APPENDIX L

Travel Analysis Process Report

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

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Lookout Pass Ski Area Expansion Environmental Impact Statement

Travel Analysis Process Report

Coeur d'Alene Ranger District, Idaho Panhandle and Lolo National Forests, Shoshone County, Idaho, and Mineral County, Montana

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ACRONYMS USED

ADT	average daily traffic
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
BMPs	best management practices
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	environmental impact statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERO	ERO Resources
FSH	Forest Service Handbook
GIS	geographic information system
IDT	Interdisciplinary team
IPNFs	Idaho Panhandle National Forests
LNF	Lolo National Forest
MA	Management Areas
MRS	minimum road system
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFS	National Forest System
OHV	off-highway vehicles
ROS	recreation opportunity spectrum
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SUP	special use permit
SWCA	SWCA Environmental Consultants
TAP	travel analysis process
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
WFA	Wildlands Fire Associates

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1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has prepared this travel analysis process (TAP) report in conformance with Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 7709.55 Chapter 20 guidelines. The TAP is not a decision process, but it provides an analytical framework that can be used to inform future choices about road and trail system management. The main objectives of the TAP are to 1) identify opportunities to meet current or future management objectives for the National Forest System (NFS) transportation system; and 2) provide information that facilitates integration of ecological, social, and economic concerns into future transportation decisions.

1.1. Travel Management Rule

Transportation management on USFS lands is guided by the agency's administrative transportation system policy and Travel Management Rule (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 212, 251, 262, and 295). These regulations require that road management decisions be informed by a science-based analysis and that the USFS govern the use of motor vehicles on NFS lands. In particular, travel management regulations (36 CFR 212.5(b)) require that the USFS "identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands" and identify the roads that "are no longer needed to meet forest resource management objectives and that, therefore, should be decommissioned or considered for other uses, such as for trails."

1.2. Travel Analysis Process

The TAP describes current conditions, risks, and benefits of analyzed NFS roads and trails. Based on these findings, a set of science-based recommendations (regarding road retention, conversion, decommissioning, or other disposal) are developed that can inform subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes.

The analysis process consists of six steps, which are as follows:

- Step 1: Setting Up the Analysis
- Step 2: Describing the Situation
- Step 3: Identifying Issues
- Step 4: Assessing Benefits, Problems, and Risks
- Step 5: Describing Opportunities and Setting Priorities
- Step 6: Reporting

Travel analysis is an iterative process. As such, this report is a "living" document that reflects the conditions and understanding of the analysis area at the time of writing. This document may be updated, as necessary, in response to changing conditions or new information.

2. THE ANALYSIS

Step 1 of the TAP process—setting up the analysis—consists of identifying the analysis area, establishing analysis objectives, identifying analysis team members, developing an analysis plan, and identifying available information.

2.1. Analysis Area

Travel analysis can occur at multiple scales, from project-specific areas to forest-wide assessments. This TAP was prompted by a private proposal to expand the Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area special use permit (SUP) onto adjacent NFS lands. As such, this report is limited to a 1,473-acre analysis area (hereafter also referred to as the Lookout Pass Analysis Area) that incorporates the proposed expansion area, in addition to the existing SUP and surrounding roads used to access the site.

The Lookout Pass Analysis Area is located approximately 12 miles east of Wallace, Idaho, along Interstate 90 on the Idaho/Montana border (Figure 1). The analysis area occurs entirely within USFS-administered lands. Administration of these lands is split between the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNFs) in Shoshone County, Idaho, and Lolo National Forest (LNF) in Mineral County, Montana. Approximately 52% of the acreage (764 acres) falls within the IPNF and 48% (709 acres) falls within the LNF.

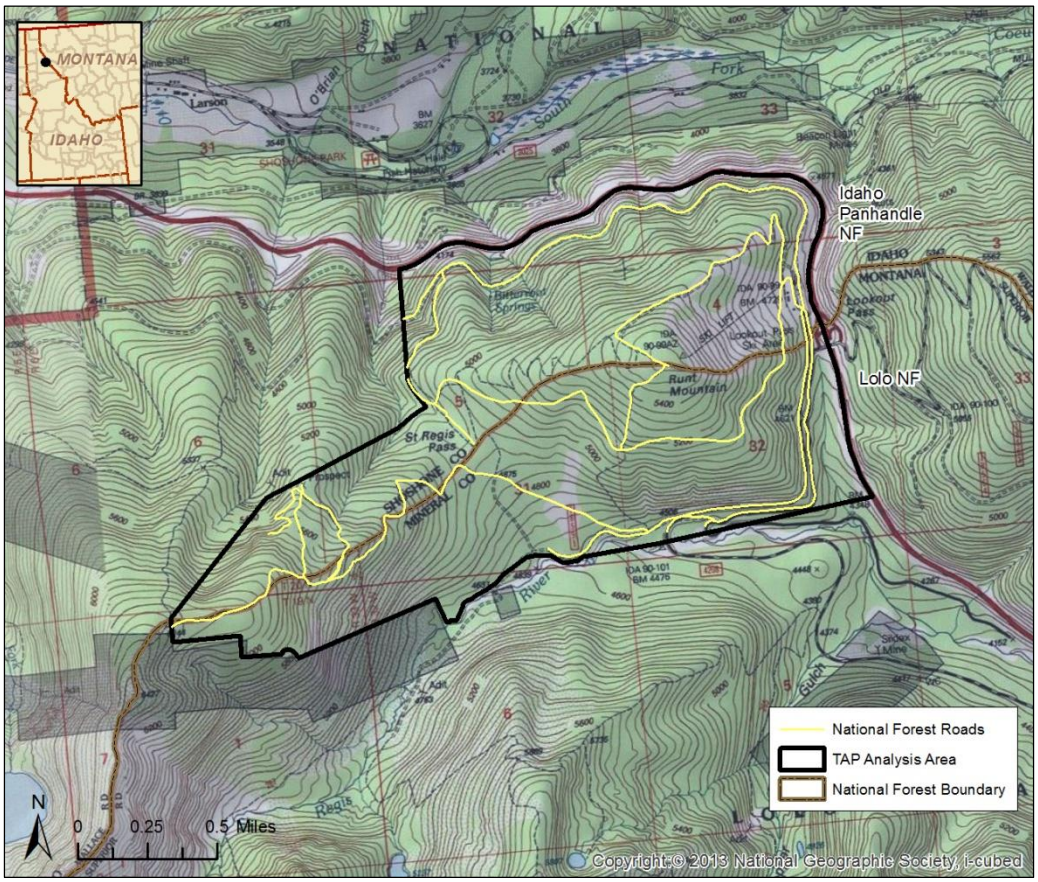

Figure 1. Vicinity map for Lookout Pass Analysis Area.

All existing routes included in the USFS transportation database, INFRA, that are within the analysis area are included in this report. The area also contains historic mining or logging routes, as well as user-

created trails that are present on the landscape but not managed or authorized by the USFS. These undesignated routes are not incorporated into this TAP.

2.2. Objectives

This travel analysis is driven by a need to analyze conditions and to make recommendations for the minimum transportation system as part of the larger ongoing Lookout Pass Ski Area Expansion environmental impact statement (EIS). The analysis will provide scientific information for road management to ensure the forest transportation system:

- provides safe access and meets the needs of communities and forest users;
- facilitates the implementation of the IPNFs and LNF Forest Plans;
- allows for economical and efficient management within likely budget levels;
- meets current and future resource management objectives; and
- begins to reverse adverse ecological impacts, to the extent practicable.

2.3. Report Preparers

An Interdisciplinary team (IDT) consisting of USFS staff and private contractors was established to prepare this report. A list of members and their primary discipline(s) are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Specialist Roles on Lookout Pass Travel Analysis Process

Role	Contractor Staff/Affiliation	USFS Staff/Affiliation
Project Oversight/Quality Control	Sue Wilmot – SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA)	Barbara Hansen – IPNFs
Fisheries Biology	Laura Burckhardt – SWCA	Tim Price – IPNFs
Visual Resources	Chris Mertl – Corvus Design	Diana Jones – IPNFs
Air Quality	Bill Jamieson – SWCA	Sarah Jerome – IPNFs
Public Safety	Dan Whitely – SWCA	Barbara Hansen –IPNFs Sarah Jerome – IPNFs
Minerals	Kemble White – SWCA	Kevin Knesek – IPNFs
Wildlife Biology	Karen Baud – ERO Resources (ERO)	Beth Kennedy – LNF
Recreation	George Weekley – SWCA	Barbara Hansen – IPNFs
Soils	Cody Stropki – SWCA	John Ruebke – IPNFs
Wetlands/Vegetation	Steve Butler – ERO	Val Goodnow – IPNFs
Engineering/Silviculture/Timber Management	Greg Zartman – LEI Engineering	Wanda Smith – LNF Nate Kegel – LNF Barbara Hansen – IPNFs
Cultural Resources	Lorelea Hudson – SWCA	Bruce Gibson – IPNFs
Water Resources	Chris Garrett – SWCA	Dustin Walters – LNF
Hazardous Fuels/Wildfire	Darrell Schulte – Wildlands Fire Associates (WFA)	Sarah Jerome – IPNFs
Socioeconomics	Jonathan Rigg – SWCA	Clint Scott – IPNFs

Table 1. Specialist Roles on Lookout Pass Travel Analysis Process

Role	Contractor Staff/Affiliation	USFS Staff/Affiliation
Geographic Information System (GIS)	Melissa Katz-Moye – SWCA	Tom Elliott – IPNFs Deb Job – LNF

2.4. Analysis Plan

The IDT established the following steps to carry out the travel analysis:

- Assemble and review existing data.
- Identify discrepancies, omissions, and duplication between the LNF and IPNF's INFRA roads database and GIS coverage of area resources. Document and correct these data issues, where possible.
- Where possible, verify the current conditions of roads, including safety issues, surface type, and environmental issues.
- Identify access and resource issues, concerns, and opportunities based on available data.
- Recommend changes to the road system, as appropriate, to support the minimum road system (MRS) and to improve the management of forest resources.

2.5. Data Used in Analysis

The following sources of information were identified for use in this analysis:

- Geographic information system (GIS) database information available for the analysis area, including land ownership, vegetation, wildlife occurrences, streams, soils, and Forest Plan management areas
- INFRA roads and trails database
- Special use authorizations and ski area vegetation management and operation plans
- Public comments related to motorized and non-motorized use
- Former and current travel management plans and maps
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) records and consultation with state agencies on heritage resources
- Existing publications and surveys relating to resource issues in the analysis area (such as the 2002 Lookout Pass EIS)

The most updated information available was used to conduct this analysis. However, the USFS transportation database (INFRA) and GIS coverage for the LNF and IPNFs contained some overlapping, duplicate, or missing data. Efforts were made to clean the data using the best available information at the time of analysis. Data maintenance and management is an ongoing, iterative process, however, and additional revisions may be made in the future.

3. CURRENT ROAD SITUATION

Step 2 of the TAP—defining the current road situation—provides a brief overview of the base transportation network and identifies and classifies all existing routes within the Lookout Pass Analysis Area.

3.1. Road System Overview

The existing transportation system in the IPNFs and LNF serves a variety of resource management, commercial, recreation, administrative, and access needs. Interstate 90 is the main transportation route that provides public access from local and more distant communities to the Lookout Pass Analysis Area. Several USFS roads provide the remaining network of motor vehicle access to the analysis area.

