

**Supplement  
to the  
Biological Assessment for Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed  
Terrestrial Wildlife Species  
2021 Forest Plan for the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest  
2 December 2021**

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## Introduction

### Background

The Biological Assessment for Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Terrestrial Wildlife Species for the 2021 Forest Plan for the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest (Biological Assessment) was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on 13 March 2020. On 31 July 2020 the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest (HLC) sent an email to the FWS with several corrections and errata to the Biological Assessment (BA), and on 23 September 2020 the HLC sent an email to FWS with an additional correction. The FWS delivered their Biological Opinion on 10 February 2021.

### Purpose

Since the Biological Opinion (BO) was delivered, updates to some data reported in that document and in the Biological Assessment have been made in response to the objection process, and as a result of project-level analyses. The purpose of this supplement is to summarize in one place the recent updates, along with the corrections and errata that were provided previously in emails, and to provide additional information and clarification to the data and analysis in the Biological Assessment.

The information contained in this supplement is in addition to that provided in the 13 March 2020 Biological Assessment (BA), and does not affect nor change the analysis, conclusions, and determinations made in that document.

### Content and Organization

This document includes only updated or corrected information as described above. After a section listing simple errata, it is organized by topic area or BA section. Brief information is provided as needed to explain each updated or corrected section, and reference is made to the corresponding page and where applicable, table numbers in the BA. Updated information is indicated in **bold text**, with updated numbers within tables or text indicated in **underlined bold**.

The original BA included analysis of North American wolverine. Because the proposed rule to list wolverine was withdrawn in October 2020, this supplement does not include any information specific to the wolverine analysis.

This document does not contain a literature cited section; all documents referenced are in the literature cited in the BA or are internal analysis documents in the project record.

### Errata

- Throughout the BA, the proposed action is referred to as the “2020 forest plan” or similar. The BO correctly updates this to the “2021 forest plan” or similar, based on the anticipated date of signing and issuance of the Record of Decision. In this supplement, we refer to the **“2021 forest plan” or similar, which should be interpreted as replacing references in the 13 March 2020 BA to the “2020 forest plan”**.
- On page 3 of the BA, the total acreage of the planning area is given incorrectly; the correct figure **for total acreage of the planning area is 2,846,606 acres**. The correct acreage was provided to the FWS via email as referenced above, and is used in the 10 February 2021 Biological Opinion. This acreage correction does not reflect any changes on the ground, rather, it is the result of use of updated data layers. Any minor inconsistencies in acreages reported

elsewhere in the BA or in this document are assumed due to use of data layers that may have been subsequently updated or are due to slight differences in processing during spatial analyses.

## Description of the Preferred Alternative

The acreages of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Recommended Wilderness Areas (RWA) were adjusted slightly from those used in the original BA analysis. Those adjustments have resulted in slight changes to acreages reported in several places in the BA. The description of the preferred alternative is updated in the following sections. Updated numbers will be reported where appropriate in other sections.

## Allowed Activities and Uses

The description of the preferred alternative includes Table 3 (page 7 of the BA), which displays the summary of activities and uses that would be allowed under the preferred alternative, and compares that to what is allowed under the existing forest plans. **Table 3 (page 7 of the BA) is now updated by and replaced with the following table;** updated numbers are indicated in **underlined bold**. The information in the Alternative F columns in Table 3 below also replaces Table 11 (pages 39-40) in the BA.

**Table 3. Summary of activities and uses that would be allowed under the preferred alternative (alternative F) compared to the 1986 Forest Plans (alternative A; existing condition)**

