

**Trout-West Fuels Reduction Project  
Pike/San Isabel National Forest  
Recreation Specialist Report  
Jan Langerman**

*Note: If there are any inconsistencies between this report and the Trout-West Final EIS, the Final EIS takes precedent.*

**Introduction**

The entire Pikes Peak Ranger District is an Urban Interface management district, with heavy to extreme recreational use. An estimated 550,000 people live adjacent to or within the District boundaries. Approximately 2 million people live in the Front Range urban corridor from Ft. Collins south to Pueblo. The user population is ethnically and culturally diverse, and includes four military installations, including NORAD, Peterson Air Force Base, the Air Force Academy, and the Ft. Carson Army base.

Important recreation resources in the Project Area include the Manitou Park Recreation Area, the Manitou Experimental Forest, the North Divide Trail 717, and the Rampart Range. Paved and improved gravel roads, many of which are open year around, provide easy and rapid access.

Perhaps the single most attractive feature of the Pikes Peak Ranger district is also its downfall – the availability of public lands within a very short drive adjacent to a major population area. The District is not a major “destination” recreation area. Most of the impacts are associated with day-use. A person can be on NFS lands within a half-hour, recreate, and then leave.

The associated activities are generally those one cannot do on private lands or within urban boundaries, such as shooting, OHV/ATV riding, and large group gatherings. People living or camping on the National Forest lands in excess of 14 days is increasing. The increase in residential subdivisions within the project area has led to an increase in social or non-system trail development from private land onto adjacent National Forest. These activities, compounded with the large population base and numerous repeat visits over a single day, has caused serious resource impacts throughout the project area (Range Area Management Plan 2001).

## **Forest Plan Direction**

The Forest Plan provides guidance for the management of forested areas on the Pike and San Isabel National Forests through its stated goals and objectives and through the objectives for each Management Area (MA). The Forest Plan also sets standards and guidelines that apply to the entire Forest. A detailed list of these can be found in the Forest Plan. The standards and guidelines for recreation that apply to the proposed actions are given below.

### **Forest-wide Goals**

- Provide a broad spectrum of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities in accordance with identified needs and demands.
- Maintain approximately the current ratio of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classes for dispersed recreation.

### **Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines**

- Provide a broad spectrum of dispersed recreation opportunities in accordance with the established Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification for the management area.
- Close or rehabilitate dispersed sites where unacceptable environmental damage is occurring.
- Manage dispersed recreation activities to not exceed the established ROS PAOT/acre capacity.
- Manage use of trails in dispersed areas to not exceed the established PAOT/mile of trails guidelines.

The Forest Plan designates areas in the Forest that are appropriate for various types of land uses and activities. This is done through the use of Management Area direction. The emphasis placed on recreation varies between MAs. The Trout-West Project Area occurs in MAs 2B, 4B, 7A, 7D, 9A, and 10B (Forest Plan 1984a).

### **Recreation Opportunity Spectrum**

When managing recreation, the Forest Plan has assigned Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classifications to all lands. The ROS is a system developed by the Forest Service that classifies recreation settings on National Forest lands according to their physical, social, and managerial characteristics. These ROS settings are formally applied only to National Forest land and not adjacent private lands. However, the presence and condition of private lands influence the ROS settings assigned to National Forest lands (ROS users guide, August 1982).

The ROS classes assigned to National Forest lands in the Project Area are as follows: Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, Roded Natural, and Rural. A description of these ROS settings from least to most developed is found below:

- Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) - A natural, or natural appearing, environment of moderate to large size. The concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. No roads are present.
- Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) - A natural, or natural appearing, environment of moderate to large size. Interaction between users in this setting is low, but there is often evidence of other users. Local roads used for other resource management activities may be present.
- Roaded Natural (RN) - A natural, or natural appearing, environment of moderate size with moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of humans. Such evidence usually harmonizes with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be moderate to high, with evidence of other users prevalent. Motorized use is allowed.
- Rural (R ) - An area characterized by a substantially modified natural environment. The sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is often moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities for intensified motorized use and parking area available.

The ROS settings found in the Trout-West project area include Roaded Natural and Rural (Map located at the Pikes Peak District Office).

## **Management Area Direction**

Forest Plan management direction for recreation resources in these management areas are as follows:

### ***Management Area 2B***

The management emphasis for MA 2B is to provide rural and roaded-natural recreational opportunities.