3.2. Existing Roads Information

Figure 2 displays existing roads in the analysis area, while Table 2 summarizes identified roads, including their current status, service life, and maintenance level; level of service; travel plan status; and management area. Detailed description of these categories is provided below. Only roads contained within the analysis area boundary are included in this list. If a road passes in and out of the analysis area boundary, only mileage within the boundary is reported.

Total road density in the analysis area including undetermined and OML 1 roads is 5.7 miles per square mile of land, of which 2.3 miles per square mile are NFS roads open to public motorized use (OML 2 or higher).

3.2.1. Current Status

Roads within the analysis area are classified as NFS roads, undetermined roads, or decommissioned roads. Definitions for these terms are provided below.

NFS road: “Roads that are wholly or partly, within or adjacent to, and serving the National Forest System that the Forest Service determines necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources. Further, these roads are under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service, as opposed to those that are authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a State, county, or other local public road authority” (36 CFR 212.1).

USFS undetermined road: “Roads on National Forest System lands that are not managed as part of the forest transportation system, such as unplanned roads, abandoned travelways, and off-road vehicle tracks that have not been designated and managed as a trail; and those roads that were once under permit or other authorization and were not decommissioned upon the termination of the authorization” (36 CFR 212.1).

Decommissioned road: A road that is no longer being managed as part of the NFS. The road is closed to use; however, it may or may not be obliterated or otherwise physically closed.

3.2.2. Existing Service Life

Roads within the analysis area are classified as providing long-term, intermittent-term, or short-term service. Definitions for these terms are provided below.

Long-Term Service (C) – A long-term road developed and operated for continual or annual recurrent service.

Intermittent-Term Service (I) – A road developed and operated for periodic service and closed for more than 1 year between periods of use. The road can be stored for future use by removing culverts or improving drainage so that damage to watershed/ecosystem health is minimized until reconstruction is necessary.

Short-Term Service (S) – A road developed and operated for a limited period of time, which will cease to exist after the purpose for which it was constructed is completed, and the occupied land is reclaimed and managed for natural resource purposes.

3.2.3. Maintenance Levels

Roads within the analysis area are classified within one of five different maintenance levels. Maintenance levels, as defined in FSH 7709.59, are described as follows:

Level 1 – Assigned to intermittent service roads during the time they are closed to vehicular traffic. The closure period must exceed 1 year (as opposed to "seasonal" closures). Basic custodial maintenance is performed to keep damage to adjacent resources to an acceptable level and to perpetuate the road to facilitate future management activities. Emphasis is normally given to maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Planned road deterioration may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are "prohibit" and "eliminate." Roads receiving this level of maintenance may be of any type, class, or construction standard, and may be managed at any other maintenance level during the time they are open for traffic. However, while being maintained at Level 1, they are closed to vehicular traffic but may be open and suitable for non-motorized uses (e.g., hiking).

Level 2 – Assigned to roads open for use by high-clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic is not a consideration. Traffic is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed recreation, or other specialized uses. Log hauling may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either to (1) discourage or prohibit passenger cars or (2) accept or discourage high-clearance vehicles.

Level 3 – Assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. Roads in this maintenance level are typically low speed and single lane, with turnouts and spot surfacing. Some roads may be fully surfaced with either native or processed material. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either "encourage" or "accept." "Discourage" or "prohibit" strategies may be employed for certain classes of vehicles or users.

Level 4 – Assigned to roads that provide a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate travel speeds. Most roads are double lane and aggregate surfaced. However, some roads may be single lane. Some roads may be paved and/or dust abated. The most appropriate traffic management strategy is "encourage." However, the "prohibit" strategy may apply to specific classes of vehicles or users at certain times.

Level 5 – Assigned to roads that provide a high degree of user comfort and convenience. These roads are normally double-lane, paved facilities. Some may be aggregate surfaced and dust abated. The appropriate traffic management strategy is "encourage."

3.2.4. Level of Service

All roads within the analysis area are classified as low-volume roads (less than 400 average daily traffic [ADT]). Roads are also classified by one of three traffic flow conditions: congested when heavy traffic (coded as "H"); flow interrupted, use limited (coded as "I"); or slow flow or may be blocked (coded as "J").

3.2.5. Travel Plan Status

Roads within the analysis area are classified as either open to all vehicles, with no legal restrictions on use (coded as "1") or closed year-round to all motorized vehicle traffic (coded as "4").

3.2.6. Management Areas

IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FORESTS FOREST PLAN

On the Idaho side of the analysis area, existing roads occur within one Management Area (MA) 7 – Primary Recreation Areas, which is suitable for road construction as well as an array of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities and infrastructure. These areas may be characterized by substantially modified natural environments (ROS classification of roaded natural and rural). Recreation use in MA 7 is high, sights and sounds of human activity are common, and roads, trails, and sometimes highways are often evident (see 2015 Forest Plan for more detailed information).

LOLO NATIONAL FOREST PLAN

On the Montana side of the analysis area, existing roads occur within four MAs: 8, 9, 13, and 24. These MAs are described below (see 1986 Forest Plan for more detailed information):

MA 8: Management Area 8 consists of lands under SUPs issued to private operators to provide downhill ski opportunities to the public. As such, the area is managed to provide developed recreation opportunities and infrastructure to the public. Travel within this MA is typically for construction and maintenance; public use is generally restricted. Roads may be constructed, as needed, to meet management goals.

MA 9: Management Area 9 consists of lands with concentrated public use. This area is managed to provide a diversity of dispersed and developed recreation opportunities and improvements; conducting other resource management consistent with recreation objectives is also a core goal. Road and trail construction is permitted to provide access and meet recreation objectives.

MA 13: Management Area 13 consists of lakes, streams, and adjoining lands dominated by riparian vegetation. This area is managed to maintain and enhance value for wildlife, recreation, fisheries, aquatic habitat, and water quality. Dispersed recreation opportunities are encouraged, but all management activities are required to be designed to minimize impacts on water quality and riparian function. Road construction is generally minimal, except in cases where road systems must cross or traverse the area to provide access.

MA 24: Management Area 24 consists of lands with high visual sensitivity and that are available for timber management. This area is managed for optimal timber potential, healthy stands, and visual quality. Dispersed recreation opportunities are allowed. Extensive road development is permitted in this area as long as it meets visual quality objectives and is designed to minimize the risk of drainage or mass failure.

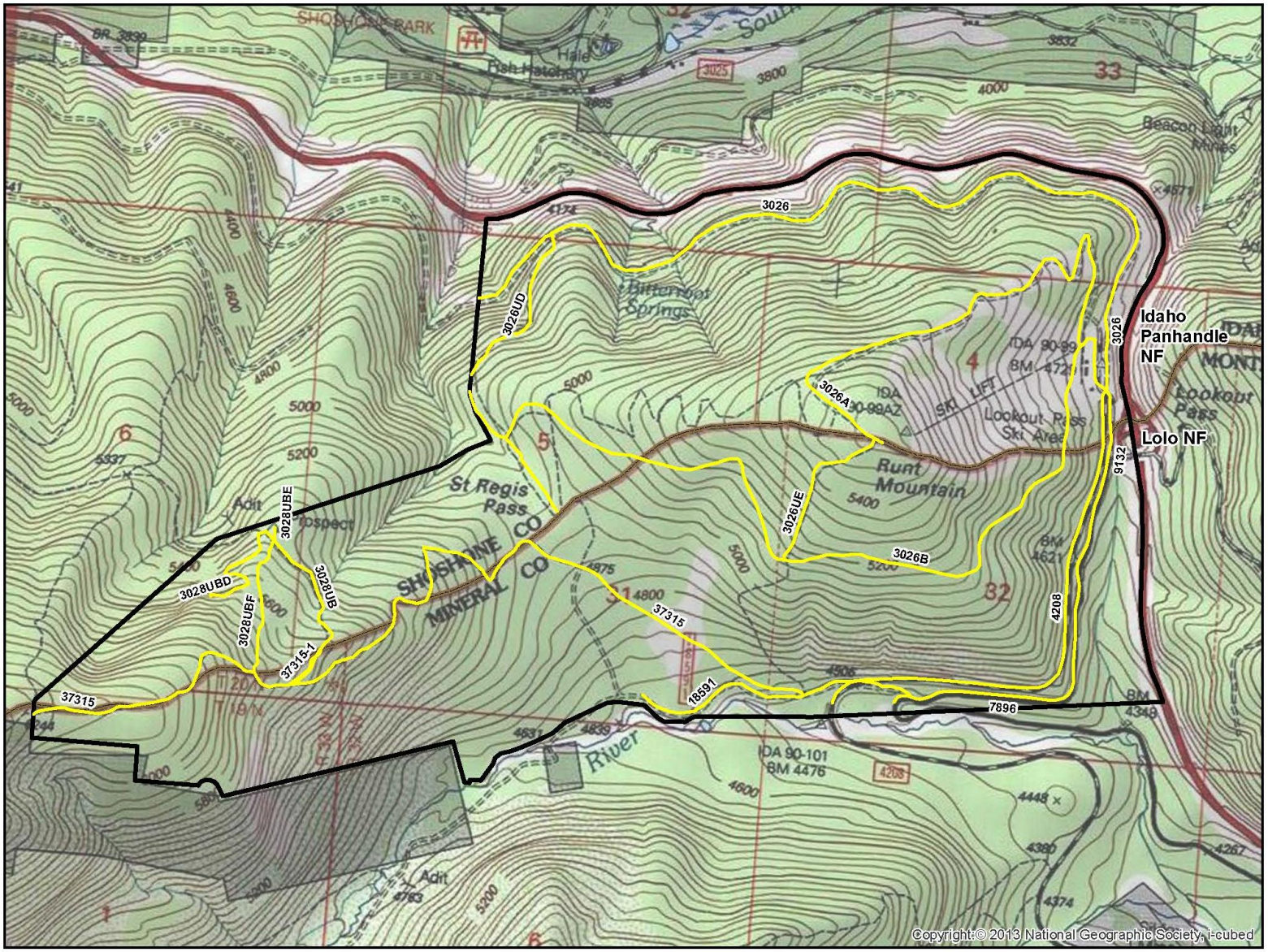

Figure 2. Display of INFRA Roads within the Analysis Area.

