



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Singletrack

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact

Aspen-Sopris and Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger Districts, White River National Forest, Eagle County,
Colorado

June, 2015



For More Information Contact:

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Introduction

We are proposing to establish motorized singletrack trails and a parking area, perform wetland restoration and rehabilitation of non-system routes on approximately 9 acres. These actions are proposed to be implemented on the Aspen-Sopris and Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger Districts of the White River National Forest (WRNF).

We prepared this environmental assessment (EA) to determine whether implementation of establishing motorized singletrack trails, a parking area, restoration and rehabilitation of non-system routes, and restoration of a wetland currently being used as a parking area, may significantly affect the quality of the human environment and thereby require the preparation of an environmental impact statement. By preparing this EA, we are fulfilling agency policy and direction to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). For more details of the proposed action, see the Proposed Action and Alternatives section of this document.

Project Location

The project area encompasses approximately 12,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands in several sections of Township 6 Range 86 and Township 7 Range 86 in Eagle County, Colorado. The area is further defined as a polygon roughly 4.5 miles square that includes Cattle Creek Road 509 to the south, 430.1 to the north, and includes the first 7 miles of Red Table Road 514.

Purpose and Need for Action

This proposal is needed to update and create new motorized recreation opportunities, address user created routes, and improve wetland conditions in the vicinity of Red Table Mountain.

The purpose is driven by the need for:

- Improved and maintained trails
- A connector route between authorized motorized routes on the Aspen-Sopris and Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger Districts
- A sustainable motorized trail system with low gradients that allow for drainage and a variety of skill levels
- Protecting wetland resources
- Rehabilitating user-created routes

Public Involvement and Tribal Consultation

Motorcycle use in the project area has been prevalent for many years. Managing this area for additional miles of motorized singletrack was introduced in the 2011 WRNF Travel Management Plan EIS (TMP). Many people submitted comments during the TMP planning process. A public meeting was conducted July 23rd, 2011, in Carbondale, CO to discuss motorized trails and the TMP. In June of 2012, the proposal for the Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Singletrack was first listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions report. A grant was secured from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to fund education, maintenance, and reconstruction on existing routes, rehabilitation of closed areas, parking area improvements, and analysis of potential new motorized singletrack routes. On March 24, 2014, a scoping notice was mailed to approximately 50 community residents, individuals, public agencies, and other organizations. This notice was designed to elicit comments, concerns, and issues pertaining to the Proposed Action. A legal notice was published on March 27, 2014 in the Glenwood Springs Post Independent, the newspaper of record for the WRNF, announcing the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Action. Open Houses were held in El Jebel and Eagle, CO on April 8th and 9th, respectively. The public was asked to submit comments by April 26, 2014. In response to the Forest Service's solicitation for public comment, 48 letters were received.

Substantive comments were extracted from the letters, entered into a database, and categorized by resource issue. The Forest Service considered the information gathered through public scoping along with the input from the Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) in identifying specific resources that required further analysis in Chapter 3 of this EA.

The Forest Service consulted the following individuals, Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies during the development of this EA:

The Forest Service met with individuals from the Wilderness Workshop, Roaring Fork Audubon, Rocky Mountain Sierra Club, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Rocky Mountain Recreation Initiative, Colorado Backcountry Trail Riders, and Rocky Mountain Sport Riders. The product of several meetings with representatives from the above organizations is found in the project Design Criteria (Appendix A), and specifically the Adaptive and Proactive Management Plan (Appendix B).

Alternatives Considered

The proposed action and following alternatives were considered:

No-Action Alternative (Alternative 1)

The No Action Alternative reflects a continuation of management practices without changes, additions or upgrades. Under the No Action Alternative, the current travel management plan would guide the management of the project area. Existing conditions would persist for the foreseeable future.

Proposed Action (Alternative 2)

The action proposed by the Forest Service to meet the purpose and need consists of four elements: 1) Construction of an approximately 80' x 200' parking area, near the beginning of the Red Table Road, National Forest System Road (NFSR) 514 on the north side of County Road 10 near Cottonwood Pass; 2) Reconstruction of a total of 8.2 miles of motorized trail at the "Green Gate Trail", and the Milepost 1 Trail, to create a more logical and sustainable trail system; 3) Restoration of a wetland impacted by the existing parking area at the junction of NFSR 514 and County Road 10 and; 4) rehabilitation of 27.4 miles of trail. All elements of the proposed action would be implemented by the WRNF, and their partners, beginning in 2015.

The existing parking area near the kiosk at the beginning of Red Table Road is located in a wetland. A new parking area approximately 16,000 square feet in size is proposed to be constructed a few hundred feet north, just above the junction of County Road 10 and NFSR 514. The proposed parking area would accommodate 7 vehicles with trailers. An access trail from the new parking area would allow OHV users to cross County Road 10 in a single location, to access NFSR 514.

The 6.6 mile long "Green Gate Trail", and the 1.6 mile long "Milepost 1 Trail" would be included in the White River National Forest's Travel Plan, for a total of 8.2 miles of motorized singletrack. The Green Gate Trail would connect the existing Lone Pine motorized trails on the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District with motorized routes on the Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger District and on Bureau of Land Management Lands. The Green Gate Trail begins near milepost 2 on NFSR 514, continuing northeast, above Sawmill Gulch, connecting with NFSR 430.1B, near N266.1. The addition of the Milepost 1 Trail to the travel plan would create two motorized ingress/egress points on the Red Table Road creating loop opportunities. This would allow access for riders of varying degrees of skill, and travel management flexibility. The Milepost 1 Trail begins at the Red Table Ditch head gate terminating near milepost 1 on NFSR 514. Trail reroutes totaling approximately 8,000 feet would ensure that the trail system follows sustainable alignments. The travel corridor for system routes would be 6 feet. The tread width would be 18-24".