#### *Recreation Opportunity Spectrum – Roaded Natural and Rural.*

The Roaded Natural setting is characterized by natural appearing environments with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of man. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be moderate to high, with evidence of other users prevalent. Motorized use is allowed.

The Rural setting is an area characterized by a substantially modified natural environment. The sights and sounds of humans are readily evident, and the interaction between users is often moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities for intensified motorized use and parking area available. The only Rural setting identified in the project area is along State Highway 67 from Manitou lake Picnic Area to Red Rocks Group campsite.

### ***Management Area 4B***

Management emphasis is on Management Indicator Species. Recreation activities do not conflict with indicator species. Motorized and Non-Motorized recreation activities occur along locale roads and trails.

*Recreation Opportunity Spectrum – Roaded Natural.*

Description provided above.

### ***Management Area 7A & 7D***

Management emphasis is on wood fiber production and utilization for saw timber (7A) and other forest products (7D). The majority of the North Divide Trail system is in MAs 7A and 7D, which emphasize tree stand management. These MAs recognize the importance of roaded natural recreational opportunities along forest service arterial and collector roads. Accordingly, areas adjacent to CR 3 and 51 (which provide the primary access into the area) have been assigned ROS setting of Roaded-Natural.

*Recreation Opportunity Spectrum – Roaded Natural.*

Description provided above.

### ***Management Area 10b***

Experimental Station in which Forest wide Standards and Guidelines are not in conflict with the operation and management of the Station. Management direction is to provide for experiments, tests, and other activities to obtain, analyze, develop, demonstrate, and disseminate scientific information about protecting, managing and utilizing forest and rangeland renewable resources.

*Recreation Opportunity Spectrum – Roaded Natural and Rural.*

Descriptions provided above.

## **Affected Environment**

Although the Project Area is quite large, there are several portions that receive the bulk of the recreation use. These areas contain a wide variety of resources and support an array of recreational activities. The following describes the primary areas that contain recreation resources in the Trout-West Project Area.

**Manitou Park Recreation Area (Developed Recreation):**

Developed recreation resources within the Trout-West Project Area can be found in the Manitou Park Recreation Area (Manitou Park). The Manitou Park runs along both sides of State Highway 67 (SH 67), a north-south highway with the city of Woodland Park at the southern end and the town of Deckers on the north end. Manitou Park is the most popular recreation attraction on the District. Much of the area is in private land ownership.

Manitou Park provides a myriad of recreational opportunities such as scenic driving along SH 67, which offers views of Pikes Peak and the Rampart Range. There are a number of undeveloped scenic pullouts along the corridor. Developed recreational facilities include three family campgrounds at Painted Rocks, Colorado, and South Meadows Campgrounds; two group campgrounds at Pike Community and Red Rocks Group Campgrounds; and the Centennial Trail, Manitou Lake Picnic Area, and a Dump Station. Many users stay at the campgrounds due to their close proximity to Colorado Springs, Pikes Peak, the Air Force Academy, and the Garden of the Gods (refer to Table 1).

**Table 1: Occupancy of Recreation Facilities in the Manitou Park Recreation Area.**

<i>Facility</i> ROS classification is in parenthesis	<i>No. Sites</i>	<i>PAOTS*</i>	<i>Weekday Occupancy (%)</i>	<i>Weekend Occupancy (%)</i>
Painted Rock Campground (RN)	18	90	25%	75%
Colorado Campground (R)	81	405	25%	75%
South Meadows Campground (R)	64	320	25%	65%
Red Rocks Group Campground (R)	3	125	15%	90%
Pike Community Group (R)	1	150	30%	90%
Manitou Lake Picnic Area** (R)	42	210+	35%	90%

Source: Manitou Park Recreation Corridor – Master Plan 2002, U.S. Forest Service

\* PAOTS – People At One Time allowed in a facility. Design capacity.

\*\* Manitou Lake has 42 picnic sites, but the capacity can exceed this as visitors bring their own furniture for fishing around the lake. Parking is the limiting factor.

Manitou Park is readily accessible by the population of Colorado Springs, which makes group sites at Manitou Lake Picnic area, Red Rocks Group and Pike Community Group site extremely popular for family reunions and company outings as indicated by 90% occupancy on the weekends. To accommodate large groups, other recreational amenities include an amphitheater, softball fields, horseshoe pits, and volleyball courts. Family campgrounds do not exceed design capacity.