Table 2. Summary of INFRA Roads within the Analysis Area

Road No.	Road Name	Forest	Length (miles)	Current Status	Existing Service Life	Operational Maintenance Level	Level of Service	Travel Plan Status	Surface	Management Area(s)
3026	Railroad Grade	IPNFs	2.3	NFS	C	2	I	1	Native Material	7
3026A	Lookout Ski	IPNFs	1.5	NFS	I	2	J	4	Native Material	7
3026B	Lookout Ski	IPNFs	1.9	NFS	I	2	J	4	Native Material	7
3026UD	St. Regis Pass	IPNFs	0.8	Undetermined	I	1	J	4	Native Material	7
3026UE	St. Regis Pass Spur	IPNFs	0.4	Undetermined	I	1	J	4	Native Material	NA
3028UB	Trail #256	IPNFs	0.4	Decommissioned	NA	1	J	4	Native Material	7
3028UBD	St. Regis River Divide	IPNFs	0.3	Decommissioned	NA	1	J	4	Native Material	7
3028UBE	St. Regis River Divide	IPNFs	<0.1	Decommissioned	NA	1	J	4	Native Material	7
3028UBF	St. Regis River Divide	IPNFs	0.3	Decommissioned	NA	1	J	4	Native Material	7
4208	Northern Pacific Railway (NORPAC)	LNF	1.2	NFS	C	2	H	1	Crushed Aggregate or Gravel	8, 9, 13, 24
7896	Highway Falls	LNF	1.0	NFS	C	3	I	1	Asphalt	8, 9, 13, 24
9132	Lookout Pass Parking	LNF	<0.1	NFS	C	5	I	1	Crushed Aggregate or Gravel	24
18591	Saint Regis Basin	LNF	0.7	NFS	C	2	J	1	Native Material	13. 24
37315	Old Mullan Trail	LNF	2.2	Undetermined	NA	NA	J	1	Native Material	9, 13, 24
37315-1	NA	LNF	0.1	Undetermined	NA	NA	J	1	Native Material	9

4. ISSUES

Key resource or access issues within the Lookout Pass Analysis Area were identified in Step 3 based on recent USFS travel management plans, past Lookout Pass ski expansion NEPA documents, and IDT input. These issues are assessed as part of the baseline risk and benefits analysis in Step 4, starting on the next page. Please note that issues are provided in alphabetical order below and do not represent a hierarchy of importance.

4.1. Resource Issues

4.1.1. Aquatic Systems

Analysis area roads may impact aquatic species or alter aquatic habitat through stream channelization, increased erosion and sediment loading, or a change in watershed runoff characteristics; restricted organism passage; or reduced amphibian migration due to habitat fragmentation by roads.

4.1.2. Botany (noxious weeds, wetlands, and sensitive species)

Analysis area roads may alter or remove vegetation, increase soil disturbance and habitat fragmentation, and introduce or spread invasive species via vehicular and foot traffic.

4.1.3. Heritage Resources

Analysis area roads may adversely affect heritage resources via physical damage or increased public access to areas with known or high probabilities for heritage resources.

4.1.4. Hydrology

Roads in the analysis area that bisect or parallel intermittent and perennial stream channels may impair the hydrologic function of these water resources. Portions of the analysis area also have soils with higher susceptibility to surface erosion or mass movement that may deliver sediment to adjacent waterbodies and influence water quality.

4.1.5. Recreation

The diversity of recreation activities on analysis area roads may lead to a conflict among users. Mixing motorized and non-motorized users can increase safety hazards and reduce the quality of the experience for users seeking quiet recreation. Road management decisions may also facilitate the creation of unauthorized routes or illegal motorized traffic on closed roads. An expected increase in area population and recreation demand is likely to increase these risks.

4.1.6. Road Condition and Maintenance

Inadequate maintenance reduces access for NFS users and management, accelerates soil erosion by concentrating surface water flow, and affects water quality by increasing sediment in water courses and intermittent drainages. Funding for road maintenance within the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District is not adequate to maintain the existing system and perform necessary monitoring.

4.1.7. Wildlife Security and Habitat Fragmentation

NFS and unauthorized roads in the analysis area may reduce or fragment wildlife habitat and create barriers to movement, potentially reducing area capability to sustain wildlife populations. These roads may also allow for increased levels of human activities such as hunting and trapping that may directly impact individuals in these wildlife populations.

4.2. Access Issues

4.2.1. Access for Fire Suppression

An adequate road system is needed in the analysis area to provide safe and prompt access to fire locations for wildfire suppression and emergency response. Areas with limited road systems reduce options for economical fuel treatments and reduce firefighter safety.

4.2.2. Access for Recreation and Other Special Uses

Access of various types is needed in the analysis area to provide recreational opportunities. Roads are used for various types of motorized recreation including driving for pleasure, four-wheel driving, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and motorcycle riding, and snowmobile riding. Roads are also used to provide motor vehicle access to recreational activities occurring off roads, such as hiking, hunting, and firewood gathering. In the analysis area, all roads are close to motorized use except for NFS Roads 3026, 4028, 9132, 7896, and 18591.

4.2.3. Access for Vegetation Management

An adequate road system is needed in the analysis area to provide safe, efficient, and cost-effective access for current and future vegetation management and monitoring activities, such as noxious weed treatments, stand tending, and insect and disease management.

5. RISKS AND BENEFITS

As part of Step 4—Assessing Benefits, Problems, and Risks—the IDT considered the major uses and effects of the current transportation system to generate baseline information against which proposed changes can be compared. The benefits and risks of the current transportation system are contained in the following three sections: environmental effects, economic effects, and social effects. Each section is broken down into categories, which are identified using a two-letter abbreviation for easy reference.

5.1. Environmental Effects

5.1.1. Ecosystem Functions and Processes (EF)

EF (1) Issue: What ecological attributes, particularly those unique to the region, would be affected by roading of currently unroaded areas?

No inventoried roadless areas are located within the Lookout Pass Analysis Area. There are no ecological features unique to the analysis area that would be affected by new road construction. The ecological attributes of unroaded areas will continue to be protected by implementation of the IPNFs and LNF Forest Plans and project-specific design features for any proposed road action.

EF (2) Issue: To what degree does the presence, type, and location of roads increase the introduction and spread of exotic plant and animal species, insects, diseases, and parasites? What are the potential effects of such introductions to plant and animal species and ecosystem function in the area?

The presence of roads increases the risk of spread of existing and new exotic (noxious or non-native) plants to the forests and surrounding landscapes. In general, the higher the assigned road maintenance level, the greater the frequency of road maintenance and motorized vehicular traffic, which increases the potential for spread of noxious weeds into new areas. Roads that provide access to ridgetops, forest

clearings, or other open areas may also allow for easier access to unroaded areas, which can contribute to the spread of weeds into previously undisturbed, uninfested areas.

Exotic plant species, including spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), St. Johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*), hawkweed (*Hieracium pretense*), and yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), are present along roads and other areas of bare soil within the analysis area (USFS 2013a). The introduction of additional invasive or noxious weeds may continue to displace existing native plant species, thereby reducing biodiversity and degrading wildlife forage areas. Implementation of best management practices (BMPs), native plant maintenance or revegetation, and herbicide use, as detailed in the Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area's vegetation management plan (USFS 2013b), can reduce, but not eliminate, further spread.

Roads do not typically increase the introduction and spread of exotic insects, diseases, and parasites; wind is the most common vector for spread to previously undisturbed areas. However, road construction or maintenance and improved user access for firewood collection can potentially remove roadside dead or dying trees (snags), thereby reducing cover and nesting habitat for a variety of insectivorous bird species and subsequently reducing opportunities for natural insect predation. Vehicles traveling on road systems can also spread some disease agents.

EF (3) Issue: To what degree does the presence, type, and location of roads/trails contribute to the control of insects, diseases, and parasites?

Roads and trails provide a transportation network that facilitates the management of insects, disease, and parasites through increased efficiency and ease of monitoring, sampling, and treatment although, as discussed above, equipment traveling on road systems can spread some disease agents.

There are a number of insects and diseases present in the Lookout Pass Analysis Area that are anticipated to cause forested stand loss irrespective of the local transportation system. Some root disease has been observed in the lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) on the Montana side of the analysis area. Grand fir (*Abies grandis*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), which occur primarily on the lower elevations of the Idaho side, are also very susceptible to root disease. Currently 1% to 15% of the canopy has been lost as a result of root disease–caused tree mortality (USFS 2013b).

Western white pine (*Pinus monticola*) in the area is susceptible to the white pine blister rust, an introduced disease. While some white pine mortality has been observed, several scattered live white pine remain in the area. This slow loss of large white pine is expected to continue.

Several species of bark beetles are also causing mortality in the analysis area. The most serious insect pest is the mountain pine beetle, which has caused heavy losses of lodgepole pine (ponderosa pine [*pinus ponderosa*] is also susceptible). For subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), the most important bark beetle is the western balsam bark beetle. Western balsam bark beetle has been observed to cause low level subalpine fir mortality in the area. The pine engraver has also been observed killing the tops of lodgepole pine trees and may also kill smaller diameter lodgepole pine trees. Current levels of beetle-caused mortality are expected to continue for the near future in the analysis area until most of the susceptible trees have been killed or are removed (USFS 2013b).

EF (4) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect ecological disturbance regimes in the area?

The primary natural ecological disturbance regimes in the analysis area are fire, insects and disease, wind, and ice. Transportation effects related to insects and disease are discussed in EF (2) and EF (3), above. Catastrophic wildfire has occurred in analysis area. The most notable fire to occur was the 1910 fire; evidence from that fire, such as burned out logs and stumps, still exists within area forested stands. Fires

such as the 1910 fire are stand replacement fires that generally occur at long return intervals. The fire-free interval for these habitat types is 50 to 130 years. These periodic fire disturbances and high amount of low to moderate fire intensity favor species such as lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, and western larch (*Larix occidentalis*). Stands dominated by lodgepole pine and over 80 years of age, as found in the analysis area, tend to build fuels that become part of large stand replacement events encompassing thousands of acres (USFS 2013b).

Road and trail access can both positively and negatively affect fire patterns. Road access increases the risk of human-caused fire, but also allows for fuel breaks and improved fire suppression activities that can limit the spread and number of low-severity fires. Additional discussion of these risks and benefits is provided in PT (1) and (2), in Section 5.3.3.

Wind throw is another potential problem, especially on southwest aspects where there is an exposed edge of trees or in stands that have been partially cut. In most cases, road systems do not affect disturbance from larger-scale wind (and ice) events. However, new road or trail construction can damage adjacent tree root systems, resulting in localized blowdown or ice damage during weather events. Root rot, discussed above in EF (3), also weakens the root system and makes trees more susceptible to blowdown during these occasions.

EF (5) Issue: What are the adverse effects of noise, caused by developing, using, and maintaining roads and trails?

Noise from developing, using, and maintaining roads and trails may affect people and wildlife within audible distance. There are no noise-sensitive locations (e.g., residential homes, lands with wilderness or roadless character) located within the analysis area that could be affected. Road noise may temporarily displace wildlife in localized settings; these effects are discussed in TW (1).

5.1.2. Aquatic, Riparian Zone, and Water Quality (AQ)

AQ (1) Issue: How and where does the road system modify the surface and subsurface hydrology of the area?

Roads have three main effects on area hydrology: 1) they intercept surface and subsurface water; 2) they concentrate flow, either on the road surface or in an adjacent ditch or channel; and 3) they divert or reroute water from normal flow paths, thereby potentially changing the amount of time it takes for water to enter a stream channel and altering the timing of peak flows or runoff response times. Increasing road density increases the impact to a watershed and its waterways. Potential hydrological effects are greatest for roads that cross, or are located near, streams, springs, or other water sources, as well as roads that are mid-slope.

Roads 18591, 37315, 7896, and 4208 cross (or parallel) analysis area streams, riparian areas, or wetlands and have the greatest potential to influence surface hydrologic function. Other mid-slope roads with higher potential to modify hydrology include Roads 3026B and 3026UD.

AQ (2) Issue: How and where does the road/trail system generate surface erosion?

Roads tend to erode every year that they are used and are a chronic source of sediment. The extent of sediment delivery from roads depends on road surface conditions, road location, topography, and soil properties, as well as road design, use, and management. In general, the higher the assigned road maintenance level, the greater the frequency of road maintenance and motorized vehicular traffic, which increases the potential for erosion and sediment delivery.