A wetland, which has been impacted by the existing parking area, located near the kiosk at the beginning of NFSR 514, would be restored. The existing parking area would be closed, soils would be de-compacted and amended, and the site would be planted with desired native species to mimic reference conditions found just a few feet downstream. Two parking spaces near the kiosk, and an area to turn vehicles around, would be incorporated in the restoration of the current parking area at the kiosk.

Lastly, 27.4 miles of trails, not currently recognized as authorized system trails in the travel plan, would be closed and rehabilitated. Trails currently not on the White River Travel Plan, including

1913.1, N1913W.1K, 1913W.1D, 1913W.1E, 1913W.1C, 1913.2, N203.1, N204.1, N265.1, N266.1, 464W.3, 464W.2N, 514W.2B, 514W.2C, 514W.2D, 514W.2E, 464W.2E, and N612.1 would be rehabilitated and managed as closed to unauthorized mechanized and motorized uses. Woody debris, scarification, seeding, and signage would help prevent mechanized and motorized incursions and would promote the return to natural conditions.

Habitat Fragmentation Minimization (Alternative 3)

Alternative 3 proposed by the Forest Service to meet the purpose and need, includes a change to Alternative 2 above, decreasing the total miles of trail reconstruction from 8.2 to 6.5 miles. The modification would decrease the mileage of the Green Gate Trail from 6.6 miles to 4.9 miles, eliminating a motorized singletrack trail that is parallel to a system road. The Green Gate trail would begin at road NFSR 514 and terminate at NFSR 430.1B utilizing N6045.1 and N265.1. The amount of reroutes necessary in this alternative is approximately 5000 feet. Rehabilitation and closure would occur on 28.4 miles of trails, not currently recognized as authorized system trails in the travel plan. Alternative 3 is driven by comments received in scoping that address habitat fragmentation. Alternative 3 is also driven by internal comments concerning the recreation resource and the WRNF's ability to sustainably maintain the additional miles of motorized trail.

Alternatives and Design Components Considered But Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

The range of alternatives considered by the Responsible Official includes all reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action that are analyzed in the document, as well as other alternatives eliminated from detailed study. Alternatives not considered in detail may include, but are not limited to, those that fail to meet the Purpose and Need, are technologically infeasible or illegal, or would result in an unreasonable environmental harm (Forest Service Handbook, 1909.15).

Historical roads and trails near Forest Road 464, Bowers Gulch Routes, the upper North Fork corridor, and the two-track between the Association Ditch and milepost 2 of Forest Road 514 were all eliminated from detailed analysis because they would not address the Purpose and Need related to improved, maintained, and sustainable trail systems. These routes would have required a substantial amount of analysis, rerouting and reconstruction, to provide a sustainable link to the existing motorized routes.

Decision/ Selected Alternative

I have decided to select Alternative 2, the Proposed Action as analyzed in the 2015 Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Singletrack EA. A map of the selected alternative is shown in Figure 1 below.

While I still have concerns about managing and maintaining additional miles of trail, I am encouraged by the participation of area organizations and Forest Service partners to ensure that the goals of this project are sustainably achieved.

Rationale for Decision

My decision involved balancing several considerations, including which trail routes best support the purpose and need for action described in the EA while at the same time maintaining healthy

watersheds and meeting the needs of local communities. I reached my decision after careful consideration of the environmental effects of the alternatives discussed in the EA, the associated planning records, the issues identified during the planning process, and public comments. My decision meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and best responds to the purpose and need of the project while being responsive to public comments and considerate of local communities. The rationale for my decision is further detailed below.

1. The project proposal is consistent with management direction in the Forest Plan as required by 36 CFR 219.10 (e). Specifically, the project conforms to the White River Forest Plan's Goals and Objectives and Management Area direction. Resource reports located in the project file, detail more fully how Alternative 2 achieves consistency with the Forest Plan.
2. The selected Alternative meets the purpose and need, providing improved and maintained motorized singletrack trails, a connector route, and a sustainable trail system. It also addresses user created routes, and protects wetland resources.
3. The selected alternative will have no significant adverse effects on vegetation, wildlife and their habitat, hydrologic function, soils, fisheries, scenic integrity, cultural, or recreation resources as documented in the EA.
4. The selected alternative responds to issues brought up during scoping. A proactive and adaptive management plan has been developed and has been incorporated to balance the concerns of user groups.
5. There is community and local government support for the Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Singletrack project. Public comments are part of the project record.
6. I did not choose Alternative 1 (No Action) because it will not meet the objectives of protecting wetland resources and addressing user created routes. I did not choose Alternative 3 because it will not meet the objectives of a sustainable motorized trail system.

Project Design Criteria

The EA presents PDC in **Appendix A** of the EA, which have been incorporated into the selected alternative. My decision includes the PDC as described in the EA, along with PDC, which are included in Appendix A of this Decision Notice. Project activities must comply with the required PDC.

Finding of No Significant Impact

As the responsible official, I am responsible for evaluating the effects of the project relative to the definition of significance established by the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1508.13). I have reviewed and considered the EA and documentation included in the project record, and I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. As a result, no environmental impact statement will be prepared. My rationale for this finding is as follows, organized by sub-section of the CEQ definition of significance cited above.

