7.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closure

During certain times of the year routes would be closed to use. At other times of the year these routes would be open to motorized use. During those times of year when these routes were closed there would be limited motorized recreational access to these areas. During periods of closure there will be increased opportunities for non-motorized forms of recreation.

4.7.4 Alternative 4 Closure of Non-transportation system roads

Route proliferation would be stopped through enforcement of the route designations and public education. Some routes that currently exist would be closed. Closure of routes would reduce the opportunities for ORV recreation in some areas. Recreational opportunities would be created for non-motorized users. Non-motorized hunting opportunities would also be increased over Alternative 2.

4.9 Socioeconomics

4.9.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

There will not be any changes from current types of uses. It is expected that there will be an increase in motorized travel and the current route network will likely experience more use over time.

4.9.2 Alternative 2 Designated Routes Preferred Alternative

Closure of non essential routes will create additional recreational opportunities such as back packing, horse packing, and hiking in a non motorized environment. This will tend to diversify the types of uses and increase the amount of use. An increased use could generate more tourist activity in these areas and surrounding towns. This alternative will continue to provide motorized access and opportunities for motorized recreation. Opportunities for loop rides will be maintained in this alternative.

4.9.3 Alternative 3 Seasonal Closure

Alternative 3 proposes closing additional routes than what is called for in Alternative 2

during certain periods of the year. Seasonal closure of routes will create additional recreational opportunities such as back packing, horse packing, and hiking in a non motorized environment. This will tend to diversify the types of uses and increase the amount of use. An increased use could generate more tourist activity in these areas and surrounding towns. This alternative will continue to provide motorized access and opportunities for motorized recreation during the rest of the year.

4.9.4 Alternative 4 Closure of Non-transportation system roads

This alternative also could increase economic activity through a diversification of recreational activities. Alternative 4 proposes closing additional routes than what is called for in Alternative 2. Closure of non essential routes will create additional recreational opportunities such as back packing, horse packing, and hiking in a non motorized environment. This will tend to diversify the types of uses and increase the amount of use. An increased use could generate more tourist activity in these areas and surrounding towns. This alternative will continue to provide motorized access and opportunities for motorized recreation though less than Alternative 2.

4.10 Cumulative Impacts

4.10.1 Alternative 1 (No Action)

There will be no reduction in the number of routes. Route proliferation will continue to occur and illegal user created routes will increase.

4.10.2 Alternatives 2, 3 and 4

Designation of an appropriate network of routes and closure and rehabilitation of others is expected to address public and administrative access needs, protect resources, promote public safety, and minimize conflicts among the various uses of public lands. Implementing the travel management plan would end the slow process of resource degradation, which if not attended to, would produce long term adverse impacts. The overall effect of implementing the travel management plan would be higher quality wildlife habitat, higher quality visual resources, and high quality motorized opportunities. Motorized recreation and other forms of outdoor recreation are expected to continue to increase as the general population increases, possibly leading to increased conflicts in popular recreation areas. As the travel management designation decisions in the Washakie RMP are implemented, there would be an increase in limitations on motorized travel and increased enforcement of the designations. Cumulatively, this would lead to an increased management presence throughout the Worland Field Office mainly in the form of signs and markers, and law enforcement.

4.12 Residual Impacts

After the implementation of the travel management plan, several years will be required before the public becomes fully aware of the limitation on travel. Violations of the travel management plan are likely to occur. These violations will disturb wildlife and also any mitigation measures. Also existing routes that were closed through this environmental assessment will never

completely disappear. Visual reminders of these routes as well as ruts and gullies formed by these routes will remain. Complete stabilization of active soils will require many years of no motorized travel. Vegetation will naturally migrate from adjacent parcels of land but will be of a different age and composition than surrounding lands and therefore be visible.

5.0 Mitigation

Implementation of the travel management plan will consist of placing signs, barriers, bulletin boards, decommissioning routes and trying to disguise closed routes. This will take several years before the plan is completely implemented and the public at large obeys the travel management plan. Violations of the travel management plan and vandalism to informational signs will continue and will cause less than full compliance with the plan. Maintenance of signs, continued attempts to rehabilitate closed routes and enforcement of the plan will reduce violations.