Surface erosion is evident to some extent on nearly every road in the analysis area. Roads on the Idaho side include Road 3026 (the former railroad grade to Mullan), closed Road 3026UD, and Road 3026A, the ski area maintenance road, which provides access to the mountain top. A past field assessment (USFS 2002) indicated these roads are partially vegetated and show evidence of rill erosion on steeper slopes that discharge to adjacent well-vegetated areas.

On the Montana side, erosion from snowmelt and rainstorms has occurred along Road 18591, delivering sediment to vegetated areas along the south side of the road in previous examinations (USFS 2002). Road 37315 crosses a wetland on the south side of Runt Mountain. During previous road assessments (USFS 2002), it was noted that water draining from the wetland area was generating substantive gully erosion on this road (up to 12 inches deep). The 2002 Lookout Pass EIS proposed re-grading this location to eliminate the erosion problem; subsequent road assessment is required to determine if grading has resolved the issue. Other Montana roads have previously documented areas of rill and gully erosion, but these areas were also noted to discharge to well-vegetated buffer sites (USFS 2002).

AQ (3) Issue: How and where does the road/trail system affect mass wasting?

Diversion of stream flow at road–stream crossings, road proximity to stream channels, culvert placements, and road design are key factors contributing to road failure and landscape erosional events.

No landslides, slumps, mudflows or other slope stability problems have been identified in past soil and geologic mapping or fieldwork within the analysis area (USFS 2002). Soils mapped in the area have low to moderate mass wasting erosion potential.

AQ (4) Issue: How and where do road/trail-stream crossings influence local stream channels and water quality?

Road–stream crossings can be a major source of sediment to streams, resulting from channel fill around culverts, subsequent road-crossing failures, and changes in stream morphology. Greater road density will generally have a greater number of road–stream crossings and thereby increase the likelihood of impact on stream water quality via the introduction of fine sediment or sand at those juncture points.

The analysis area includes two stream crossings with culverts on Road 3026. One crossing is on a perennial stream below Bitterroot Springs and the other is on an intermittent drainage without a defined stream channel approximately 2,000 feet to the east. Both of these crossing are vegetated and did not have evidence of sediment delivery to the stream from the road surface during past evaluation (USFS 2002).

There are no other culverts known to be present within the analysis area. Road 18591 crosses a small stream (likely originating from a nearby wetland) at a low point in the road, while Road 37315 crosses a wetland. However, no evidence of runoff or sediment from analysis area roads was observed reaching the St. Regis River or area streams in past assessment (USFS 2002).

AQ (5) Issue: How and where does the road/trail system create potential for pollutants, such as chemical spills, oils, de-icing salts, or herbicides to enter surface waters?

Roads and trails provide a transportation network that can facilitate the entry of pollutants and herbicides to area waters. The potential for pollutants to enter surface waters is based on a variety of factors, including proximity of the road to a stream and the presence or lack of vegetation materials to serve as a “buffer strip” between the road and stream water. Road design also plays a role. Paved road systems have a greater likelihood of pollutant introduction due to higher public vehicular use, greater road maintenance requirements, concentration of contaminated runoff, and potential accidental spills, while unpaved road

systems can generate their own sedimentation problems to nearby streams through off-road vehicle activity.

There are no roads within the analysis area that currently receive chemical treatments for dust abatement or de-icing, and no authorized actions allow for the use of petrochemicals or other oils. Herbicide use may occur along roads and is authorized under the Lookout Pass Vegetation Management Plan. Herbicide application guidelines within this plan are designed to avoid incidental application to flowing waters and sensitive aquatic areas (USFS 2013b).

Off-road vehicle use may contribute sediment at stream crossings or where roads and trails occur near streams. However, no direct pathways for runoff and sediment delivery to streams have been observed in previous field assessments (USFS 2002). Outfalls or concentration points where runoff from roads or adjacent ditches might be discharged will be identified as part of the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion third-party EIS.

AQ (6) Issue: How and where is the road/trail system hydrologically connected to the stream system? How do the connections affect water quality and quantity?

Roads can intercept, concentrate, and divert water flow along the road surface or adjacent ditch/channel. In areas where surface flow becomes continuous between roads and streams or other waterbodies, such as where a ditch conveys runoff to a stream channel, the road generating or receiving the runoff is considered “hydrologically connected” to the stream network. Wherever a hydrologic connection exists, accelerated runoff, sediments, and road-associated chemicals, such as spills or oils, have a direct route to surface waters.

Roads 18591, 37315, 7896, and 4208 cross (or parallel) analysis area streams, riparian areas, or wetlands and have the greatest potential to be hydrologically connected to the stream system. Further determination of locations of hydrologic connectivity will be made as part of the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion third-party EIS.

AQ (7) Issue: What downstream beneficial uses of water exist in the area? What changes in uses and demand are expected over time? How are they affected or put at risk by road/trail-derived pollutants?

As of 2012, the St. Regis River (located just outside the analysis area) was listed as impaired for aquatic life (fish, shellfish, and wildlife protection and propagation). The river fully supports agricultural, drinking water, and recreation uses (Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] 2013). There are no anticipated changes to these uses or their demand in the future. Downstream beneficial uses are, and will continue to be, affected by sediment and habitat alteration from road-based recreation, silviculture, and other natural or human activity and uses of roads in the analysis area. However, the USFS has adopted BMPs for soil and water conservation to prohibit further impairment and will implement these BMPs for future actions to prevent or minimize sediment delivery to the St. Regis River.

AQ (8) Issue: How and where does the road/trail system affect wetlands?

Road and trail systems can result in wetland fill or modify surface or subsurface drainage during construction and maintenance. Transportation systems can also introduce noxious or non-native weeds and alter wetland vegetation composition.

There is one known wetland in the analysis area, on the south side of Runt Mountain. Road 37315 crosses this wetland; past assessment indicates that this road has altered wetland drainage, resulting in gully erosion (USFS 2002). However, subsequent assessment as part of the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion

third-party EIS is required to determine current wetland status. Additional wetland areas may be present along small seeps adjacent to area streams or the St. Regis River. The presence and condition of these wetlands will be assessed during a future field visit.

AQ (9) Issue: How does the road system alter physical channel dynamics, including isolation of floodplains; constraints on channel migration; and the movement of large wood, fine organic matter, and sediment?

Roads can have adverse effects on river stability and sediment supply as a result of increased stream flow, fill encroachment, realignment, reducing stream length, cutting off floodplains, and direct modifications of base level and grade by stream crossings. The alteration of any of these processes can result in channel destabilization processes including excess sediment deposition, widening of the channel, incision, floodplain abandonment, excess bank erosion, abandonment of previous channels, or meandering to braided channels.

In Section 32, Township 20 North, Range 32 West (which covers Lookout Pass's existing SUP on the Montana side), the St. Regis River is a second-order stream with a "B" channel type at an elevation of approximately 4,400 feet (USFS 2002). In general, B channel types have a low sensitivity to disturbance, an excellent recovery potential, very low sediment supply, low streambank erosion potential, and negligible vegetation controlling influence (Rosgen 2009). During past surveys at this location, the average width of the St. Regis River was 7.9 feet, the average depth was 0.5 feet, and the gradient was 3.3% (USFS 2002). Roads 18951, 4208, and 7896 parallel the St. Regis River in this area for at least part of their lengths. However, there is a well-vegetated buffer between the roads and river; there was no evidence of sediment delivery from the roads to the river during previous assessment (USFS 2002).

Past sampling within the St. Regis River (at T20N, R32W, Section 32) indicated a lack of habitat diversity due to the shallowness of the stream and the cold temperatures at this elevation. The survey noted that most of the available woody debris was of smaller sized materials and that there was a considerable amount of undercut or unstable bank area (USFS 2002).

Through the proper design and placement of roads and stream crossings, and the implementation of erosion control measures, the USFS can minimize impacts to the St. Regis River or tributary streams during future road actions.

AQ (10) Issue: How and where does the road/trail system restrict the migration and movement of aquatic organisms? What aquatic species are affected, and to what extent?

The St. Regis River provides core area for bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, outside of the analysis area. Other fish species likely found in the area include westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*), rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), largescale sucker (*Catostomus macrocheilus*), longnose sucker (*Catostomus catostomus*), shorthead sculpin (*Cottus confusus*), and mountain whitefish (*Prosopium williamsoni*) (USFS 2002). Westslope cutthroat trout are listed as a sensitive species by the USFS in this region.

Road systems can affect the migration and movement of aquatic organisms if inappropriately installed culverts, poorly designed low water crossings, or changes in water velocities in a stream occur. Fish migration to the St. Regis River headwaters, via the analysis area, is currently blocked by a fish barrier under Interstate 90 (USFS 2013c). However, there are resident fish species in the St. Regis River adjacent to the analysis area.

AQ (11) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect shading, litter fall, and riparian plant communities?

In general, road and trail systems can affect riparian habitat through the introduction of noxious or non-native weeds and the removal or alteration of riparian vegetation, which can reduce stream shading and leaf fall.

Riparian zone habitat is present on the southern edge of the analysis area near the St. Regis River and is likely present along seasonal drainages. Roads 18951, 4208, and 7896 parallel the St. Regis River for at least part of their lengths. During past assessment, it was determined that most of the riparian zone along the St. Regis River consisted of willow and other shrubs (USFS 2002). No assessment of litter fall or shading was completed during previous field visits, although surveyors noted areas of road erosion discharging sediment to adjacent vegetated areas. Future transportation effects to riparian plant communities can be avoided or minimized by applying INFISH buffers around riparian areas and using BMPs developed in accordance with the USFS's *National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands* (USFS 2012) and USFS soil and water conservation practices.

AQ (12) Issue: How and where does the road/trail system contribute to fishing, poaching, or direct habitat loss for at-risk aquatic species?

Roads and trails provide a transportation network that can facilitate recreational fishing, as well as facilitate potential poaching and habitat loss for at-risk aquatic species. In the analysis area, roads and trails provide access to fishing areas along the St. Regis River. Fishing pressure, both legal and illegal (poaching), is currently unknown.

Road system effects to water resources (water quality, stream flow, etc.) that can adversely affect fish populations are discussed in AQ issues (1) through (11). The analysis area does not contain any designated critical habitat for bull trout. Road system effects to suitable habitat for other sensitive aquatic species likely to be present in the analysis area, such as the leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*), boreal toad (*Bufo boreas boreas)*, and Coeur d'Alene salamander (*Plethodon vandykei idahoensis*), could include loss or fragmentation of habitat due to conversion of native vegetation to road surface.

AQ (13) Issue: How and where does the road/trail system facilitate the introduction of nonnative aquatic species?

The road system allows for the potential transportation and introduction of non-native species, including aquatic nuisance species, bait species, and game fish, into area waters. Waters located along passenger roads are more likely to receive these types of introductions than waters located in backcountry areas requiring foot travel or high-clearance vehicles. The current road system allows for high-clearance vehicle travel along the St. Regis River. Motorized access to other tributaries in the analysis area is prohibited.

AQ (14) Issue: To what extent does the road/trail system overlap with areas of exceptionally high aquatic diversity or productivity, or areas containing rare or unique aquatic species or species of interest?