Context

For the proposed action and alternatives the context of the environmental effects is based on the environmental analysis in this EA. The direct and indirect effects analysis contained in the EA focuses on the Basalt to Gypsum project area, and may extend further for cumulative effects analysis, depending on the resource.

Intensity

Intensity is a measure of the severity, extent, or quantity of effects, and is based on information from the effects analysis of this EA and the references in the project record. The effects of this project have been appropriately and thoroughly considered with an analysis that is responsive to concerns and issues raised by the public. The agency has taken a hard look at the environmental effects using relevant scientific information and knowledge of site-specific conditions gained from field visits. My finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and intensity of effects using the ten factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b).

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.

The beneficial effects of the Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Singletrack have not overshadowed the agency's analysis. No significant adverse effects will result from the implementation of the alternatives.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The Action Alternatives do not adversely affect public health or safety. Safety is addressed in the Recreation report.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as the proximity to historical or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The project area contains wetlands. The Action Alternatives improve wetland conditions, stream health and water quality within project area watersheds. See the Watershed report. No cultural resources exist within the project area.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be controversial. The Action Alternatives of the project occur on less than 10 acres. Rehabilitation would occur on seven acres, and across 27.4 miles of routes. The link trail improves recreational pursuits as

it connects motorized routes in the Basalt area with motorized routes in the Gypsum area. See Soils and Recreation reports.

Roadless character and qualities are upheld, and in some cases improved. See Roadless Report.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The possible effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain. Parking areas and Motorized singletrack trails currently exist across the forest. Rehabilitation efforts are ongoing throughout the forest.

6. The degree to which the action may establish precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This project is not intended to establish precedent for future actions. Among other reasons, this project arose from a need to rehabilitate user created routes, protect wetland resources, and to provide a connector route from NFS roads and trails to the south of the existing motorized singletrack, to NFS and BLM roads and trails to the north.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.

There are no significant cumulative effects. See Cumulative Effects sections of resource reports.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

A cultural inventory has been taken and there are no known cultural resources present.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The Selected Alternative may affect but are not likely to adversely affect the Canada Lynx. See the Wildlife report. The proposed action may affect, and is not likely to adversely affect greenback cutthroat trout and its available habitat. The Selected Alternative would have no impact to boreal toads or northern leopard frogs. See the Aquatics report.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The Selected Alternative does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The Selected Alternative may impact Region 2 Sensitive Species, but is not likely to cause a trend towards Federal listing or result in loss of viability in the planning area. See the Wildlife report.

Consistency with Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the 2002 WRNF Forest Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act and all other laws, regulations, and policies that govern Forest Service actions. The project was designed to conform to the Forest Plan and all other laws, regulations, and policies. Site specific PDC (**Appendix A**) and Forest Plan standards and guidelines will be applied, as appropriate, to meet forest plan goals and desired conditions.

Administrative Review and Objection Opportunity

This proposed project is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. A 45 day opportunity to object was initiated by a legal notice in the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* on April 15, 2015

One timely objection was received and determined not to have standing to object. The objector was contacted by the Project Leader and a letter from the Objection Reviewing Officer was sent on June 8, 2015.

There will be no further opportunity for administrative review or objection.

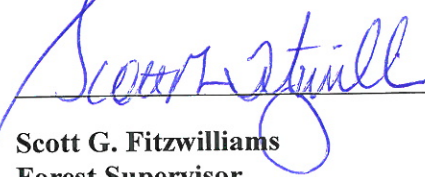
Implementation Date

This decision can be implemented immediately.

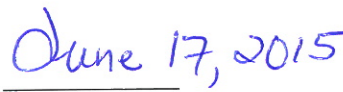
Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service objection process, contact:

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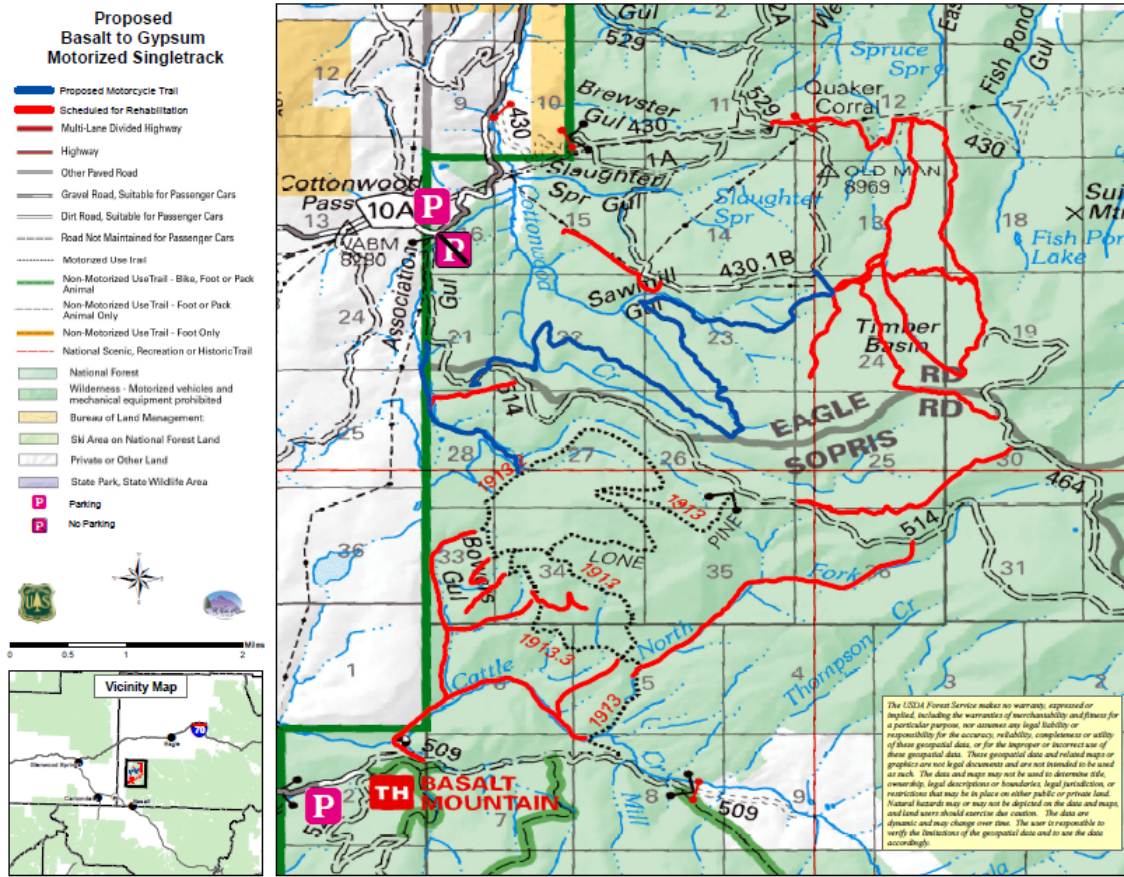