The Manitou Lake Picnic Area has a nature trail that connects the sites in both loops to the lake and circles the lake. There are 5 interpretive signs along the trail. A historic, stone picnic shelter is near the southern end of the picnic area. The site is a fee site and is open year-round.

The Centennial Trail is also a major attraction within Manitou Park, providing a hiking and biking path that connects Manitou Lake Picnic Area to the town of Woodland Park eight miles south. The trail encompasses 4.2 miles of Forest Development Trail (FDT) 699 and 699.1A, which connect the various campgrounds and picnic areas. Other recreational activities include fishing along Trout Creek and at Manitou Lake (when filled and stocked).

The *Manitou Park Recreation Corridor Master Plan* (2001) identifies proposed improvements to all facilities within the corridor. The Plan states that the Manitou Lake Picnic Area and Red Rocks Group Site needs additional trees to be planted between US 67 and the picnic area and between sites for screening, respectively. Major reconstruction is planned for South Meadows and Colorado Campground.

The Manitou Park Recreation Area is regulated under Special Order Number 86-01 signed by Forest Supervisor Jack Weissling on May 6, 1986. The order prohibits camping and fires outside of developed campgrounds (listed above) and prohibits motorized use on FDT 699 and 699.A1.

### **Manitou Experimental Forest (Non-Motorized Use)**

The Manitou Experimental Forest encompasses the entire Ridgewood treatment unit and parts of the Rampart and Long John treatment units of the Trout-West Project. The recreation resources described in this section will focus on recreational activities in the Ridgewood treatment unit.

The primary recreational activities are hiking on designated non-motorized trails and fishing along Trout Creek and Missouri Creek. There are no developed recreational sites within the Ridgewood treatment unit. The Experimental Forest has restrictions on motorized trail use, dispersed camping, and campfires. The Manitou Experimental Forest Headquarters (a National Register of Historic Places site) is in the southern part of the Ridgewood treatment unit.

#### ***Motorized Use***

The Phantom, Ryan Quinlan, Rampart, and Skelton treatment units are open to motorized trail riding on designated trails. All legal motorized routes are marked with a white arrow signing system at trailheads, intersections, and periodically along the trail.

One of the most popular trail systems is referred to as the North Divide Trail 717, which has 54.5 miles of multi-use trails open to hiking, biking, x-country skiing, motorcycling and ATVs. The trails are designed for motorcycling and parts of the trail are not wide enough for ATVs. This trail system is found in the Phantom and Ryan Quinlan treatment units.

The Pikes Peak Enduro motorcycle race has been a recreation event issued under a special use permit on a biennial basis in the past. According to the Pikes Peak Ranger District the race was not permitted for the 2002 season since the proper environmental compliance documents were not completed by the permittee. The race has attracted over 500 participants in the past.

The Rampart Range Motorized Recreation Area (RRMRA) is another very popular multi-use trail system in the Front Range and its popularity increases annually. Only a 7-mile portion of the RRMRA is included in the Trout-West Project. Other popular motorized trails can be found in the Skelton treatment unit.

Resource damage is occurring in all of the units. The most notable are areas immediately adjacent to designated routes. Motorists are creating new routes up hills and across creeks causing erosion and stream bank degradation. These new routes have been identified by the Forest and are referred to as unclassified roads/trails in this analysis (Refer to Figures 1 and 2). There are approximately 107 miles of unclassified roads in the Trout-West Project Area.



**Figure 1: Unclassified Trail off CR 3.**  
The designated trail is to the right of this Picture, as indicated by the sign.



**Figure 2: Unclassified Road off FDR 300**

## **Other Recreation Resources**

This section will describe the other recreational uses in the Phantom, Ryan Quinlan, Rampart, and Skelton treatment units.

Dispersed camping is popular along many Forest System Roads throughout the aforementioned treatment units. Dispersed campers are recreationists coming to the area to fish, hunt, trail ride, etc. Often times the 16-day stay limit is abused and resource damage occurs due to the lack of sanitation facilities. Another source of impacts in the dispersed camping areas are residential campers living on National Forest lands and working in nearby towns (refer to Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Unclassified Road & residential camp off CR 51**

Other dispersed recreational activities that mainly occur off trails are fishing, hunting, and rock and mineral collecting. Scenic Driving occurs along SH 67, the Rampart Range road, CR 3 and to a lesser extent along forest development roads that allow low-clearance vehicles. Winter sports are dependent upon the weather. DIn most years there is not enough snow for snowmobiling to occur. Some cross-country skiing occurs periodically throughout the project area.