Type of activity/use	Alternative F		1986 plans	
	Acres	Percent of forest	Acres	Percent of forest
Land suitable for timber production <sup>1</sup>	<b><u>368,563</u></b>	13%	414,936	14%
Land unsuitable for timber production but where harvest <sup>2</sup> may occur	<b><u>1,674,482</u></b>	58%	1,167,247	40%
Personal use of forest products	2,874,356	100%	2,874,356	100%
Commercial use of forest products	2,037,261	71%	2,092,374	73%
Recommended Wilderness	<b><u>152,948</u></b>	5%	34,212	1%
Eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers	361 miles	NA	140 miles	NA
Research Natural Areas	18,447	1%	16,870	1%
Green Timber Botanical Area	1,167	0%	NA	NA
Badger Two Medicine Special Area	129,740	4%	NA	NA
Experimental and demonstration forests	8,871	<1%	8,871	<1%
Recreation Emphasis Areas	89,439	3%	0	NA
Grazing allotments	1,355,143	47%	1,355,143	47%
Riparian Management Zones	496,212	17%	0	NA
Wheeled motorized vehicle use (spring-summer-fall)	1,098,892	38%	1,099,010	38%
Over-snow motorized use (winter)	<b><u>1,008,035</u></b>	<b><u>35%</u></b>	<b><u>1,043,323</u></b>	<b><u>36%</u></b>
Summer non-motorized <b><u>only</u></b> <sup>3</sup>	1,784,322	62%	1,784,204	62%
Winter non-motorized <b><u>only</u></b> <sup>3</sup>	1,875,187	65%	1,839,900	64%

<sup>1</sup> Timber production is the purposeful growing, tending, harvesting, and regeneration of regulated crops of trees to be cut into logs, bolts, or other round sections for industrial or consumer use (36 CFR 219.9).

<sup>2</sup> Timber harvest is the removal of trees for wood fiber use and other multiple-use purposes (36 CFR 219.9)

<sup>3</sup> **Non-motorized uses are allowed in areas where motorized uses are also allowed; numbers in this table show the acreage where only non-motorized uses are allowed.**

## Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

Table 4 (page 9) in the BA displays the acreage of National Forest System land in the planning area that would be in each of several ROS categories, which are described in the 2021 plan and its glossary. **Table 4 (page 9) in the BA is updated by and replaced with the following table**, with updated numbers indicated in **underlined bold**:

**Table 4. Forestwide ROS Classes in the preferred alternative (alternative F)**

ROS classification	Acres - summer	Percent of total NFS lands - summer	Acres-winter	Percent of total NFS lands - winter
Primitive	<b><u>1,034,715</u></b>	36%	<b><u>1,017,244</u></b>	35%
Semi-primitive non-motorized	<b><u>758,488</u></b>	26%	<b><u>856,799</u></b>	30%
Semi-primitive motorized	<b><u>368,338</u></b>	13%	<b><u>726,772</u></b>	25%
Roaded natural	<b><u>692,704</u></b>	24%	<b><u>253,980</u></b>	9%
Rural	28,982	1%	28,432	1%
Urban	0	NA	0	NA

## Grizzly Bear Species Assessment

### Habitat Security and Motorized Access

#### Recovery Zone (Primary Conservation Area)

Table 5 (page 21-22) in the BA displays the Total Motorized Access Route Density (TMRD), Open Motorized Access Route Density (OMRD), and Core within the Recovery Zone. The numbers reported in the BA for the Arrastra Mountain subunit were calculated using a method inconsistent with the standard method used throughout the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) to calculate OMRD, TMRD, and Core. The correct numbers were provided to FWS in the 31 July 2020 email; the BO includes the correct numbers. The correct numbers provided to FWS and included in the BO reflect full (completed) implementation of the Blackfoot Non-Winter Travel Plan, which has not yet been fully implemented.

In order to more accurately report the existing condition and compare with information in previous decisions referenced in the BA and in the BO, Table 5a below displays OMRD, TMRD, and Core for all three subunits within the Upper Blackfoot GA. The table includes those numbers as calculated and reported in the BO for the 2018 grizzly bear amendments (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2017), the 2017 NCDE Biennial Motorized Access Monitoring Report (IGBC 2017), the BO for the 2021 Helena-Lewis and Clark plan (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2021), the existing condition as of 14 April 2021, and anticipated after full implementation of the Blackfoot Non-Winter Travel Plan. **Table 5a is intended to both correct and supplement Table 5 (page 21-22) in the BA.** Note that the information in BA Table 5 regarding GA, BMU, and percent of NFS lands is not included in Table 5a here because it is unchanged from the BA. Also note that the information in Table 5a is organized differently from that in Table 5, in order to allow for comparison among reporting years.