Scott G. Fitzwilliams
Forest Supervisor
White River National Forest



Date

Figure 1. Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Singletrack Project Map



Appendix A: Project Design Criteria

Table 2-2: Project Design Criteria

Recreation
Trail Standards consistent for a Class II single-track motorized trail: Tread Width 18-24"; Clearing Height 6-8'; Clearing Width 36-72"; Shoulder Clearance 6-12"; Grade 5-20%; Short Pitch Maximum 40%; Target Cross Slope 5-10%; Maximum Cross Slope 15%; Designed Turn Radius 4' minimum; Surface Type Native with limited grading, may be continuously rough; Sections of soft or unstable tread on grades less than 5% may be common and continuous; Protrusions less than or equal to 6" may be common and continuous; Obstacles up to 18" may be common or placed for increased challenge
Forest Service and volunteer patrols will monitor closed routes and rehabilitation. Collaborating with partners through an ambassador program, the target number of patrols during the first year of trail system use is eight per month. When an incident of off-trail use, or use of closed routes is observed, obliterate all evidence of such use as soon as possible.
Closed trails are re-vegetated to a natural state within sight distance or along their entire length, whichever is deemed appropriate by the Forest Service. Closure of trails will occur by placing debris, signs, and drainage structures as well as scarification as needed to break up the soil.
All signs and other necessary infrastructure will be installed before trails are opened. Cost of sign replacement will be borne by user groups or those determined to have stolen or vandalized the signs.
Signs will be posted at all kiosks informing users of hunting season dates and recommending limiting use of the trail system to the middle of the day (between 10am and 3pm) during hunting season to minimize user conflicts and reduce use during the time when animals are most active. Kiosk and information materials will inform all users to expect to encounter motorized users. The Forest Service will determine the number of signs needed. "Closed throttle" zones may be identified and signed where there is shared use near trailheads and in other locations as deemed appropriate.
Seasonal motorized trail closures occur from October 10 through June 20. Signs educating the public and users about the seasonal closure will be installed at both parking areas. User groups including CBTRA and RMSR will educate their members about seasonal trail closures and impacts to wildlife. If significant changes in elk, mule deer, or big horn sheep behavior, and/or use of historical calving areas can be specifically attributed to motorized use, the Forest Service will consider management options including additional seasonal closures. If continued illegal use of closed roads or trails occurs, the entire trail system or portions of it may be subject to closure.
The Forest Service will prepare and follow an Education and Enforcement Plan.
The Forest Service will prepare and follow an Implementation Schedule prior to implementation.
Scenery
All trail construction produces debris of some sort. Rock and earth which are excess in a cut area can often be deposited in the adjacent fill section. Tree trunks, branches, stumps, root wads and other vegetative matter (commonly known as slash) are usually unsatisfactorily fill materials and must be disposed of in other ways.
Vegetative contrast is created if slash is left along road or trail clearing limits; the color, texture and line are not in tune with its surroundings and thus attract attention. If suitably crushed or chipped, small trees, shrubs, and the branches, needles, leaves etc., can often be beneficially used as mulch on newly exposed soil. Along with slash disposal, color contrast reduction can be greatly reduced if freshly cut stumps are treated with paint or dirt and/or cut to a minimal height to reduce scenery contrast.