The Pike's Peak Ranger District has designated approximately 10,000 acres in the Trail Creek, Phantom, and Ryan Quinlan treatment units as a Holiday Tree Cutting Area. More than 5000 Christmas trees are sold each year as part of a Recreation Fee Demonstration Project. The use of the area as a firewood site and Christmas tree area allows the District to remove small diameter trees. Due to the Hayman fire, the cutting area was moved to the Rampart Ridge area.

Recreation Resources on Private Land. A number of recreational opportunities exist on private lands. The Lutheran Valley Retreat and Ranch and the Colorado Lions Camp are an example of such resources in and around the Trout-West Project area. Lutheran Valley serves approximately 200 campers during the summer and is interested in fuels reduction around their camp. The Lions Camp serves about 400 disabled campers in the summer and serves organizational groups (approximately 100 people) in the fall and spring. Smoke inhalation is a concern during the summer months when disabled campers are present at the camp. Although the camps are not open to the general public, they are a recreational resource.

### ***Future or Ongoing Actions for Cumulative Effects Analysis***

Several ongoing actions in and around the Trout-West Project Area that may have the potential to affect recreational resource include the 2002 Hayman Fire, the 2000 Buffalo Creek Fire, and the South Platte Ranger District dispersed camping and shooting closures.



The activities that are unlikely to affect recreation because the activities have been completed or the effects to recreation have been minimal to date are the 2001 Polhemus Burn, Manitou Lake Dredging Project (2003 completion date), the Trout Creek Timber Sale (2003), the Trail Creek timber sale (on private land), and the Manitou Experimental Forest 40-Acre thin.

## **Environmental Consequences**

### **No Action**

#### *Direct and Indirect Effects*

The No Action alternative would not have any direct effects on the recreational resource. An indirect effect of the alternative would be a continuation of the trend towards increasing forest fuel loads and fire risk. This alternative would have the greatest potential for a large, catastrophic fire that could substantially damage recreational resources in the Project Area. Examples of the effects of catastrophic fires are Hayman, Buffalo Creek, Hi Meadow, Big Turkey, and Berry wildfires located throughout the Pike/San Isabel National Forest. These fires caused major damage to recreational facilities such as trails and campgrounds and destroyed others. Recreational use was either banned or restricted, reducing the recreational opportunities on that District.

A major fire in the Trout-West Project Area could result in the temporary or permanent loss of recreational facilities. This area is heavily used for recreation and users would be displaced to other facilities in other locations. Because the Project Area is so close to the Colorado Springs and Denver metropolitan areas, it can be assumed that recreationists would go to other similar facilities close to Denver to recreate. This would put additional pressures on those facilities. However, the Project Area offers a unique combination of recreation opportunities close to a major metropolitan area and replacement recreational opportunities may not exist for some. Recreationists might return to the Project Area if facilities impacted by a fire had been rebuilt and the nearby landscape was beginning to revegetate.

The No Action alternative does not propose to reclaim unclassified roads or improve the design of system roads in the project area. Recreationists using these areas who wander off the main trails onto the various social trails would continue to disturb riparian areas and erode stream banks and hillsides, potentially degrading water quality and fish habitat. Over time, the increasingly degraded conditions would negatively affect the recreation experience.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

The Hayman Fire, the Buffalo Creek Fire, the South Platte Ranger District dispersed camping and shooting closures, the Polhemus Burn, the Manitou Lake Dredging Project, the Trout Creek Timber Sale, the Trail Creek timber sale, and the Manitou Experimental Forest 40-Acre thin would have minor short-term effects on recreational resources in the No Action alternative. These events and activities would primarily affect recreation by increasing vehicle activity on Forest Development Roads and increase occupancy at developed campgrounds in the Project Area. Several campgrounds burned in the Hayman fire, which may cause increased use in the Trout-West watershed.

### ***Conclusion***

This alternative (No Action) would not have any direct effects on recreation. Indirectly, the alternative would continue the trend toward increasing fire risk and potential damage to recreational resources. Resource damage on unclassified trail and road systems from motorcycles and ATVs would continue.

## **Proposed Action**

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects***

#### *Effects of Vegetation Treatment on Recreation*

The proposed vegetation treatments would change the character of portions of the Project Area in which recreation takes place. The treatment units would still have a natural appearance, but the forest would be less dense and there would be more openings created.