**Table 5a. Existing and anticipated Open Motorized Route Density (OMRD), Total Motorized Route Density (TMRD) and Secure Core for the Alice Creek, Arrastra Mountain, and Red Mountain bear management unit subunits.**

	2017 Amendment BO <sup>1</sup>	2017 NCDE Monitoring Report	2021 HLC Forest Plan BO	Existing as of 14 April 2021	Full Implementation <sup>2</sup>
Alice Creek – OMRD <sup>3</sup>	10	10	12	11	12
Alice Creek – TMRD <sup>4</sup>	18	18	10	12	10
Alice Creek – Secure Core <sup>5</sup>	71	71	74	73	74
Arrastra Mountain – OMRD	16	16	14	15	15
Arrastra Mountain – TMRD	17	19	15	17	15
Arrastra Mountain – Core	75	74	77	76	76
Red Mountain – OMRD	21	24	17	18	18
Red Mountain – TMRD	21	21	17	17	17
Red Mountain - Core	63	61	66	70	70

<sup>1</sup>From Table 7, page 46, in the BO for the grizzly bear amendments (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2017). The data were calculated for the 2015 NCDE reporting year.

<sup>2</sup>Full implementation is with the Blackfoot Non-Winter Travel Plan fully implemented, as updated in the Supplement to the Updated Terrestrial Biological Assessment for the Blackfoot Non-Winter Travel Plan (1 June 2016)

<sup>3</sup>OMRD is the percent of the subunit with open motorized route densities exceeding 1 mile per square mile

<sup>4</sup>TMRD is the percent of the subunit with open motorized route densities exceeding 2 miles per square mile

<sup>5</sup>Secure Core is the percent of the subunit that is  $\geq$  500 meters from a motorized route and is at least 2500 acres in size, excluding acreage of large lakes and small private lands

The information in Table 5a was calculated per the protocols used in the NCDE biennial monitoring reports, and is in the project record. The remaining subunits that are included in Table 5 of the BA are in the Rocky Mountain Range GA, and are not subject to any existing or anticipated decisions that would change motorized access route density or secure core as reported in the BA.

As discussed in the BA, the proposed forest plan does not make site-specific decisions and would not change motorized route densities as reported in Table 5a. Future changes in motorized access would only occur after appropriate site-specific analysis and consultation.

Outside the Recovery Zone (Zones 1, 2, and 3)

Table 6 (page 25) in the BA displays the acreage of National Forest System lands within Grizzly Bear Analysis Units (GBAUs) on the HLC, along with the acres of secure habitat in each GBAU and the percent of each GBAU that is in secure habitat. The table is not clear about the relationship between some grizzly bear management zones and administrative boundaries/Geographic Areas (GAs), nor does it display the acreage of non-National Forest System land within the boundaries of GBAUs.

*Zone 1 boundaries and acreage*

The relationship between GA boundaries and zones is important mainly in Zone 1, because of the requirement in the 2021 plan (retained from the grizzly bear amendments) to maintain linear motorized route density on the HLC portion of Zone 1 at or below the baseline established in the amendments and adjusted via subsequent consultations. The HLC portion of Zone 1 encompasses a total of 158,372 acres, which includes:

- 158, 047 acres in the Upper Blackfoot GA (Lincoln Ranger District)
- 325 acres in the Divide GA (Helena Ranger District)

Additionally, 1,017 acres of the Upper Blackfoot GA (Lincoln Ranger District) are in grizzly bear management Zone 2.