<p>Where there is disturbed ground from new construction, put any excess material back to the area with grading to maintain a natural appearance at transitions. Any site grading should blend disturbance into the existing topography to achieve a natural appearance and minimize cuts and fills at the transition with proposed grading and existing terrain.</p>				
<p>Utilize construction techniques that facilitate revegetation of cut and fill slopes (leave in roughened condition). Fills should be stabilized and maintained to prevent erosion. Height of cut and fill slopes along trails should be minimized and varied to blend to adjacent terrain. Slope rounding should be considered.</p>				
<p>2 to 1 slope maximum, 3 to 1 or flatter preferred. Minimizing cut slopes, if 2 to 1 slopes. Cut and fill slopes should be graded to conform the site to the adjacent terrain. Vary the pitch of cut and fill slopes. Use construction techniques that facilitate revegetation of cut and fill slopes (leave in roughened condition). This involves slope rounding in both vertical and horizontal form as a more natural extension of landform surface configurations. Use excess excavation material to create low earth mounds (berms) that blend into the natural landform and create less uniformly graded surface.</p>				
<p>Large boulders found in the excavation should be randomly placed along the edge of the trailhead parking area or in the cut bank to help stabilize the slope. Place boulders in groups or individually. Boulders should be planted with 2/3 of the boulders below the surface and 1/3 of the boulder above the surface for a more natural appearance.</p>				
<p>All disturbed areas shall be revegetated after the site has been satisfactorily prepared. Revegetation should include planting and seeding. Seed with a native seed mixture using a variety of native seed grasses and forbs when possible. The forest botanist shall provide a recommended seed mix.</p>				
<p>All facilities including parking area and kiosk must meet the Accessibility Guidelines. These can be found at the following website; http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility</p>				
<p>Range</p>				
<p>Install trail cattle guards with an adjacent metal (easily closed) gate at all trail/fence crossings. Work closely with range and recreation staff and grazing permittees on design.</p>				
<p>Include an approximately 600 foot fence extension on the north end of this fence with this analysis to more effectively separate two range pastures. Fence will be a four-barbed wire, laydown fence. Fence construction could be funded with Range Betterment funding in the future. Location is in section 34, T-6S, R-86SW, between the following UTM points (NAD 83):</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>13S 0325628</td> <td>4372631</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13S 0325556</td> <td>4372764</td> </tr> </table> <p>Many decommissioned trails will need to be closed with signage and woody vegetation such as downed logs that horses and motorized equipment (ATV/UTV) can easily cross. Some decommissioning can be more extensive as long as the work can temporarily be undone and then redone by heavy equipment used to clean ponds and repair spring developments.</p>	13S 0325628	4372631	13S 0325556	4372764
13S 0325628	4372631			
13S 0325556	4372764			
<p>The upper elevation portions of the proposed trail occur along an existing livestock driveway. Motorized trail design needs to accommodate efficient livestock travel. This means a trail that is at least 5 feet wide and not dramatically incised (sloped in a “v” shape). It also may be necessary to close the route to motorized traffic for short periods of time 1-2 days per year to facilitate safe and efficient livestock movement and for public safety (Figure G-1, Cottonwood Range Map).</p>				
<p>Pretreatment of existing infestations with approved herbicides within the project area, especially on existing and proposed trail corridors should be conducted along with project implementation. Herbicide choices and application rates for treatment are available from the District/Forest Weed Program Manager or County Weed Manager. Some funding is available for this as part of the state OHV grant. Other projects in the area such as the wildlife habitat improvement project also may contribute to accomplishing pretreatment. Implemented in 2013 and 2014.</p>				
<p>Clean Equipment. Ensure that prior to moving on to National Forest Lands, all off-road equipment used in project implementation is free of soil, seeds, vegetative matter, or other debris that could contain or hold noxious weed seeds. “Off-road equipment” includes all construction machinery or off highway vehicles,</p>				

<p>except for trucks, service vehicles, water trucks, pickup trucks, cars, and similar vehicles. The project administrator will inspect the equipment prior to entrance onto the Forest to see that it is free of debris.</p>
<p>All disturbed ground will be re-vegetated with desirable plant species. Utilize seed mix approved by the Forest Botanist and certified to be free of weed species. Seed mixes that incorporate native plant species similar to those within the project area are desirable. Any mulch used in re-vegetation efforts must be certified to be free of weed species.</p>
<p>Monitor project area for at least 3 years after completion for presence of invasive plants and successful establishment of desirable vegetation. Re-treat invasive plants as needed.</p>
<p>Wildlife</p>
<p>The Forest Service will post signs at each trailhead and on brochures and websites requiring users to stay on designated trails and a violation phone number. If illegal or off-trail use occurs, signs will be posted specifying management actions up to and including trail system closure. If illegal or off-trail use continues, the deciding officer may close the entire trail system or portions of it.</p>
<p>If re-vegetation is not occurring naturally, then seeding (overseen by the Forest Service) with only certified native grass and shrub mix will occur in the following fall. Closed trails will be monitored; success is 75% vegetation coverage after 24 months, or a calibrated per cent in areas with cattle grazing.</p>
<p>Missing or damaged signs and other infrastructure will be replaced as soon as practical. If chronic vandalism or theft occurs, other actions will be considered. A sign plan will be developed and monitored by partners on an annual basis.</p>
<p>Signs will be posted at all kiosks informing users of hunting season dates and recommending limiting use of the trail system to the middle of the day (between 10am and 3pm) during hunting season to minimize user conflicts and reduce use during the time when animals are most active. Kiosk and information materials will inform all users to expect to encounter motorized users. Educational materials and visitor contacts will include emphasis on slow speeds on the Red Table and Basalt Mountain roads. Signs and trail features may be installed in locations that are subject to habitual concerns if determined to be effective and feasible. Alternating days of use between the various user groups may be instituted, after additional analysis.</p>
<p>Seasonal motorized trail closures occur from October 10th through June 20th. Forest service staff and volunteers will monitor compliance with seasonal closures. Signs educating the public and users about the seasonal closure will be installed at both parking areas. User groups including CBTRA and RMSR will educate their members about seasonal trail closures and impacts to wildlife. If significant changes in elk, mule deer, or bighorn sheep behavior, and/or use of historical calving areas can be specifically attributed to motorized use, the F.S. will consider management options including additional seasonal closures.</p>
<p>To maintain the suitability and use of elk transition zones, calving areas, and winter range, as well as to provide for avian nesting/brood rearing, all trail and parking lot construction should occur after June 20 (potentially June 30 depending on winter snow accumulations and spring weather conditions) and end before November 15 annually.</p>
<p>During the year that trail construction or decommissioning is planned, conduct any appropriate avian surveys identified below to identify necessary restrictions for nesting birds. Surveys done prior to the season of implementation are not valid for identifying necessary restrictions.</p>
<p>If additional territories of raptors are discovered within the project area, establish and maintain these territories with adequate permanent buffer zones and seasonal activity use restrictions around breeding sites if possible to prevent the loss of those individuals. Specifically, if a newly discovered goshawk nest is found, maintain a 30-acre buffer around the nest site (whether active or inactive). For Cooper's hawks, a 20-acre buffer is needed. For sharp-shinned hawks, a 10-acre buffer is needed. For red-tailed and Swainson's hawks, a minimal buffer is needed to prevent blowdown of the nest tree. Within these buffer zones, do not locate trails, temporary construction staging areas, or new developments.</p>
<p>Snags and trees used for nesting that are identified during pre-construction wildlife surveys will be retained, unless they pose a hazard. Establish and maintain these territories with adequate permanent buffer zones and seasonal activity use restrictions around breeding sites if possible to prevent the loss of those individuals. Leave snags and woody material on-site to benefit species dependent upon these</p>