The Proposed Action would not change the ROS settings of the Project Area. The temporary new roads and the vegetation treatments would not change the long-term recreational use (see below for a discussion on the effects of road reclamation). The PA would use tractor/cable; helicopter, on-site treat and light treat methods for thinning and biomass treatment. Areas treated with tractors would be the most obvious to recreationists. In some areas, a “path” of disturbed ground (and vegetation) would be evident. The paths would remain noticeable until they rehabilitated to pre-treatment conditions. Tractor paths could be used as motorcycle trails and lead to soil erosion and other adverse conditions. Implementation of the mitigation measures listed at the end of the Alternatives Comparison section is recommended to minimize impacts.

Vegetation treatments would reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic fire, thereby reducing potential damage to recreation resources in the Project Area, as compared to the No Action alternative.

Another indirect effect would be the possible temporary displacement of recreationists while the vegetative activities are being completed. Recreationists using facilities outside the Project Area may notice more use, which could negatively affect their recreation experience. This type of displacement could occur during harvest activity, prescribed burning, and reclamation efforts. However, the effect would be minor, as all of the activities would be scheduled over a number of years, which would reduce the displacement effect.

### *Effects on Recreation Facilities*

Manitou Park Recreation Area (Manitou Park). Recreation facilities that could be affected by the Proposed Action include the Manitou Experimental Forest Headquarters, Manitou Lake Picnic Area, Painted Rocks Campground, Colorado Campground, Dump station, South Meadows Campground, Pike Community Group Campground, Red Rocks Group Campground, Centennial Trail (which includes FDT 699 and 699.1A), and State Highway 67 (SH 67).

It is likely that the developed recreation facilities would be temporarily closed during harvest and/or prescribed burn activities or the prescribed treatments would be scheduled when the facilities are closed for the season. Closing these campgrounds during peak season would likely cause displacement of recreationists to other facilities. This could increase crowding in other areas, potentially negatively affecting the recreation experience at other facilities. However, the closures would be temporary and result in only minor, short-term effects. Cumulative effects with displacement of recreationists caused by the Hayman Fire may occur and cause some inconvenience or distress as people crowd into unaffected areas.

Short-term effects of the harvest activity would include noise, visual activity, smells, and smoke that could affect the experience of people using these facilities and living in the area. Traffic associated with the harvest and prescribed burning would also affect recreationists using this area. Prior to the prescribed burning, logging slash may be noticeable to visitors in some areas. Although these effects would be considered minor, some recreationists may choose to avoid the affected areas while harvest activities are being conducted.

Prescribed burning would also be a short-term effect in the treatment units. During this time, recreationists would likely avoid the areas being burned because of smoke. This would temporarily reduce the use of this area. However, the duration of the effect is short and therefore the overall effect of the burning would be considered minor.

The primary long-term effect to visitors of these facilities would be visual. Areas where the forest has been thinned would have a different visual character than the existing, dense forest. The effect of this change would depend upon the sensitivity of the individual. The overall difference in appearance would be a change to a more open condition, which would more closely emulate the historic forest conditions. The treated areas would retain a natural character. The change in appearance of the treated areas may be noticeable but would not cause an adverse effect to recreationists.

Manitou Experimental Forest. The portion of the Experimental Forest that is being described in this section is the area within the Ridgewood treatment unit. The portion of the Manitou Park Recreation Area that extends into the Experimental Forest has been evaluated in the previous section.

The proposed unclassified roads/trails identified to be reclaimed at the end of the project will improve area resources and help deter illegal off-trail riding that is occurring in the area. The short-term and long-term effects to recreationists would be similar to those mentioned in the Manitou Park Recreation Area.

Motorized Trail System. The Phantom, Ryan Quinlan, Rampart, and Skelton treatment units have similar recreation resources. The primary recreational resource to be affected in these areas will be the extensive multi-use trail system. The highest concentration of designated motorized trails occurs in the Phantom and Rampart areas. Some of the most popular of these trails, including the North Divide Trail 717 and the trails off of the Rampart Ridge Road, would pass through treatment units.

The short-term effect of the harvest activity and prescribed burning may result in trails being closed for varying periods of time. After treatment, ATV and OHV riders using the portions of trails that pass through the project area would observe a more open forest. The treatments would not affect their ability to use the trails or adversely affect their recreational experience. There may be a short-term effect in use along tracks and paths created by mechanical logging devices (skidders, tractor, etc.) until the site is fully reclaimed and mitigation measures (see Mitigation Section) are implemented.