*Zone 1 linear route densities*

The 2018 grizzly bear amendments require that open motorized route density in the HLC portion of Zone 1, measured as linear miles over the entire area (referred to as “linear motorized route density”), is not to increase above the 2011 baseline unless adjusted through consultation. That requirement was retained in the 2021 forest plan. For completeness, Table 5b below provides information on the existing calculated linear motorized route density in Zone 1 since the original 2011 baseline identified in the NCDE Conservation Strategy; this is also the time period in which implementation of the Blackfoot Non-Winter Travel Plan has been ongoing. The original reference baseline density from the 2011 NCDE Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy is shown, along with the existing densities calculated for required biennial reporting. Table 5b also includes, for reference, the density calculated as the existing condition for the 2017 consultation on the 2018 grizzly bear amendments. **Table 5b is intended to supplement the information in the BA for the 2021 forest plan.**

**Table 5b. Existing linear open motorized route density since 2011 in the HLC portion of grizzly bear management Zone 1.**

<b>Analysis Document</b>	<b>Density of all motorized routes</b>	<b>Density of National Forest System Routes only</b>
2011 NCDE Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy original reference baseline	na	1.6 mi/mi <sup>2</sup>
2015 and 2017 NCDE Motorized Access Monitoring Report	na	1.2 mi/mi <sup>2</sup>
2017 Grizzly Bear Amendments BO (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2017)	1.5 mi/mi <sup>2</sup>	1.3 mi/mi <sup>2</sup>
2019 NCDE Motorized Access Monitoring Report	na	1.0 mi/mi <sup>2</sup>
2021 Biological Opinion on the Effects of the Hogum Wildfire Resilience Project on Grizzly Bears	na	1.3 mi/mi <sup>2</sup>

The motorized route densities shown in Table 5b differ for several reasons. First, they reflect actual changes on the ground as implementation of the Blackfoot Non-Winter Travel Plan progresses. Second, the motorized route information database (INFRA) is incomplete, as noted in the BA for the 2021 forest plan. Both of these mean that biologists and analysts may use various methods to determine whether certain roads that are lacking formal data are open or effectively closed, for the purposes of motorized

route density analyses. Those methods may include such things as field validation, use of remote imagery, staff knowledge, etc., and may vary depending on timing of analysis and availability of information sources. Where appropriate, road status determinations made during project-level analyses are entered into the INFRA database. Not all determinations are appropriate for entry into INFRA, however, as some may require further validation. Nevertheless, biologists and analysts use the best information available at the time each analysis is completed. The HLC is engaged in an ongoing process to update the INFRA database and improve availability of the information required for motorized route density analyses. The 2019 monitoring report was completed to measure compliance with the 2018 grizzly bear amendments, and it reflects the most up-to-date information available at the time. The density reported for the Hogum Wildfire Resilience Project was calculated specifically for that analysis and differs from the 2019 monitoring report for the reasons stated above (e.g., additional field evaluation).

As discussed in the BA, the proposed forest plan does not make site-specific decisions and would not change motorized route densities as reported in Table 5b. Future changes in motorized access would only occur after appropriate site-specific analysis and consultation.

*Grizzly Bear Analysis Units (GBAUs)*

The BA for the 2021 forest plan lacked clear information about the location of GBAUs relative to GAs and to grizzly bear management zones. This supplement provides that information. The Dalton Mountain and Humbug GBAUs are within Zone 1; their boundaries follow the zone boundary rather than administrative (district or GA) boundaries. The GBAU acreages reported in the BA (Table 6, page 25) were National Forest System lands only. For completeness and to allow comparison with other documents, the total acres for all GBAUs as well as the National Forest system acres are shown in Table 6a below. Table 6a also clarifies information about the zones and GAs associated with each GBAU. Some numbers differ by 1-2 acres due to rounding differences in calculations made by the software used for analysis. **Table 6a in this document is intended to supplement rather than replace Table 6 in the BA.**

**Table 6a. Acreage of Grizzly Bear Analysis Units by Ownership**

Grizzly Bear Management Zone	Geographic Area	Grizzly Bear Analysis Unit (GBAU)	Total Acreage	National Forest lands acreage	Percent of GBAU that is National Forest lands
Zone 1	Upper Blackfoot <sup>1</sup>	Dalton Mountain <sup>2</sup>	85,574	82,277	96
		Humbug	72,797	66,966	92
Zone 2	Elkhorns	Boulder River BDNF <sup>3</sup>	33,523	30,973	92
		Casey Peak	68,181	60,455	89
		Crow Creek	73,514	69,822	95
	Divide <sup>2</sup>	Lazyman	77,205	64,416	83
		North Divide <sup>1</sup>	163,457	72,196	87
		Spotted Dog	74,673	66,723	89
	Big Belts	Middle Big Belts	83,704	70,744	85
		North Big Belts	215,830	171,431	79
		South Big Belts	126,333	67,119	53
Zone 3	Little Belts	Dry Wolf	79,470	74,308	94