<p>habitat structural elements. For the purple martin a 10-acre buffer is needed. For the Flammulated owl, a minimal buffer is needed to prevent blowdown of the nest tree. Any deviation of the polygon sizes in this criterion would be done in coordination with a Forest Service Wildlife Biologist.</p> <p>To provide for avian nesting/brood rearing, all trail and parking lot construction should occur after June 20 (potentially June 30 depending on winter snow accumulations and spring weather conditions) annually.</p>
<p>Soils</p>
<p>Apply Best Management Practices, and application of sustainable trail design principles to help ensure a minimal loss of soil organic material such as topsoil (mineral A horizon) and forest litter (duff layer, O-horizons).</p>
<p>The existing parking area will be closed, soils will be de-compacted and amended, and the site will be planted with desired native species to mimic adjacent (undisturbed) conditions. Compost is recommended as soil amendment, to be applied at 3 inch depth and ripped into compacted soil for alleviating compaction and soil organic matter loss.</p>
<p>Provide stable drainage that disperses runoff into filter strips and maintains stable fills. Stockpile topsoil where practicable to be used in site restoration. Use certified local native plants as practicable; avoid persistent or invasive exotic plants.</p>
<p>Adequately block vehicle access to former parking area (following wetlands reclamation) through the use of natural materials/techniques including but not limited to boulder placement, woody material barriers, and earth works.</p>
<p>Do not locate trails on slopes that show signs of instability, such as slope failure, mass movement, or slumps.</p>
<p>Cultural Resources</p>
<p>If undocumented historic and/or prehistoric properties are located during ground disturbing activities or planning activities associated with approved construction activities, all construction in the immediate vicinity would cease and they would be treated as specified in 36 CFR §800.11 concerning Properties Discovered During Implementation of an Undertaking.</p>
<p>Watershed</p>
<p>Minimize Connected Disturbed Areas and sediment delivery to streams by ensuring that trails drain to undisturbed soils rather than directly to streams. Source: WCPH Management Measures 1 and 10.</p>
<p>Wherever possible, align trails using natural topography to create grade reversals or rolling dips to facilitate maintenance-free drainage. Use waterbars, ditches and cross drains only when grade reversals and rolling dips are not practical. Schedule maintenance of waterbars, ditches and cross drains to maintain function. Source: IDT.</p>
<p>When planning and building re-routes, field fit trail alignments to minimize impacts to streams, wetlands or erosion prone slopes.</p>
<p>When rehabilitating closed trails, ensure an adequate number of drainage features such as check dams, water-bars and sediment traps are installed to address minor erosion problems. Re-contour slopes where trails have become entrenched or where there are major erosion problems. Focus the most intensive rehabilitation efforts where maximum resource benefits can be achieved, such as in the water influence zone, in or near wetlands and on erosion-prone slopes. Customize individual rehabilitation treatments to meet the particular needs of each site. Apply soil amendments if needed. Re-vegetate closed trails with native species wherever possible. Source: IDT.</p>
<p>Rehabilitate 0.5 acres of currently impacted wetland adjacent to Cottonwood Creek by applying soil amendment and planting with native sedges and shrubs. Source: IDT.</p>
<p>Keep heavy equipment out of streams, swales, and lakes, except to cross at designated points, build crossings or to do restoration work. Source: WCPH Management Measure 3.</p>
<p>Size culverts to maintain the bankful width, depth, and slope, of the natural stream channel, and to easily pass sediment and debris transported by the stream to be crossed. Source: WCPH Management Measure 4.</p>
<p>Keep ground vehicles out of wetlands except to do restoration work. Do not disrupt water supply or drainage patterns into wetlands. Source: WCPH Management Measure 6.</p>
<p>Outslope trails where practical to shed water rather than concentrating water on the trail surface. Install</p>

cross drains to disperse runoff into filter strips. Design trails to drain water to undisturbed soils rather than retaining water, or draining to streams. Locate and construct trails in such a way as to minimize the amount of excavation needed and to reduce the potential for soil erosion. Source: WCPH Management Measure 9.

Do not install culverts during spring runoff, or during periods of heavy precipitation. Source: WCP Management Measure 9.

Do not locate trails on slopes that show signs of instability, such as slope failure, mass movement, or slumps. Source: WCPH Management Measure 9.