The road and trail system does not overlap with habitat or streams containing exceptionally high aquatic diversity or productivity or rare or unique aquatic species within the analysis area. Sensitive species or other species of interest are discussed in AQ (10) and AQ (12).

5.1.3. Terrestrial Wildlife (TW)

TW (1) Issue: What are the direct effects of the road/trail system on terrestrial species habitat?

Direct effects to terrestrial species habitat from the transportation system include: 1) loss of habitat due to conversion of native vegetation to road surface, 2) degradation of habitat due to introduction of noxious weeds or other exotic species, 3) expansion in edge habitat and reduced forest patch sizes, 4) fragmentation of habitats due to road system development, 5) wildlife disturbance or displacement due to road system noise and activity, and 6) wildlife mortality from vehicle traffic strikes or via increased predation, hunting, or increased human access which may lead to increased disturbance of wildlife. Additionally, soil compaction, loss of topsoil, and other factors can delay regrowth of vegetation and wildlife habitat upon road closure or decommissioning.

Road closure or decommissioning can reduce levels of human activity, thereby minimizing human disturbance to, and/or restoring, native wildlife habitat.

The Lookout Pass Analysis Area supports habitat for a wide range of terrestrial species, including elk (*Cervus canadensis*), grey wolf (*Canis lupus*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), fisher (*Martes pennanti*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), moose (*Alces alces*), and black bear (*Ursus americanu*s). The analysis area is also within theoretical linkage area for grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), lynx, and other carnivores. The suitability of current habitat and effects of the existing road system differ by species and will require further analysis and assessment in the subsequent Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion EIS. However, higher road densities have been shown to reduce habitat security and increase mortality for a range of mammals, including elk, bears, wolverines, and lynx (e.g. Apps 2000; Copeland 1996; Hillis et al. 1991; McKelvey et al. 2000; Rowland et al. 2005; Wakkinen and Kasworm 1997). The analysis area has a high total road density of 5.7 miles per square mile but caution is warranted in assessing potential wildlife response, as the scale of analysis may be too small to appropriately gauge effects.[1]

TW (2) Issue: How does the road/trail system facilitate human activities that affect habitat?

Roads provide access for a variety of human activities that can alter the quantity or quality of wildlife habitat. Human activities in the analysis area that can affect habitat and are facilitated by the existing road system include 1) off-road vehicle travel, 2) dispersed cross-country skiing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and hiking, 3) developed, concentrated downhill skiing, and 4) USFS commodity production (i.e., timber) and forest product collection.

These activities can affect habitat through vegetation trampling, soil compaction, loss of vegetation and soil, introduction of noxious weeds, and increased erosion and sediment to stream waters. Human collection of forest products, in particular firewood, can also reduce habitat for wildlife species that use downed wood and snags for reproduction, food, or cover from predators or the weather.

TW (3) Issue: How does the road and trail system affect legal and illegal human activities (including trapping, hunting, poaching, harassment, road kill, or illegal kill levels)? What are the effects on wildlife species?

Legal activities such as hunting and trapping are facilitated by an existing transportation system that makes access to areas easier and faster, and also helps distribute hunters over a greater area. However, the same benefits of roads and trails for legal activities can also help facilitate illegal activities. Poachers may

[1] The USFS Roads Analysis (USFS 1999) suggests that assessment of fragmentation should be measured at the subwatershed, or greater, scale.

find it easier to take wildlife in areas with a well-established transportation system. Areas with high road densities can affect wildlife negatively through harassment, displacement, or vulnerability to hunters, trappers, and poachers. High levels of legal and illegal motorized use also increase the potential for wildlife mortality.

The analysis area receives dispersed hunting activity during the big game and upland bird seasons. Most of the hunting is road-oriented with some short walk-in hunts (USFS 2002). Information on the extent of illegal poaching in the analysis area is not available at this time.

TW (4) Issue: How does the road/trail system directly affect unique communities or special features in the area?

As discussed above in TW (1) and (2), roads and trails can affect plant communities or special ecological features through a variety of direct and indirect actions. The Lookout Pass Analysis Area has no known Endangered Species Act–listed plants and only two threatened species, the water howellia (*Howellia aquatilis*) and Spalding's catchfly (*Silene spaldingii*), which are suspected to occur but do not have suitable habitat in the area. Potential also exists for whitebark pine ([*Pinus albicaulis*] a proposed threatened species) to occur. The closest known sensitive plant species is *Botrychium minganense* (Mingan moonwort), which is known to occur 1.5 miles away on the Montana side (USFS 2013a). Moonwort can potentially occur in previously disturbed sites such as on edges of roads planned for reconstruction. Most other sensitive plant species in the analysis area occur in wet habitats and can be avoided by applying INFISH buffers around wetland and riparian areas.

5.2. Economic Effects

5.2.1. Economics (EC)

EC (1): How does the road system affect the agency's direct costs and revenues? What, if any, changes in the road system will increase net revenue to the agency by reducing cost, increasing revenue, or both?

A detailed cost/benefit economic assessment is not feasible at this scale of analysis. Users of the transportation system generate revenue through past timber sales, map sales, SUPs, and firewood permits. Decommissioning and storing roads can reduce costs. However, all roads in the analysis area identified for decommissioning are already revegetated and are no longer being maintained.

5.2.2. Timber Management (TM)

TM (1) Issue: How does road/trail spacing and location affect logging system feasibility?

Transportation systems provide for the economical transport of forest products to existing processing facilities. In the analysis area, past logging was conducted primarily with ground-based logging systems; however, some cable logging may have occurred. Ground-based systems traditionally used crawler tractor-type equipment on both flat and steep slopes, but in recent years have used rubber-tired skidders on slopes not exceeding 35%. Typically ground-based logging systems prefer downhill skidding of logs to a road located at the base of the slope, but some minor uphill skidding is possible. Cable logging systems were used on steeper slopes, historically using high lead logging equipment and in recent years using skyline logging equipment. Both uphill and downhill skidding is possible with cable logging systems, but uphill skidding is preferred. A road network is required for both ground-based and cable logging systems to facilitate logging and for log transport.

Road spacing needs for logging activity are highly dependent on the type of logging system used. Ground-based logging systems are typically limited to skidding of logs not more than 1,000 feet from the road system, whereas cable logging systems can skid logs 2,000 to 2,500 feet from the road system. Shorting skidding distances decreases logging costs regardless of the logging system, but also increases road density and road costs. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the design and planning of road systems and logging systems to maximize log values while minimizing road density. The USFS also has the ability to construct temporary roads at a lower cost than permanent roads and then close the road at the end of logging activities.

Past USFS commodity production has contributed to the existing road system present today in the analysis area. However, due to local topography and slope steepness, additional road improvements and/or new road construction may be necessary to provide general access to, and improve logging feasibility of, area timber resources.

TM (2) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect managing the suitable timber base and other lands?

Road systems provide the ability to access forest lands for activities including law enforcement, fire suppression, watershed restoration, site preparation and tree planting, treating noxious weeds, data collection and monitoring, thinning operations, and numerous other forest management activities. In the analysis area, the existing road system is fairly limited and is suitable primarily for high-clearance vehicles, which will restrict access for some forest management activities.

Prior to conducting activities requiring heavy or low-clearance equipment and vehicles, some existing roads will require maintenance and reconstruction to a higher operational maintenance level (OML). Additional local road construction will also be required to access those areas currently isolated from the existing road system, based upon topography and planned timber management activities.

A total of 127 acres of the analysis area is located in designated Forest Plan MA 24 in the LNF, which encourage timber production. An adequate road system is required to conduct economic timber production operations, meeting the requirements for this MA designated in the Forest Plan.

TM (3) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect access to timber stands needing silvicultural treatment?

As discussed in TM (2), a suitable road system is required to conduct silviculture treatments such as artificial reforestation, timber stand improvement activities, and to an extent prescribed fire. Currently, a large percentage of the analysis area is accessible only by high clearance vehicles and therefore is difficult to treat with required silvicultural treatments.

Due to the 1910 wildfires that burned much, if not all, of the analysis area, most of the stands are even aged stands of mixed species. Many of the stands are showing signs of damage agents such as insects, disease, and frost (USFS 2013b). Therefore, much of the analysis area could benefit from silvicultural treatment, as described in Lookout Pass's Vegetation Management Plan (USFS 2013b). This plan requires entry for stand tending and regeneration harvest to maintain the existing forested leave islands in a healthy and vigorous condition and to provide for the eventual replacement of the current leave islands.

5.2.3. Minerals Management (MM)

MM (1) Issue: How does the road system affect access to locatable, leasable, and salable minerals?

Road systems provide for faster and less expensive access to forest lands for mineral production. There are no currently active locatable, leasable, or salable mineral developments within the analysis area, but numerous abandoned exploratory mine prospects are present. Due to the close proximity of the Silver Valley mining district, it is possible that other abandoned mining features may exist.

5.2.4. Range Management (RM)

RM (1) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect management of range allotments?

There are no range allotments within the Lookout Pass Analysis Area.

5.2.5. Water Production (WP)

WP (1) Issue: How does the road system affect access, constructing, maintaining, monitoring, and operating water diversions, impoundments, and distribution canals or pipes?

There are no water diversions, impoundments, or distribution canals within the analysis area. Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area maintain a water system that supports summer and winter operations.

WP (2) Issue: How does road development and use affect water quality in municipal watersheds?

There are no municipal watersheds within the analysis area.

WP (3) Issue: How does the road system affect access to hydroelectric power generation?

No hydroelectric generation facilities occur within the analysis area.

5.2.6. Special Use Permits (SU)

SU (1) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect managing special-use permit sites?

Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area maintains an SUP for winter recreation in the analysis area. One powerline also crosses the area to provide power to the ski lifts. Roads provide access to the ski resort and utility company for maintenance and emergency access.

5.3. Social Effects

5.3.1. General Public Transportation (GT)

GT (1) Issue: How does the road/trail system connect to public roads/trails and primary access to communities?

Interstate 90 provides primary access to the analysis area and surrounding communities, including Coeur d'Alene. Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area and parking lot are accessed from Exit 0 off of Interstate 90 using Road 9132. The Northern Pacific Railway grade (NFS Road 3026) also provides an important regional route for snowmobilers and other recreational users in the area. All other motorized roads (NFS

Roads 4028, 9132, 7896, and 18591) within the analysis area provide connections to each other but do not provide access to communities.

GT (2) Issue: How does the road/trail system connect large blocks of land in other ownerships to public roads/trails?

The analysis area consists solely of USFS lands; there are no large blocks of other land ownership that would use USFS roads to connect to Interstate 90.

GT (3) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect managing roads/trails with shared ownership or limited jurisdiction?

The USFS has full jurisdiction on all NFS roads within the analysis area.

GT (4) Issue: How does the road/trail system address the safety of road/trail users?

Roads 9132 and 7896 are the only roads within the analysis area that are maintained for passenger car traffic and are subject to the Federal Highway Safety Act. Other open roads (NFS Roads 3026, 4028, and 18591) within the analysis area are maintained for high-clearance vehicles. The USFS is responsible for providing for safe travel on these roads, but users are expected to be aware of hazards associated with these lower standard roads.

The greatest public safety concern in the analysis area is the potential conflict between motorized and non-motorized users. Most NFS roads within the analysis area open for unrestricted public use are maintained at OML 2. Generally, these roads are designed to facilitate low-volume traffic; surface conditions generally limit travel speeds.