Grizzly Bear Management Zone	Geographic Area	Grizzly Bear Analysis Unit (GBAU)	Total Acreage	National Forest lands acreage	Percent of GBAU that is National Forest lands
		Elephant	205,009	199,743	97
		Pilgrim	83,786	72,942	87
		Middle Fork Judith	112,817	110,602	98
		Sheep Creek	169,900	127,730	75
		Tenderfoot-Smith	130,059	113,449	87
		Upper Belt Creek	117,741	103,762	88
	Highwoods	Highwoods	44,466	42,291	95
	Castles	Castles	79,916	69,709	87
Crazies	Crazies HLC <sup>4</sup>	70,092	57,667	82	

<sup>1</sup> Approximately 1,017 acres of the Upper Blackfoot GA are within grizzly bear management Zone 2, in the North Divide GBAU (refer to Figure 2, page 24 in the BA, or to the map in the project record). The acreage shown in Table 6a is the total GBAU acreage.

<sup>2</sup> Approximately 325 acres of the Divide GA are within grizzly bear management Zone 1, in the Dalton Mountain GBAU (refer to Figure 2, page 24 in the BA, or to the map in the project record). The acreage shown in Table 6a is the total GBAU acreage.

<sup>3</sup> The Boulder River BDNF unit is entirely within the boundary of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest; management of this area is included in the 2021 HLC plan

<sup>4</sup> The northern portion of the Crazy Mountains is administered by the HLC, while the southern portion is administered by the Custer-Gallatin National Forest. Only the HLC portion is included in the Crazies HLC GBAU.

Table 6 in the BA also displayed the total acres in and percent of each GBAU that are potentially secure habitat. Those calculations are made for National Forest System lands only. Since the BA was completed, some project-level analyses have generated updated estimates of secure habitat. We have chosen to provide that updated information in this document because it is available and allows the information to be provided in one place for ease of reference in the future. The projects that provided updated information have gone through separate consultation; the updates to secure habitat acreage as reported in those analyses are summarized below in Table 6b, along with the original numbers from Table 6 in the BA, for comparison. Only GBAUs with updated information are included in **Table 6b, which intended to supplement rather than replace Table 6 in the BA.**

**Table 6b. Potentially secure habitat by GBAU as reported in the 13 March 2020 BA and as updated by subsequent project-level analyses**

Grizzly Bear Management Zone	Geographic Area	Grizzly Bear Analysis Unit (GBAU)	Existing acres of potentially secure habitat as reported in the BA (percent of GBAU)	Existing acres of Secure Habitat – updated per project-level analysis
Zone 1	Upper Blackfoot <sup>1</sup>	Humbug	15,703 (23%)	30,555 (46%) <sup>2</sup>
Zone 2	Elkhorns	Boulder River BDNF <sup>3</sup>	7,725 (25%)	13,023 (42%) <sup>4</sup>
		Casey Peak	32,847 (54%)	35,069 (58%) <sup>4</sup>