Locate vehicle service and fuel areas on gentle upland sites at least 100 feet away from streams to prevent pollutants from contaminating water. Source: WCPH Management Measure 15.

Appendix B – Basalt to Gypsum Motorcycle Trail System Proactive and Adaptive Management Plan

Management Category	Desired Conditions *	Proactive Recommendations	Monitoring Protocol	Thresholds Triggering Management Action	Management Actions
Off-trail Use and Use of Closed Routes	<p>Motorcycles, ATVs and mountain bikes do not travel off designated routes. Closed routes are not being used.</p>	<p>There will be signs at each trailhead and on brochures and websites requiring users to stay on designated trails. All informational materials will include a phone number that allows any individual to report violations to the Forest Service.</p> <p>During the first year of the system use, frequent volunteer or agency patrols will be conducted during the riding season by the Maintenance Patrol crew, other District FPOs, RMSR, CBTRA or other trained volunteers, and CPW staff (when possible). The frequency of patrols will be re-assessed annually based on system use and compliance.</p> <p>If evidence of off-trail use or use of closed routes is observed or reported, either a 5300-1 (Incident Report) will be completed by USFS staff or trained volunteers or another land and wildlife management agency form. Annual field reports summarizing the location and number of off-trail incidents will be documented.</p>	<p>A reportable incident will be defined as a first person observation or clear evidence on the ground (e.g. tire tracks or trampled vegetation) of illegal mechanized or motorized activity.</p> <p>The target number for patrols in the first year is 8 per month.</p> <p>Volunteers and Staff will patrol system routes. Patrols will also be conducted at entry and exit points for decommissioned routes.</p> <p>Areas where there are reoccurring violations will be identified, and documented and monitored more frequently to discourage continued use.</p>	<p>When an incident of off-trail use or use of closed routes is observed all evidence of such use will be obliterated as soon as possible. If use continues, signs will be posted specifying management actions up to and including trail system closure.</p> <p>If continued illegal off-trail use or use of closed roads or trails occurs the District Ranger or Forest Supervisor may close the entire trail system or substantial portions of it. Closures would remain in effect until a new management strategy can be developed and implemented to deal with off-trail incidents.</p> <p>The number of off-trail incidents should steadily decrease as the trail system ages. If a trend toward fewer off trail incidents is not observed, reevaluation and additional actions will be considered including possible trail closures.</p>	
Restoration and Decommissioning of Routes Identified For Closure	<p>Closed trails are decommissioned and re-contoured along the line of sight from open routes or trailheads, or further if needed to deter use of closed trails</p> <p>Closed trails are re-vegetated to a natural state within sight distance or along their entire length, whichever is deemed appropriate by the Forest Service and are managed to eliminate non-native, noxious plant species including state of Colorado category “A,” “B” and “C” list species.</p> <p>Throughout the entire length of closed trails drainage is adequate and causes no erosion.</p> <p>No further use of routes identified for closure occurs.</p>	<p>Physical closure and scarification include active restoration that includes re-vegetation with a native seed mix.</p> <p>Kiosk and information materials will inform all users to expect to encounter motorized users.</p>	<p>Closed trails will be monitored by Volunteers, the Maintenance/Patrol Crew and FS specialists for successful re-vegetation and noxious weeds starting after closure.</p> <p>Re-vegetation will be considered successful if there is at least 75% vegetation coverage compared with adjacent native vegetation after 24 months. Representative samples will be taken on the trail length to determine the composition and cover of re-vegetation.</p>	<p>Less than 75% of re-vegetation coverage or consistent with adjacent natural areas.</p> <p>In locations where active cattle allotments are preventing re-vegetation, less than a 75% re-vegetation coverage is permissible without management action if cattle are determined to be the cause of the lack of re-vegetation.</p> <p>Cattle exclusions will be considered as a tool while vegetation is re-established.</p>	<p>If re-vegetation is not occurring naturally, then seeding (overseen by the Forest Service) with only certified native grass and shrub mix will occur in the following fall.</p> <p>Closure of trails will occur by placing debris, signs, and drainage structures as well as scarification as needed to break up the soil.</p> <p>District weed specialist and/or staff management will perform noxious weed control if monitoring identifies the presence of noxious weeds.</p>

* These conditions apply to Forest Service lands and Basalt to Gypsum Motorized Singletrack project routes shown on the map labeled Figure 1 and included in the Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice

Management Category	Desired Conditions*	Proactive Recommendations	Monitoring Protocol	Thresholds Triggering Management Action	Management Actions
Signs and Infrastructure	<p>All route and seasonal closure signs and infrastructure continue to function as intended, remain in the locations they were placed and are maintained in good working condition.</p>	<p>All signs and other necessary infrastructure will be installed before trails are opened.</p> <p>CBTRA and RMSR will work with USFS to replace damaged or missing signs.</p> <p>Appropriate Ranger District phone numbers will be posted at the kiosk to report trail system issues.</p> <p>SHARE THE ROAD and right of way signs are posted in appropriate locations.</p> <p>A sign plan will be developed and monitored for functionality on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Sign location waypoints will be established using GPS and infrastructure will be monitored. Maintenance/Patrol Crews will continually monitor all signs and other infrastructure.</p>	<p>Chronic vandalism or theft in localized areas.</p>	<p>Missing or damaged signs and other infrastructure will be replaced as soon as practical. If chronic vandalism or theft occurs, other actions will be considered.</p> <p>Cost of sign replacement will be borne by user groups or those determined to have stolen or vandalized the signs.</p> <p>If constant or chronic vandalism occurs in a particular place a motion-activated camera may be used to help deter and stop such activity.</p>
User Conflicts	<p>Riders of OHVs and vehicles slow down when encountering other users on system road. Other users notice this reduction in speed.</p> <p>Complaints about excessive speed occur less than 5 times during the entire season.</p> <p>Conflicts between hunters and other users of the trails and roads in the area are minimal.</p>	<p>Kiosk and information materials will inform all users to expect to encounter motorized users.</p> <p>The Forest Service will determine the number of signs needed.</p> <p>Educational materials and visitor contacts will include emphasis on slow speeds on the Red Table and Basalt Mountain roads.</p> <p>Signs will be posted at all kiosks informing users of hunting season dates and recommending limiting use of the trail system to the middle of the day (between 10am and 3pm) during hunting season to minimize user conflicts and reduce use during the time when animals are most active.</p>	<p>The Forest Service will document in the relevant Cost share Agreement or Permit the number of comments received, concerning the Basalt to Gypsum trail system.</p> <p>The system trails and roads will be patrolled by the Forest Service and volunteer Maintenance / Patrol Crews according to the frequency previously identified under the Off-trail Use and Use of Closed Routes section of this table. These crews will document complaints about excessive speeds. Forest Protection Officers will issue warnings to riders observed exceeding reasonable speed. Volunteers will provide verbal warnings to riders who are observed exceeding reasonable speed.</p> <p>The Forest Service will obtain baseline user data (amount) and monitor trail use on a yearly basis to help inform future management of the system.</p>	<p>Numerous concerns received per riding season may trigger a range of potential additional management options as determined appropriate by the Forest Service.</p> <p>User conflicts will be monitored and actions will be considered, as determined appropriate by the Forest Service.</p>	<p>One or more of the following management actions may be implemented, as determined by the Forest Service:</p> <p>Signage and trail features may be installed in locations that are subject to habitual concerns if determined to be effective and feasible.</p> <p>After appropriate level of environmental analysis, alternating days of use between the various user groups may be instituted.</p> <p>“Closed throttle” zones may be identified and signed where there is shared use near trailheads and in other locations as deemed appropriate.</p>

Management Category	Desired Conditions*	Proactive Recommendations	Monitoring Protocol	Thresholds Triggering Management Action	Management Actions
Wildlife and Ecosystem Integrity and Impacts	The seasonal motorized trail closures from October 10 th - June 20 th are complied with and enforced as necessary	<p>Signs educating the public and users about the seasonal closure will be installed at both parking areas.</p> <p>User groups including CBTRA and RMSR will educate their members about seasonal trail closures and impacts to wildlife</p> <p>Allow for trail maintenance/clearing prior to trail system opening.</p> <p>Seasonal closure of the area will last from October 10 through June 20. (Rifle season generally opens on the second weekend of October, depending on the year).</p>	<p>Forest Service staff and volunteers will monitor compliance with seasonal closures.</p> <p>All violations of the closure will be documented and reported.</p> <p>CPW will monitor the health and migration patterns of the elk, mule deer, and big horn sheep populations.</p> <p>“Indicator” species, including breeding birds will also be monitored as indicators of ecosystem integrity, through a partnership with Roaring Fork Audubon and Roaring Fork Sierra Club.</p>	<p>If significant changes in elk, mule deer, or big horn sheep behavior, and/or use of historical calving areas can be specifically attributed to motorized use, the F.S. will consider management options including additional seasonal closures. This plan acknowledges that there are many factors that could affect wildlife behavior and use of calving areas including grazing and natural population cycles.</p> <p>When an incident of off-trail use, or use of closed routes is observed all evidence of such use will be obliterated as soon as possible. If use continues, signs will be posted specifying management actions up to and including trail system closure.</p> <p>If continued illegal off-trail use or use of closed roads or trails occurs the District Ranger or Forest Supervisor may close the entire trail system or substantial portions of it. Closures would remain in effect until a new management strategy can be developed and implemented to deal with off-trail incidents.</p> <p>The number of off-trail incidents should steadily decrease as the trail system ages. If a trend toward fewer off trail incidents is not observed, reevaluation and additional actions will be considered including possible trail closures.</p>	
Funding and maintenance.	<p>Funding should be sought proportionately for all portions of this trail system including: construction, restoration, maintenance, and compliance. Because outside grants may be more likely to fund trail construction than other portions of the project the F.S. will make all reasonable efforts to provide funding and resources for portions of the project that are not funded from grants.</p> <p>Funding for trail construction should not increase the challenges of trail restoration, maintenance, enforcement and monitoring.</p>	<p>Create a yearly timetable that specifies the mix of activities to take place each year, such that resources for decommissioning and enforcement stay in sync with resources for trail construction.</p> <p>Estimate costs associated with each of the three activities, and attempt to obtain funding commitments for all three before proceeding with any one of them.</p>	<p>Monitor to be sure the three implementation activities are sequenced in sync.</p> <p>Monitor to be sure funding is balanced between the three.</p>	Funding is not obtained for decommissioning, closures, restoration, enforcement, monitoring, and maintenance.	Funding for more trail construction should not be sought until funding for decommissioning, closures, restoration, enforcement, monitoring, and maintenance is obtained.

A Challenge Cost Share Agreement or Permit System will be in place between CBTRA, RMSR, RFOV and the White River National Forest, beginning in 2015. The Agreement will identify roles and responsibilities regarding trail restoration, maintenance, reconstruction, education, enforcement, and monitoring.

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