Designation of routes is not expected to impact cultural resources. Rehabilitation of closed routes has the potential to impact cultural resources. Rehabilitation work would generally be done within the existing road surface disturbance, route rehabilitation and other proposed projects would be reviewed in individual Cultural Resources Inventory and Evaluation Forms (CRIEF), decisions regarding the need for on the ground inventory for each affected area will be made based on the CREIF review, and would be subject to the following stipulations for the protection of cultural resources:

Cultural Resources, Standard Stipulations. The operator/holder/BLM is responsible for informing all persons associated with this project that they may be subject to prosecution for knowingly damaging, altering, excavating or removing any archaeological, historical, or vertebrate fossil objects or site. If archaeological, historical, Native American, or vertebrate fossil materials are discovered, the operator/holder/BLM is to suspend all operations that further disturb such materials and immediately contact the Authorized Officer. Operations are not to resume until written authorization to proceed is issued by the Authorized Officer (AO).

The authorized officer will evaluate, or will have evaluated, such discoveries not later than five working days after being notified, and will determine what action shall be taken with respect to such discoveries. The decision as to the appropriate measures to mitigate adverse effects to significant cultural or Paleontological resources will be made by the authorized officer after consulting with the operator/holder/BLM.

The operator/holder/BLM is responsible for the cost of any investigations necessary for the evaluation, and any mitigative measures required by the Authorized Officer. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of evaluation and mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required evaluation and/or mitigation has been completed, the operator/holder/BLM will be allowed to resume operations.

Native American Resources. The area under consideration may contain areas or locations of religious or cultural concern to Native Americans, but these areas

have not yet been identified. If such areas are subsequently identified or become known through the Native American notification or consultation process they would be considered during the implementation phase. The BLM would take no action that would adversely affect these areas or locations without consultation with the appropriate Native Americans.

Human Remains. If human remains are discovered or suspected the operator shall suspend operations immediately, post an observer in the area, and notify BLM immediately.

6.0 Consultation and Coordination

6.1 List of Preparers

Aaron Kania	Worland Law Enforcement Ranger
Jeff Johnson	Worland Outdoor Recreation Planner
Tim Stephens	Worland Wildlife Biologist
Mike Bies	Worland Archeologist
Steve Kiracofe	Worland Soil Specialist
Dallas Heller	Worland Range Management Specialist
Rance Neighbors	Worland Weed Management Specialist
Holly Elliot	Worland Resource Management Specialist
Vic Trickey	Worland Realty Specialist
Alberta Settle	Worland Engineer
Don Ogaard	Worland Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Andrew Tkach	Worland Writer/Editor

6.2 Persons/Agencies Consulted

Wyoming Department of Game and Fish

Attachment 1: Alternative 2 Route Analysis		
1117 – Hyattville Logging Road		
Road	Status	Reason
1117-A	Open	Access to private property
1117-B	Closed	Fenceline road (Administrative access only)
1117-C	Open	Access to stockpond, campsite
1117-C-1	Closed	Rutted, soil erosion
1117-D	Closed	Former rock quarry
1117-E	Open	Access to private property
1117-E-1	Closed	Water line, administrative access only, sage grouse
1117-F	Open	Access to private property, possible 1133 realignment
1117-F-1	Closed	Redundant road
1117-F-2	Open	Access to stockpond
1117-G	Open	Scenic view, hunting access
1117-H	Open	Military Creek, loop road
1117-H-1	Open	Stateland, closed at BLM
1117-H-2	Open	Stateland, closed at BLM
1117-I	Open	Loop road
1117-J	Open	Loop road, access to private property
1117-K	Closed	Reclaimed logging road
1117-L	Open	Hunting access
1117-L-1	Open	Scenic overlook, camping
1117-M	Open	Access to private property
1117-N	Open	Access to private property
1117-O	Open	Access to private property
1133 – Luman Creek Road		
Road	Status	Reason
1133-A	Open	Access to water development
1133-B	Closed	Redundant road
1133-C	Open	Scenic overlook, camping
1133-D	Open	Access to private property
1133-D-1	Open	Access to State Land
1133-E	Open	Access to State Land
1133-F	Closed	Reduce trespass violations
1133-F-1	Open	Access to private property
1133-F-2	Open	Access to grazing allotment
1133-G	Open	Scenic overlook