Grizzly Bear Management Zone	Geographic Area	Grizzly Bear Analysis Unit (GBAU)	Existing acres of potentially secure habitat as reported in the BA (percent of GBAU)	Existing acres of Secure Habitat – updated per project-level analysis
	Big Belts	Crow Creek	27,967 (40%)	29,679 (43%) <sup>4</sup>
		Middle Big Belts	24,853 (35%)	25,908 (37%) <sup>4</sup>
		North Big Belts	75,085 (44%)	77,899 (45%) <sup>4,5</sup>
		South Big Belts	18,048 (27%)	20,019 (30%) <sup>4</sup>
Zone 3	Little Belts	Dry Wolf	23,277 (31%)	26,394 (36%) <sup>4</sup>
		Elephant	44,208 (22%)	48,705 (24%) <sup>4</sup>
		Pilgrim	39,615 (54%)	40,168 (55%) <sup>4</sup>
		Middle Fork Judith	65,619 (59%)	67,089 (61%) <sup>4</sup>
		Sheep Creek	5,039 (4%)	5,006 (4%) <sup>4</sup>
		Tenderfoot-Smith	60,276 (53%)	58,612 (52%) <sup>4</sup>
		Upper Belt Creek	33,158 (32%)	33,302 (32%) <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Approximately 1,017 acres of the Upper Blackfoot GA are within grizzly bear management Zone 2, in the North Divide GBAU (refer to Figure 2, page 24 in the BA, or to the map in the project record).

<sup>2</sup> Updated in the Supplement to the Terrestrial Biological Assessment for the Hogum Wildfire Resilience Project (19 August 2021).

<sup>3</sup> The Boulder River BDNF unit is entirely within the boundary of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest; management of this area is included in the 2021 HLC plan

<sup>4</sup> Updated information is from the Biological Assessment for Ongoing Travel Plans, Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forests, 27 January 2021, updated 8 April 2021

<sup>5</sup> Based on updated analysis for travel plans as in footnote 4, and re-confirmed in the analysis for the Middleman Vegetation Project as discussed in the Addendum to the Biological Assessment (17 May 2021) for that project.

None of the updates shown in Table 6b is a result of actual changes on the ground since the 13 March 2020 BA was completed. Rather, all updated numbers are a result of improvements to the data used for analysis, through project-level assessment and/or field reconnaissance. Similarly, the updated analysis for ongoing implementation of travel plans does not include any changes on the ground, but reflects updated analysis of the existing condition, using refined or more recent data and addressing issues that have been identified since those travel plans were originally signed.

As discussed in the BA, the proposed forest plan does not make site-specific decisions and would not change motorized route densities, and therefore secure habitat, as reported in Table 5b. Future changes in motorized access and potentially of secure habitat would only occur after appropriate site-specific analysis and consultation.

*Other indicators of Habitat Security*

Recommended Wilderness

Table 12 on page 45 of the BA displays each GBAU that contains existing recommended wilderness, and that would contain recommended wilderness under the preferred alternative. Due to the changes in acres of proposed recommended wilderness discussed at the beginning of this document, **the figures in Table 12 are updated in underlined bold in the following table, which replaces Table 12 in the BA.**

**Table 12. Acreage of habitat by Grizzly Bear Analysis Unit (GBAU), and percent of total NFS lands in GBAUs that are in recommended wilderness area in the proposed action and in existing (1986) Forest Plans**

Grizzly bear management zone	Geographic area	Grizzly Bear Analysis Unit (GBAU)	Total NF acres in GBAU	EXISTING acres (%) of GBAU in recommended wilderness area	PROPOSED acres (%) of GBAU in recommended wilderness area
Zone 1	Upper Blackfoot	Dalton Mountain	82,277	0	<u>16,854 (21%)</u>
<b>Zone 2</b>	Divide	<b>North Divide</b>	<b>171,431</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,717 (20%)</b>
		Spotted Dog	66,723	16,653 (25%)	18,239 (27%)
	Big Belts	North Big Belts	171,431	9,105 (5%)	7,032 (4%)
		South Big Belts	67,118	8,420 (13%)	8,141 (12%)
Totals	na	na	na	34,178	<u>64,983</u>

Also, the paragraph on page 45 that is immediately below Table 12 should be replaced with the following (updates in underlined bold); the entire paragraph is included here for clarity: The 2020 Forest Plan identifies 64,983 acres of recommended wilderness within the area where grizzly bears currently may be present. This is approximately 30,805 more acres (a roughly 90 percent increase) than in the existing (1986) plans (Table 12). The proposed action also includes a recommended wilderness area of roughly 66,894 acres not shown in Table 12, because it occurs in the Big Snowy Mountains in the Snowies GA, which is outside both zone 3 and the current area identified where grizzlies may be present. Motorized travel would not be allowed in recommended wilderness areas (see FW-RECWILD-SUIT 01 below). These areas largely overlap with existing inventoried roadless areas, and in the Snowies GA largely overlaps with the Congressionally designated wilderness study area.