5.3.2. Administrative Use (AU)

AU (1) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect access for research, inventory, and monitoring?

Road systems provide for faster and less expensive access to forest lands for administrative purposes. The Lookout Pass Analysis Area's road system provides access for current or future research, inventory, or monitoring needs. Efforts that require heavy equipment and low clearance vehicles, however, may require road improvements or new road construction to support these purposes.

AU (2) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect investigative or enforcement activities?

Unauthorized forest product collection and road use associated with summer off-road vehicles and snowmobiles are likely to occur in the analysis area, although there are no data indicating to what extent. However, the road system also provides access for law enforcement officers to engage in investigation and enforcement activities.

5.3.3. Protection (PT)

PT (1) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect fuels management?

An adequate road system allows reasonable access to fuel treatment areas, allows for a range of fuel treatment methods, and allows treatments to be conducted more efficient and cost-effectively as compared to areas with limited or absent roads. Road systems also provide an important fire break and can reduce the potential for prescribed fire escape.

The road system in the analysis area may not be sufficient for effective fuels management, as most road grades and condition preclude access by low-clearance vehicles and equipment for fuel reduction treatments.

PT (2) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect the capacity of the Forest Service and cooperators to suppress wildfires?

An adequate road and trail system allows for efficient and economic wildfire suppression. Reasonable road access near fires allows the initial fire attack to occur more quickly, as fire engines and water tenders can be used to supply water instead of using more costly aerial resources.

As with PT (1), the road system in the analysis area may not be sufficient for effective wildfire suppression, as existing narrow and steep roads preclude almost all vehicle traffic other than high-clearance off-road vehicles from traveling on them.

PT (3) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect risk to firefighters and to public safety?

Firefighters are at higher risk when fighting fires in places without adequate road access. Roads provide escape routes for firefighters and opportunities for medical evacuations that cannot occur in inaccessible spots. Roads also provide important fire breaks, can help keep fires smaller, and allow fires to be put out faster, so there is a lower risk of intense, uncontrolled fire.

Most roads in the analysis area are low-standard/low-volume roads. These roads do provide a fire break and can serve as an escape route. However, existing low-standard roads are difficult to travel or not suitable for some vehicles or loads, increasing the risk of accident or getting stuck. On low-volume roads, traffic or parking can congest roads and increase the risk of collision. Heavy traffic on low-standard roads can also lead to poor visibility conditions from traffic-generated dust.

PT (4) Issue: How does the road/trail system contribute to airborne dust emissions resulting in reduced visibility and human health concerns?

Airborne dust emissions are a function of the type of surface road materials used, amount and type of vehicle use, and weather conditions, among other factors. Most roads in the analysis area consist of native aggregate material, which can result in airborne dust and visibility problems. However, these effects are generally short term due to wind dispersion; air quality in the area is generally good.

5.3.4. Special Forest Products (SP)

SP (1) Issue: How does the road/trail system affect access for collecting special forest products?

Collection of special forest products (including huckleberries, Christmas trees, and firewood) in the Lookout Pass Analysis Area typically occurs adjacent to open USFS roads. The road system provides multiple points of access for public collection activities.

5.3.5. Unroaded Recreation (UR)

The Lookout Pass Analysis Area does not contain any unroaded ROS classes.

5.3.6. Road-Related Recreation (RR)

RR (1) Issue: Is there now or will there be in the future excess supply or excess demand for roaded recreation opportunities?

Snowmobiling, ATV use, wildlife watching, fishing, and hunting are popular roaded recreation activities that occur within the analysis area. Cross-country and backcountry skiers also share many of the NFS roads with snowmobiles, especially on the south side of Runt Mountain.

The *Analysis of the Management Situation for Revision of the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle Forest Plans* (USFS 2003:41) notes that:

> Motorized and non-motorized modes of travel have increased and diversified. In the case of the IPNF, communities like Spokane, Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint have experienced significant population growth… This growth in population has resulted in an increase in the numbers and types of users of NFS lands. Roads that were originally constructed and used for timber harvest are now predominantly used for recreation purposes, and resource protection and restoration.

Many public comments on the plan also supported maintaining or expanding motorized areas and roads across the IPNF. As such, this TAP assumes that a higher demand for roaded recreation opportunities exists in the analysis area and will continue to grow over time.

RR (2) Issue: Is developing new roads into unroaded areas, decommissioning of existing roads, or changing the maintenance of existing road/trails causing substantial changes in the quantity, quality, or type of roaded recreation opportunities?

Road construction, decommissioning, or maintenance level changes can negatively affect recreation users' experiences due to noise, dust, and other construction activities (such as increased traffic or congestion during construction), as well as alter recreational access. Improved roads with higher maintenance level roads (OML 3–5) can increase user access to recreation opportunities, while decommissioning or lowering maintenance levels (OML 1–2) will prohibit use or restrict use to individuals with high-clearance vehicles.

All NFS roads within the existing Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area SUP are currently closed to motorized vehicle use except for authorized activities by the ski area, and several other roads in the analysis area (outside of the existing SUP) have been decommissioned. These changes have reduced motorized roaded recreational opportunities in the analysis area. Road changes in the analysis area may, however, have improved the quality of experience for non-motorized recreational users seeking more privacy, such as hikers or wildlife watchers. Additionally, surrounding LNF and IPNF lands continue to provide access and roaded recreational opportunities for recreational users.

RR (3) Issue: What are the effects of noise and other disturbances caused by developing, using, and maintaining roads on the quantity, quality, and type of roaded recreation opportunities?

Noise and other disturbances caused by developing, using, and maintaining roads for roaded recreation opportunities can potentially decrease user satisfaction, depending on their expectations for the experience. Some winter non-motorized recreational users of area roads have expressed concern about additional sound and air pollution effects from snowmobile use (USFS 2002). However, in areas managed for roaded recreation opportunities, users can expect to experience a higher degree of noise, development, and other users. See also RR (2) above.

RR (4) Issue: Who participates in roaded recreation in the areas affected by constructing, maintaining, and decommissioning roads?

The primary recreation users of the analysis area are skiers and motorized recreationists (snowmobile and off-highway vehicles [OHV]) from surrounding communities. At particular times of year there may also be use by hunters, anglers, berry pickers, birdwatchers, hikers, and cyclists.

RR (5) Issue: What are these participants' attachments to the area, how strong are their feelings, and are alternative opportunities and locations available?

Many recreationists have strong attachments to recreational opportunities in the area, due to factors such as long-term use or the quality of the recreation experience. This attachment has resulted in the development of area interest groups that advocate for the protection of their preferred activity.

Roaded recreation opportunities are available in other parts of the national forests and on state and county lands, although they may be less convenient for users or unable to provide a similar type of experience.

RR (6) Issue: How does road management affect wilderness attributes, including natural integrity, natural appearance, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive recreation?

The Lookout Pass Analysis Area does not contain any wilderness or inventoried roadless areas.

5.3.7. Passive-Use Value (PV)

PV (1) Issue: Do areas planned for road entry, closure, or decommissioning have unique physical or biological characteristics, such as unique natural features and threatened or endangered species?

No specific roads or areas are currently targeted for closure or construction in the analysis area. Physical and biological characteristics of the analysis area are described in previous resource sections. Wildlife species that may use the analysis area and are currently threatened or endangered include the lynx and grizzly bear. There are no threatened or endangered plant species that are known to existing within the analysis area. Construction or reconstruction of 4.0 miles of temporary or permanent roads, as well as decommissioning of 2.3 miles of road, would not affect lands with unique physical or biological characteristics.

PV (2) Issue: Do areas planned for road entry, closure, or decommissioning have unique cultural, traditional, symbolic, sacred, spiritual, or religious significance? What, if any, groups of people hold cultural, symbolic, spiritual, sacred, traditional, or religious values for unroaded areas planned for road entry or road closure.

The analysis area is within the traditional use areas of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The Lookout Pass Ski Area Expansion EIS includes construction or reconstruction of 4.0 miles of temporary or permanent roads, as well as decommissioning of 2.3 miles of road. Consultation with affected tribes will be completed prior to any future road construction or decommissioning decision. This effort will assist the USFS in identifying any sites with cultural, traditional, symbolic, sacred, spiritual, or religious significance.

PV (3) Issue: Will development of new roads into unroaded areas, decommissioning of existing roads, or changing the maintenance of existing road/trails causing substantial changes in passive-use values?

Construction or reconstruction of 4.0 miles of temporary or permanent roads, as well as decommissioning of 2.3 miles of road is not anticipated to affect passive-use values within the Lookout Pass Analysis Area.

5.3.8. Cultural and Heritage (CH)

CH (1) Issue: How does the road system affect access to paleontological, archaeological, and historical sites?

Transportation systems can increase the risk of physical damage, vandalism, and looting of paleontological, archaeological, and historical sites, as well as increase opportunities for public education and awareness of area heritage resources.

There are no known paleontological sites within the analysis area. Previously identified historical sites include the Mullan Road/Trail, cabin and mining remains, a timber chute, and the ski area lodge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1941. An assessment of road and trail impacts to these or other identified sites will be provided in the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion EIS.

CH (2) Issue: How does the road system and management affect cultural and traditional uses, and American Indian treaty rights?

Changes in the road system can affect cultural or traditional uses and American Indian treaty rights by altering access to areas. Closing a road may restrict traditional uses and activities (i.e., gathering, hunting, fishing), while opening or improving a road may increase user conflicts.

There are no known traditional cultural properties within the analysis area. The analysis area is within the traditional use areas of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes but is not included within the current reservation boundary of either group. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires the USFS to consult with Indian tribes that attach religious and cultural significance to historic properties that may be affected by proposed actions. Results from this consultation will be provided in the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion third-party EIS.

CH (3) Issue: How are roads that are historical sites affected by road management?

Road management decisions can adversely affect a road's historic integrity. However, none of the NFS roads in the Lookout Pass Analysis Area constitute historic sites under the National Historic Preservation Act (1966). The Mullan Road is a non-NFS heritage road present within the analysis area in close proximity to existing and proposed roads. An assessment of road impacts to this site will be provided in the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion EIS.

5.3.9. Social Issues (SI)

SI (1) Issue: What are the people's perceived needs and values for roads? How does the road management affect people's dependence on, need for, and desire for roads?

Roads, and the access they provide, are very important to most people. Some people depend on USFS roads for utilitarian needs, such as driving to work or driving into town for groceries. Others use USFS roads for recreational, commercial, or administrative purposes.

In the Lookout Pass Analysis Area, roads are typically used to achieve personal and socioeconomic needs and desires, such as motorized and non-motorized recreation, firewood collection, and operation and maintenance of the Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area. Road management decisions (such as opening or closing a road) may eliminate, reduce, or even improve these opportunities and could alter an individual's dependence on, or need for, a particular road within the analysis area.

SI (2) Issue: What are the people's perceived needs and values for access? How does the road/trail management affect people's dependence on, need for, and desire for access?

Access to public lands is often a highly controversial topic in the United States, as the public tends to express mixed reactions to proposed access changes. While some individuals may feel that road access is sufficient, others may feel that access is too limited or too high to achieve their desired purposes (for solitude, for off-road vehicle travel, etc.). As discussed in SI (1), access to analysis area roads is desired for a wide range of recreation or socioeconomic purposes. Management activities that close or create new roads may adversely or beneficially affect the public's ability to achieve these needs or desires, depending on the action and individual expectations.