Other Recreational Resources. In areas where *dispersed camping* is allowed, the effects would be similar to the short-term effects described for the developed sites in the Manitou Park Recreation Area description. In areas where dispersed camping is occurring in and around unclassified roads (scheduled to be reclaimed upon completion of the project), the campsites would be eliminated causing campers to use developed campgrounds or find other areas to camp. The effect would be long term on the users but is considered minor since there are many other opportunities available in the area.

Recreational Resources on Private Land. The Lutheran Valley Retreat Ranch (located outside the Trout-West Project Area) and the Colorado Lions Camp (located on SH 67) and similar facilities located on private land are still considered recreational resources potentially affected by the Proposed Action. Recreationists who use private lands in and around the project area would notice a change in the forest conditions. The short-term and long-term effects would be the same as discussed for the Manitou Park Recreation Area.

### *Effects of Road Reclamation*

The Proposed Action would upgrade 68 miles of system roads, upgrade then reclaim 48 miles of unclassified roads/trails, and build/reclaim 14 miles of temporary new roads in the Trout-West Project Area.

The unclassified roads/trails provide access to and along riparian areas, private lands and ridge tops. Overuse has damaged riparian vegetation, aquatic habitat and caused erosion in many areas. By reclaiming the existing unclassified road/trails, routes will be restored to a near natural condition and blocked, if need be, to discourage use and allow

vegetation to become reestablished. Reclamation will help direct recreational users to roads and trails designed and designated for said activities.

There could be some short-term disruption for recreationists while the work is being completed. These disruptions would include noise, traffic, and reclamation activities on the trails and at parking areas. These disruptions would be considered minor.

Reclaiming unclassified roads would not change the ROS setting because these roads are not recognized as authorized Forest Development Roads. In addition, unclassified roads have not been developed or maintained to Forest Service standards and should be removed from the landscape per Forest Policy. The reclamation could displace individuals who may use the unclassified roads for OHV, ATV, hiking, and biking but there are many other opportunities in the area for these activities to take place, so the effect would be minor.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

The Hayman Fire, Buffalo Creek Fire (permanently closed 1 developed campground and 2 forest development roads), and management activities on the South Platte Ranger District (closing areas to dispersed camping and shooting) will displace recreational users to other areas. There is potential that some of that use will be diverted to this project area. Developed campgrounds in the project area have additional capacity to accommodate most of the displaced use. Trail use may increase from said activities causing a short-term negative effect on users. When the areas affected by the burns begin to revegetate and facilities are re-built, the use may shift back to the burned areas. Since the duration of the effect is relatively short and use can be accommodated in the Project Area, the effect would be considered minor.

The Manitou Lake Dredging project, Trout Creek Timber Sale, the Trail Creek timber sale (on private land), and the 40-Acre thin on Experimental Forest combined with the proposed actions may result in a cumulative increase in management activity in the Project Area. For a period when activities are concurrent, the cumulative effects may increase the feeling of crowding and negatively affect the recreation experience. This effect would be short-term until activities are completed.

The long-term cumulative effect of these combined actions would be a reduction in fire risk and, therefore, a reduction in the potential for adverse effects to recreational resources due to a large catastrophic fire.

### ***Conclusion***

The Proposed Action would have only minor, short-term adverse effects due to the proposed activities. These effects would primarily be due to the actual harvest activities and prescribed burning.

In the long-term, the recreational resources would be improved by this alternative. The harvest treatments would reduce the long-term fire risk, which would reduce the potential for damage of recreational resources due to a large, catastrophic fire. The Proposed Action would prevent further resource damage due to unclassified roads and trails and rehabilitate some of the areas already damaged by overuse.

This alternative is consistent with the Forest Plan direction for management of recreational resources.

## **Alternative A**

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects***

Alternative A would have similar effects to the Proposed Action, except there would be no effect from burning. Alternative A proposes to treat approximately the same number of acres in the project, except the fuels reduction would be entirely mechanical. The no burn zone would be extended to the entire project. Smoke and related visual and health issues would not be an effect in this alternative.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

The cumulative effects on recreation resources for this alternative would have the same effects as the Proposed Action.

## **Alternative B**

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects***

Alternative B would have similar effect to the Proposed Action but at a smaller scale. Fewer roads would be reclaimed than in the Proposed Action.