Recreation Opportunity Setting

Table 13 on page 48 of the BA displays the acreage of each GA that would be in each Recreation Opportunity Setting (ROS) categories under the preferred alternative. Due to the changes in acres of proposed ROS discussed at the beginning of this document, the figures in Table 13 are updated in **the following table, which replaces Table 13 (page 48)**; updated numbers are in underlined bold text. Note that while acreages changed, the percent of each GA in the identified categories only changed slightly only in one GA (Upper Blackfoot).

**Table 13. Acreage of recreation opportunity setting by GA, 2020 Forest Plan, alternative F**

GA	TOTAL GA acres (NFS lands only)	Primitive acres (% of GA)	Semi primitive nonmotorized acres (% of GA)	Semi primitive motorized acres (% of GA)	Roaded natural acres (% of GA)	Rural acres (% of GA)
Big Belts	315,199	46,031 (15%)	107,915 (34%)	39,021 (12%)	112,531 (36%)	9,700 (3%)
Castles	69,709	0	16,876 (24%)	16,343 (23%)	36,490 (52%)	0
Crazies	57,667	0	33,899	15,126	8,642	0

GA	TOTAL GA acres (NFS lands only)	Primitive acres (% of GA)	Semi primitive nonmotorized acres (% of GA)	Semi primitive motorized acres (% of GA)	Roaded natural acres (% of GA)	Rural acres (% of GA)
			(59%)	(26%)	(15%)	
Divide	202,642	<u>32,877</u> (16%)	<u>69,213</u> (34%)	<u>22,446</u> (11%)	69,298 (34%)	8,808 (4%)
Elkhorns	161,251	45,894 (28%)	<u>48,708</u> (30%)	6,450 (4%)	<u>57,346</u> (36%)	2,853 (2%)
Highwoods	42,291	0	29,906 (71%)	8,219 (19%)	4,165 (10%)	0
Little Belts	804,657	<u>101,801</u> (13%)	<u>189,693</u> (24%)	<u>222,541</u> (28%)	<u>287,385</u> (36%)	3,239 (<1%)
Rocky Mountains	778,023	578,357 (74%)	144,091 (19%)	24,553 (3%)	27,796 (4%)	3,226 (<1%)
Snowies	118,172	95,628 (81%)	0	6,541 (6%)	15,328 (13%)	676 (1%)
Upper Blackfoot	333,617	134,429 (40%)	<u>118,187</u> <u>(36%)</u>	<u>7,099</u> <u>(2%)</u>	73,723 (22%)	481 (<1%)

#### Connectivity

The language in the last paragraph that begins on page 52 in the BA for the 2021 forest plan should be updated with the following (change in underlined bold text): The 2020 Forest Plan would include a 90 percent increase in the total acreage of recommended wilderness areas in GAs that are currently identified as where grizzly bears may be present. Although recommended wilderness areas largely overlap with inventoried roadless areas, they include additional restrictions on certain activities (described in the Habitat Security section above) and would be managed in a way that would minimize risk of habitat fragmentation and therefore maintain potential connectivity within each recommended wilderness area.

#### Canada Lynx Species Assessment

Updated information to the Canada Lynx analysis in the 13 March 2020 BA is confined to updates that result from the changes to acreages in recommended wilderness and ROS categories in the preferred alternative, as described at the beginning of this document. Therefore explanations will be minimal, and most information is provided to replace the corresponding information in the BA. All updated numbers or text are indicated in underlined bold text. Most updates involve only one or a few numbers, but the entire paragraphs in which they occur are included for clarity.