SI (3) Issue: What is the effect of road management on community social and economic health?

Road management can affect nearby community businesses that rely on NFS recreational use for their livelihood, including restaurants, motels, stores, snowmobile rentals, bars, and campgrounds. Changes in NFS road maintenance or access can impact (positively or negatively) associated recreational revenues and employment by altering the type and numbers of recreational users that come to the area and use community services.

In the Lookout Pass Analysis Area, the surrounding communities of Mullan, Wallace, De Borgia, Haugan, and Saltese provide the closest sources of lodging, gasoline stations, and restaurants.

SI (4) Issue: What is the effect of the road system on people's sense of place?

Sense of place is difficult to quantify, as special places may differ by individual. To one individual, it could be the tree stand they return to over time. To another, it could be a scenic view or a huckleberry picking spot. If road management decisions alter access to, or experience at, a person's special place, it can either improve or degrade individuals' sense of place. Past evaluation (USFS 2002) suggests that the St. Regis basin (to the south and west of the analysis area) is an important area to many motorized and non-motorized recreationists. Additional special places may be identified as part of the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion third-party EIS process.

SI (5) Issue: Are there conflicts between users, uses, and values associated with the road system?

Conflicts on the road system in the analysis area consist of illegal motorized vehicle use on closed roads and conflicting motorized/non-motorized use of the same roads and trails. Future increases in motorized recreation will likely intensify these conflicts as users seek more opportunities in the area.

5.3.10. Civil Rights and Environmental Justice (CR)

CR (1) Issue: How does the road system and management affect use or values by minority, low-income, or disabled populations?

Road management decisions can disproportionately affect disabled or environmental justice populations who rely on the road system for access. However, the Lookout Pass Analysis Area road system is not

known to be used or valued differently by minority, low-income, or disabled populations as compared to the general population.

5.4. Risk-Benefit Evaluation

Subsequent to the overall assessment of benefits, problems, and risks, the IDT evaluated each road against identified key issues and assigned a numerical value (ranking). High risks/benefits were assigned a numerical value of three (3), moderate risks/benefits were assigned a numerical value of two (2), and low risks/benefits were assigned a numerical value of one (1). Assignment of these rankings followed the risk and benefit criteria guidelines presented in Tables 3 and 4. These criteria were established based on available GIS coverage and IDT input.

Once a numerical value was assigned for each issue category, an average was calculated for each road that represents its overall risk (or benefit) ranking. Those rankings in the upper one-third (with a numerical value of 2.34 or greater) were assessed as “High”; those rankings in the middle third (with a value between 1.67 and 2.33) were assessed as “Moderate”; and those rankings in the bottom third (with a value less than 1.67) were assessed as “Low.” These categories were calculated mathematically and did not consider the severity of the impact beyond the guidelines discussed below. Table 5 provides the results of this evaluation process.

Table 3. Risk Criteria Rating Guidelines

Issue	Rating	Guidelines
Wildlife Fragmentation and Security	High	Motorized and non-motorized use on roads in extremely high roaded area; road intersects highly suitable habitat known to be used by species of concern (wolverine, lynx, grizzly bear, gray wolf, elk) for forage and travel.
	Moderate	Motorized and non-motorized use on roads in moderate to highly roaded area; road intersects low to moderately suitable habitat for lynx, wolverine, grizzly bear, gray wolf, and elk.
	Low	Motorized and non-motorized use on roads in minimally roaded area; no road impacts to habitat for species of concern listed above that may be used for travel (or seasonal use for elk).
Botany: Noxious Weeds	High	Known populations of noxious weeds adjacent to high maintenance level (OML 3–5) roads.
	Moderate	Known populations of noxious weeds adjacent to low maintenance level (OML 1–2) roads.
	Low	Minimal to no noxious weeds present.
Botany: Wetlands and Sensitive Species	High	Road bisects known wetlands or sensitive plant populations.
	Moderate	Road within 50 meters of known wetlands or bisects potential sensitive plant habitat*.
	Low	No wetlands present; sensitive plant habitat is unlikely.
Aquatic Systems	High	Roads that cross or are within 50 meters of perennial streams. -Or- Roads within 100 meters of amphibian habitat (represented by floodplains, riparian, and wet meadows).
	Moderate	Roads within 50 to 100 meters of perennial streams**.
	Low	Roads over 100 meters away from perennial streams and amphibian habitat.
Hydrology	High	Close proximity to surface water, defined as: • 50 meters either side of an intermittent channel; • 100 meters either side of a perennial channel; or • Crosses stream channel two times or more; -And- • Bisects soils with high surface or mass erosion potential.
	Moderate	Close proximity to surface water. -And- Bisects soils with low to moderate surface or mass erosion potential.
	Low	Road is not in close proximity to surface water.
Recreation	High	Road has high potential to facilitate illegal motorized use or user conflict.
	Moderate	Road has some potential to facilitate illegal motorized use or user conflict.
	Low	Road has low potential to facilitate illegal motorized use or user conflict.
Heritage	High	Heritage sites are present within the roadbed or road falls within high probability areas for heritage resources.
	Moderate	Heritage sites not present within the roadbed but road falls within moderate probability areas for heritage resources.
	Low	Heritage sites not present within the roadbed but road falls within low probability areas for heritage resources.
Road Maintenance	High	High levels of deferred maintenance and repair needs as based on the presence of three or more of the following conditions: washboarding; surface deterioration; landslides; roadbed slumping; slope raveling; drainage problems; rutting or gullying; mud holes; poor condition structures or culverts; and design deficiencies.

Table 3. Risk Criteria Rating Guidelines

Issue	Rating	Guidelines
		-Or- Road undetermined; currently not managed and condition unknown.
	Moderate	Moderate levels of deferred maintenance and repair needs as based on the presence of two or more of the above conditions.
	Low	Little or no deferred maintenance and repair needs; no existing damage or one of the above conditions present and condition fair or better. -Or- Road decommissioned; no further maintenance required.

* Previous surveys have not identified sensitive plant species in the analysis area (USFS 2002). However, many potential sensitive species that could be present are found in wet habitats. As such, roads that parallel or bisect riparian or wetland areas were scored as moderate risk. All other roads were scored as low risk.

** All roads that cross or are within 50 meters of perennial streams also have segments that are within 50 to 100 meters of perennial streams. No roads fall solely within the moderate category in this analysis area. The use of distance criteria for aquatic systems assumes that roads that bisect or closely parallel amphibian habitat or surface waters that can support fish are more likely to result in adverse effects (from increased sediment delivery, changes to streamside vegetation, etc.).

Table 4. Benefit Criteria Rating Guidelines

Issue	Rating	Guidelines
Fire Suppression	High	Roads that provide numerous opportunities for repeat access and prescribed fire control across a large geographic area -And- Allow low-clearance vehicular travel (OML 3–5).
	Moderate	Roads that provide some opportunities for repeat access and prescribed fire control; road maintenance levels are restricted to high-clearance vehicles (OML 2) but are acceptable for fire suppression.
	Low	Roads that provide duplicate or unneeded access for fire suppression; motorized vehicle access is prohibited (OML 1) or insufficient for fire suppression.
Vegetation/ Silviculture Management	High	Roads that will be used many times for vegetative management (including high-priority weed treatment and stand tending) in future projects.
	Moderate	Roads that access several planned or potential vegetative management projects or provide maintenance for past projects.
	Low	Roads that access the same area or provide access to areas that are not planned for future treatment -Or- Are decommissioned; no further management is necessary.
Recreation Access	High	Roads that provide access to numerous or high-value recreation opportunities and/or connectivity to many other routes.
	Moderate	Roads that provide access to some recreation opportunities and/or connectivity to some other routes.
	Low	Roads that provide access to limited recreation opportunities and do not provide connectivity to other routes -or- Are closed or are for administrative purposes only.

Table 5. Risk-Benefit Rating for Lookout Pass Analysis Area Roads*

Road #	Wildlife Fragmentation and Security	Botany: Noxious Weeds	Botany: Wetlands and Sensitive Species	Aquatics	Hydrology	Heritage Resources	Recreation	Road Condition	Average Risk	Fire Suppression	Vegetation/ Silviculture Management	Recreation Access	Average Benefit
3026	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	2	**2.00**	2	1	3	**2.00**
3026A	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	**1.75**	2	2	1	**1.67**
3026B	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	**1.75**	2	2	1	**1.67**
3026UD	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	**2.00**	1	1	1	**1.00**
3026UE	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	**1.75**	1	1	1	**1.00**
3028UB	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	**1.50**	1	1	1	**1.00**
3028UBD	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	**1.38**	1	1	1	**1.00**
3028UBE	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	**1.38**	1	1	1	**1.00**
3028UBF	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	**1.38**	1	1	1	**1.00**
4208	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	**2.25**	2	2	3	**2.33**
7896	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	1	**2.25**	3	2	3	**2.67**
9132	2	3	1	3	2	3	1	1	**2.00**	3	2	3	**2.67**
18591	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	**2.38**	2	2	3	**2.33**
37315	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	**2.63**	1	1	2	**1.33**
37315-1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	**1.63**	1	1	1	**1.00**

*Rankings are as follows: 1=Low Risk; 2=Moderate Risk; 3=High Risk. These rankings are based on currently available data and may be revised upon further evaluation as part of the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion third-party EIS.

6. OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Step 5, Describing Opportunities and Setting Priorities, provides existing road recommendations to efficiently meet safety, user, and resource needs; identifies transportation system opportunities; determines the MRS; and describes future actions.

6.1. Road Recommendations

The IDT compared the current road system to the desired road system in the analysis area and identified general recommended actions for roads that fall within nine risk/benefit categories. These actions are described below (Table 6). For the Lookout Pass Analysis Area, not all risk/benefit categories are represented.

Table 6. Road Recommendations to Meet the Minimum Transportation System

		Benefits		
	Scores	**Low**	**Moderate**	**High**
Risks	**Low**	(LL) Decommission open road, close, or convert to lower maintenance level or trail (1.1 miles or 8.4%)	(LM) Maintain (0 miles)	(LH) Maintain currently open roads; change closed roads to open (0 miles)
	Moderate	(ML) Decommission, close, or admin use only (1.2 miles or 9.2%)	(MM) Mitigate and maintain (6.9 miles or 52.7%)	(MH) Mitigate and maintain – second priority (1.0 mile or 7.6%)
	High	(HL) Decommission, close; maintain closed roads – highest priority (2.2 miles or 16.8%)	(HM) Mitigate or admin use only (0.7 miles or 5.3%)	(HH) Maintain and mitigate open road system – highest priority (0 miles)

6.1.1. Low Risk/Low Benefit – Decommission, Close, or Conversion

Low Risk/Low Benefit roads should be evaluated for conversion to a lower maintenance level, closure for public motorized use (OML 1), or removal from the system. There are four decommissioned roads and one undetermined road (Road 37315-1) in this category for the analysis area. Road 37315-1 is recommended for closure or decommissioning, since there is no compelling administrative or public need for the road in the long term. All currently decommissioned roads should remain closed and removed from the system.