Alternative B proposes to treat vegetation within one mile of the urban interface. The majority of the multi-use trail systems, dispersed camping, dispersed recreation, scenic driving, and the Holiday Tree Cutting Area within the Rampart and Phantom treatment units will not be directly effected by this alternative. Effects would be similar to the No Action alternative.

A direct effect of Alternative B would be that fewer Forest Development Roads would be upgraded than in the Proposed Action. The indirect effect would be the same as Alternative A.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

The cumulative effects on recreation resources for this alternative would have the same effects as the Proposed Action.

## **Alternative C**

Alternative C proposes to treat the same number of acres without building any new roads. In areas that require new roads, the stands would be treated using helicopters.

Alternative C would have less effect on motorized and non-motorized trail recreation in the Trail Creek, Phantom, Ryan Quinlan, and Skelton treatment units than the Proposed Action. The impacts of tractor yarding and temporary new roads would not be evident in the helicopter treatment areas. Therefore, the potential effect of new unclassified road/trails developing would be less with Alternative C than the Proposed Action.

Short-term direct effects of Alternative C on private landowners during harvest activity would include noise and visual activity. There would be less traffic on local roads and the long-term effect of road scars and skidder trails would be greatly reduced in this alternative. Indirect effects are similar to those described in the Proposed Action.

The combination of no new roads, upgrading 68 miles of system roads, and rehabilitating 48 miles of unclassified roads/trails would have a greater positive effect on the recreations resources and private lands than the Proposed Action.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

The cumulative effects on recreation resources for this alternative would have the same effects as the Proposed Action.

## **Alternative D**

Alternative D would have effects similar to Alternative B, but at a smaller scale. Risks from wildfire would be similar to No Action.

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects***

Alternative D would have the same direct and indirect effect on developed and dispersed recreation in the Manitou Park Recreation Area and the Manitou Experimental Forest as the Proposed Action except as discussed below.

The majority of the multi-use trail systems, dispersed camping, dispersed recreation, scenic driving, and the Holiday Tree Cutting Area within the Rampart and Phantom treatment units will not be directly effected by this alternative, but indirectly recreational resources in these areas would be affected by the greater risk of a catastrophic fire, as in the No Action alternative.

The effects around private lands would include more helicopter treated units within the ½ mile treatment zone and less material would be harvested in tractor treatment units. The effects on private lands would be similar to Alternative C.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

The cumulative effects on recreation resources for this alternative would have the same effects as the Proposed Action.

## **Alternative E**

### ***Direct and Indirect Effects***

Alternative E would have the greatest direct impact of all the alternatives. It treats the greatest number of acres, including riparian areas, and creates openings over 30 percent of the landscape. These openings could lead to an increase in off-road vehicle use as recreationists find easier access through these areas. Mitigation measures that apply to openings are included in the description of Alternative E in Chapter Two of the EIS. In addition to the Mitigation Measures described in the Proposed Action, the District may have to consider fencing most travelways to attempt to contain the off-road/trail riders to designated areas. Area closures may also be considered to alleviate the illegal off road/trail use.

Alternative E would have a greater short-term effect on developed recreation in the Long John treatment unit with increased traffic, noise, and smoke from tractor harvesting and prescribed burning in and around Red Rock and South Meadows campgrounds. In addition, visual impacts will be more evident from developed sites.

Alternative E would have similar effects on dispersed recreation trails, camping, hunting, and fishing as the Proposed Action. Approximately the same number of system, unclassified roads/trails, and temporary new roads used under the Proposed Action would be reclaimed in Alternative E. The direct and indirect effects of Alternative E on road reclamation would be the same as the Proposed Action.

### ***Cumulative Effects***

The cumulative effects on recreation resources for this alternative would have the same effects as the Proposed Action.



## **Mitigation Measures**

The following mitigation measures will apply to all action alternatives. If additional measures are required, they were identified in the Alternative description.

- Perform site-specific review of travel corridors in the selected alternative to assure that adequate screening is retained to reduce risk of increased off road/trail use.
- Maintain a visual screen within 200 feet of natural openings to deter off road/trail use.
- Rehabilitate all new temporary roads immediately upon completion of the project.
- Close treatment units to recreation use during implementation.
- Sign areas that are being treated with warning and education messages.
- Consider using boulder barriers, tank traps, fencing, slash, etc. to deter access.
- Emphasize winter logging to reduce resource impacts.

## **Literature Cited**

USDA Forest Service. 2001. Manitou Park Recreation Corridor, Master Plan.

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