1133-H	Closed	Redundant
1133-I	Closed	Reduce trespass violations
1133-J	Open	Access to Stateland
1133-K	Open	Access to private property
1133-K-1	Open	Access to private property
1133-L	Open	Access to private property
1133-M	Closed	Redundant
1134 – Laddie Creek Road		
Road	Status	Reason
1134-A	Closed	Redundant
1134 B	Closed	Administrative access only
1134-B-1	Closed	Administrative access only
1134-B-2	Closed	Administrative access only
1134-C	Open	Access private property, loop road
1134-D	Closed	Reduce trespass violations
1127- South Point Road		
Road	Status	Reason
1127-A	Open	Access private property, loop road
1127-B	Closed	Reduce trespass violations
FDR-569 – Cold Springs Road		
Road	Status	Reason
FDR-569-D	Closed	Redundant, Administrative access only,
FDR 569 D-1	Closed	Redundant.
FDR-569-E	Closed	Redundant, Administrative access only,
FDR-569-E-1	Closed	No public access
FDR-569-F	Closed	Administrative access only
FDR-569-G	Closed	Administrative access only
FDR-569-H	Open	Water pipeline, access to water developments
FDR-569-H-1	Closed	Redundant
FDR-569-H-2	Open	Access to private property
FDR-569-H-3	Closed	Redundant
FDR-569-H-4	Closed	Redundant
FDR-569-H-5	Closed	Redundant
FDR-569-H-6	Closed	Redundant
1136 – Lone Tree Road		
Road	Status	Reason
1136-A	Closed	Reduce trespass violations
Medicine Lodge OHV Trail	Limit to 50 inches or less	Access from State Park to Cold Spring Road, Full size vehicles would alter recreation experience
353	Open	Scenic Overlook, Access to Upper Paintrock trail
353-A	Closed	Reduce road density
353-B	Closed	Redundant
353-C	Closed	Redundant

352-A	Closed	Reduce road density
352-B	Closed	Reduce road density
1111- Alkali Road		
Road	Status	Reason
1111-A	Open	Loop road
1111-A-1	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-A-2	Closed	Reduce trespass violations
1111-A-3	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-A-4	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-A-5	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-A-6	Open	Scenic Overlook
1111-A-7	Closed	Reduce soil erosion
1111-B	Closed	No public access
1111-C	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-D	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-E	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-F	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-G	Open	Access to water development
1111-H	Open	Access to fence
1111-J	Closed	Reclaimed road to non-production oil pad.
1111-K	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-K-1	Closed	No public access
1111-K-2	Closed	Reduce soil erosion, hazardous hill
1111-K-3	Closed	Water pipeline, administrative use only
1111-K-4	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-L	Open	Loop road, access to Alkali road from Park
1111-L-1	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-L-2	Closed	Reduce trespass violations
1111-L-3	Open	Scenic overlook
1111-M	Open	Loop road, access to water development
1111-M-1	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density, wildlife
1111-M-2	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-N	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density, wildlife
1111-N-1	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-N-2	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-O	Open	Loop Road
1111-O-1	Open	Access to Myers Spring
1111-O-2	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-O-3	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-O-4	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-P	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density
1111-Q	Open	Access to private property
1111-Q-1	Closed	Redundant, Reduce road density

1111-R	Open	Access to water development
1111-S	Open	Access to private property and Anthony Timber
1111-S-1	Open	Access to private property
1111-S-2	Open	Campsites
1111-S-3	Open	Campsites
1111-T	Closed	Redundant