6.1.2. Moderate Risk/Low Benefit – Close, Decommission, or Administrative Use

Moderate Risk/Low Benefit roads should be considered for closure to public motorized use (OML 1), decommissioning, or administrative use only. There are two currently closed, undetermined roads (Roads 3026 UD and 3026UB) in this category for the analysis area. While public road access is not recommended based on the risk-benefit analysis, these roads may provide some future administrative value. As such, this TAP recommends maintaining the roads as closed until additional public input is provided; these roads could potentially be decommissioned in the future if no compelling administrative or public need for the roads is identified.

6.1.3. Moderate Risk/Moderate Benefit – Mitigate/Maintain

Moderate Risk/Moderate Benefit roads should receive mitigation and maintenance, though they are secondary in priority to roads with high benefits that are being maintained in the system. There are four OML 2 roads (Roads 4208, 3206, 3206A, 3206B) in this category for the analysis area. These roads have some resource impacts but also are important for public access or administrative use. It is recommended that these roads be routinely maintained and mitigated, as necessary, in order to reduce the risks.

6.1.4. Moderate Risk/High Benefit – Mitigate/Maintain

Moderate Risk/High Benefit roads should be given a high priority for maintenance and mitigation. These roads have high benefits and should be retained, although regular maintenance should occur to reduce the risk level. There are two high maintenance level (OML 3 to 5) roads in this category for the analysis area (Roads 7896 and 9132).

6.1.5. High Risk/Low Benefit – Close or Decommission

High Risk/Low Benefit roads should be closed to public motorized use (OML 1) or taken out of the system. There is one undetermined road (Road 37315) in this category for the analysis area. It is recommended that this road be removed from the system.

6.1.6. High Risk/Medium Benefit – Administrative Use or Mitigate/Maintain

High Risk/Medium Benefit roads should be either closed to public motorized use (OML 1) or given a high priority for mitigation of resource impacts and maintenance. There is one open, OML 2 road (Road 18591) that is in this category for the analysis area. As this road provides important access for public and administrative purposes, it is recommended that the road be maintained and mitigated, as necessary, to reduce risks.

Additional IDT recommendations by road are provided below in Table 7.

Table 7. Road Recommendations within the Lookout Pass Ski Expansion Area EIS

Road No.	Length (miles)	Recommended Action	Current System Designation	Proposed System Designation	Current Route Status	Proposed Route Status	Existing Service Life	Proposed Service Life	Operational Maintenance Level (OML)	Proposed OML	Travel Plan Status	Proposed Travel Plan Status
3026	2.3	Leave as is	NFS	NFS	EX	EX	C	C	2	2	1	1
3026A	1.5	Leave as is, put into storage when no longer needed for ski area operations	NFS	NFS	EX	EX	I	I	2	2	4	4
3026B	1.9	Leave as is, put into storage when no longer needed for ski area operations	NFS	NFS	EX	EX	I	I	2	2	4	4
3026UD	0.8	Leave in storage and evaluate future potential for decommissioning based on public input	UND	NFS	EX	EX	I	IS	1	1	4	4
3026UE	0.4	Leave in storage and evaluate future potential for decommissioning based on public input	UND	NFS	EX	EX	I	IS	1	1	4	4
3028UB	0.4	Leave as is; already decommissioned	NFS	NFS	DE	DE	NA	NA	1	1	4	4
3028UBD	0.3	Leave as is; already decommissioned	NFS	NFS	DE	DE	NA	NA	1	1	4	4
3028UBE	<0.1	Leave as is; already decommissioned	NFS	NFS	DE	DE	NA	NA	1	1	4	4
3028UBF	0.3	Leave as is; already decommissioned	NFS	NFS	DE	DE	NA	NA	1	1	4	4
4208	1.2	Leave as is	NFS	NFS	EX	EX	C	C	2	2	1	1
7896	1.0	Leave as is	NFS	NFS	EX	EX	C	C	3	3	1	1
9132	<0.1	Leave as is	NFS	NFS	EX	EX	C	C	5	5	1	1
18591	0.7	Leave as is	NFS	NFS	EX	EX	C	C	2	2	1	1
37315	2.2	Decommission – not needed for long-term management and operations	UND	NFS	EX	DE	NA	I	NA	1	1	4
37315-1	0.1	Decommission – not needed for long-term management and operations	UND	NFS	EX	DE	NA	I	NA	1	1	4

Abbreviations used in table

System Designation	NFS = National Forest System	Service Life	C = Long-term service		2 = High clearance vehicles
	UND = Undetermined		I = Intermittent service		3 = Passenger vehicles
Route Status	EX = Existing		IS = Intermittent stored service		5 = High degree of user comfort
	DE = Decommissioned		NA = Not applicable	Travel Plan Status	1 = Open to all use
		Maintenance Level	1 = Closed more than one year		4 = Closed to all motorized vehicles

6.2. Opportunities

Opportunities to decommission or close roads and to make system improvements to better meet Forest plan direction were identified as part of the analysis process. To minimize adverse environmental impacts and maintenance costs of the system, efforts were made to minimize the open road network and maximize roads in a stored condition. Based on this TAP, the IDT identified 2.3 miles of open roads within the analysis area that are not needed for long-term resource management and could be either decommissioned or otherwise closed.

Findings from the analysis also suggest that the construction of new temporary or system roads could improve access to, and the economic efficiency of, timber and vegetative management in the analysis area. The USFS does not have any plans to add roads to the Lookout Pass Analysis Area. However, as part of the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion third-party EIS, an additional 4.0 miles of road for permanent and temporary access are proposed (Table 8 and Figure 3).

Table 8. Proposed New Roads in the Analysis Area

Road Name	Length (miles)	Recommended Action	Proposed Status	Proposed Service Life	Proposed OML	Proposed Travel Plan Status
Lookout Pass	2.2	OML 2 for annual administrative purposes only; place in storage when no longer needed for ski area operations and maintenance	PVT	I	2	4
Temporary logging routes	1.8	Decommission once logging is complete	NA	NA	NA	NA

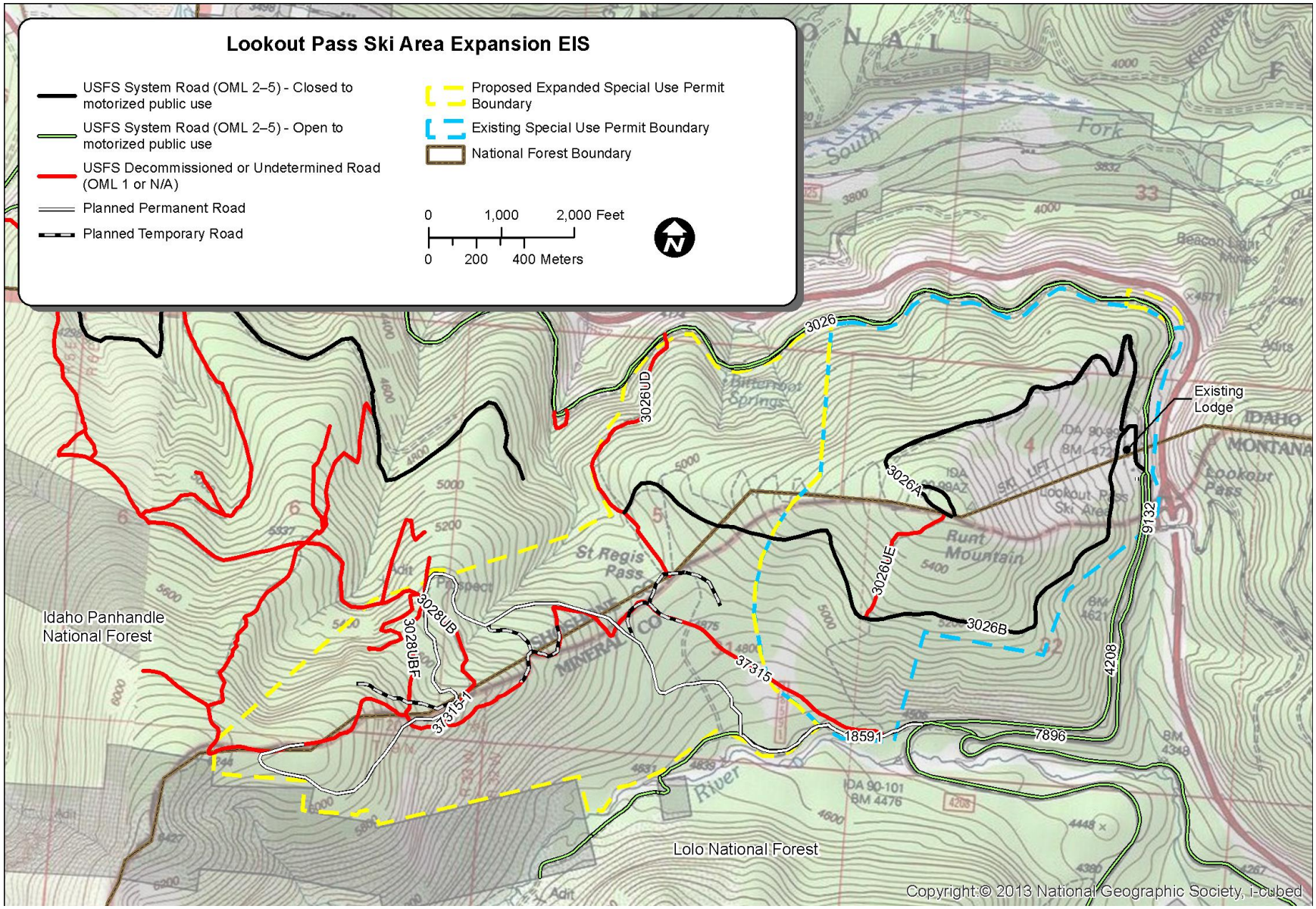

Figure 3. Proposed Temporary and Permanent Road Additions to the Existing Analysis Area Road System.

6.3. Minimum Road System

The MRS is the minimum road system determined to be needed to meet resource and other management objectives, to meet applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, to reflect long-term funding expectations, and to ensure that the identified system minimizes adverse environmental impacts associated with road construction, reconstruction, decommissioning, and maintenance (36 CFR 212.5(b)).

Based on road recommendations and subsequent identified opportunities, Table 9 proposes a MRS for the Lookout Pass Analysis Area.

Table 9. Minimum Road System for Lookout Pass Analysis Area

Action	Mileage
Existing Roads	
Retain as NFS road (OML 2-5)	8.6
Decommission (NFS or UND)	2.3
Retain for long-term storage or decommissioning	2.2
Total Existing Roads	13.1
Proposed Roads	
Proposed new permanent roads	2.2
Proposed new roads not needed for long-term	1.8
Total Proposed Roads	4.0

6.4. Future Actions

The MRS discussed in this document is a recommendation only. As stated previously, future NEPA analyses may carry forward for implementation, reject, or change the recommendations in this report, and provide the basis for making specific road-related decisions.

As recommendations in this TAP are implemented through future NEPA analyses and decisions (or different recommendations are adopted), assessments for the actions to be taken on each road will need to be completed. Each road has its own set of circumstances and there is no action that would fit all situations equally; therefore, site-specific analyses would need to be conducted to determine the best course of action.

7. REPORTING

This document serves as the Travel Analysis Process Report for the Lookout Pass Ski Area expansion EIS. It displays the recommended MRS as well as route-by-route recommendations.

8. REFERENCES

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