#### Effects of the Proposed Action

##### Vegetation Management

Table 23, on page 79, should be replaced with the following (updated numbers in underlined bold):

**Table 23. Designated areas identified in the proposed action and potential lynx habitat by occupancy**

<b>Designated area</b>	<b>Acres occupied potential lynx habitat</b>	<b>Percent of occupied potential lynx habitat</b>	<b>Acres unoccupied potential lynx habitat</b>	<b>Percent of unoccupied potential lynx habitat</b>
<b>Congressionally Designated</b>				
Wilderness areas	361,680	45%	10,032	1%
Wilderness study areas	0	0%	77,973	11%
Inventoried roadless areas	322,164	40%	410,242	60%
Conservation management area	68,442	9%	0	0%
<b>Administratively designated in preferred alternative</b>				
Recommended wilderness areas	<b>51,297</b>	6%	27,713	4%
Research natural areas	2,246	<1%	4,536	<1%
South hills recreation area	17,880	2%	0	0%
Grandview recreation area	0	0%	8,932	1%
Green timber botanical area	214	<1%	0	0%

**The text in the second paragraph below Table 23, on page 79, should be replaced with the following (updated numbers in bold red):**

The proposed action would increase the amount of potential lynx habitat in administratively designated areas by increasing the acres of RWAs (adding **37,744** acres of potential lynx habitat), and by adding an additional research natural area, a botanical area, and two recreation emphasis areas (Table 23). Management direction for RWAs and research natural areas prohibits most vegetation management actions. Those areas, however, co-occur with additional designations, such as IRAs, that are not made at the Forest Plan level and occur in the 1986 Forest Plans as well. Therefore, this increase would likely not measurably change the amount of potential lynx habitat in which vegetation management actions would be prohibited, constrained, or allowed.

## Canada Lynx Critical Habitat Assessment

### Updates to the Proposed Action

**Table 27 on page 99 should be replaced with the following (updated numbers in underlined bold):**

**Table 27. Allowable uses and critical habitat in the action area, existing condition and proposed action**

<b>Allowable uses</b>	<b>Acres total revised plan area</b>	<b>Acres critical habitat existing condition</b>	<b>Percent of critical habitat existing condition</b>	<b>Acres critical habitat proposed action</b>	<b>Percent of critical habitat proposed action</b>
Timber harvest	<b><u>1,674,482</u></b>	481,464	44%	<b><u>463,655</u></b>	42%
Timber production	<b><u>368,563</u></b>	74,086	7%	<b><u>60,793</u></b>	6%
Livestock grazing	1,355,143	270,305	25%	270,305	25%
Wheeled motorized	<b><u>1,090,024</u></b>	153,801	14%	<b><u>147,202</u></b>	<b><u>13%</u></b>
Over-the-snow motor vehicle	<b><u>1,009,183</u></b>	235,739	21%	<b><u>220,965</u></b>	20%

### Designated Areas

**The text at the top of page 103, and Table 29 on page 103 should be replaced with the following (updated numbers in underlined bold)::**

Under the current Helena National Forest and Lewis and Clark National Forest land and resource management plans, approximately 47 percent of the action area is under a particular designation that restricts or prohibits management activities such as timber production, harvest, motorized uses, and others that may impact the PCE. Of the total National Forest acres in the action area, 47 percent occur in designated wilderness, 42 percent in Inventoried Roadless Areas, **0 percent** in areas identified as recommended wilderness in the existing (1986) Helena NF and Lewis and Clark NF plans, and other small amounts in research natural areas (Table 29).

**The text on page 106, and Table 32 under the heading “Designated Areas” should be replaced with the following (updated numbers in underlined bold):**

The 2020 Forest Plan will change some area designations in the action area. These designations will influence the management activities that would be allowed or prohibited; thus, they can greatly influence management of critical habitat. The 2020 Forest Plan will increase the amount of land in critical habitat that is recommended for wilderness designation by **52,639** acres (Table 32). By recommending these new acres for wilderness designation, it will remove the area from potential timber production, reducing the overall amount of forest that could be subject to vegetation management that could reduce the amount of PCE 1a. Conversely, it would preclude vegetation treatment that would promote PCE 1a in areas where this component is underrepresented or of low quality. Additionally, a new recreation area has been proposed in critical habitat, the South Hills Recreation Area in the Divide GA at 50,180 acres, with 13,726 acres occurring in critical habitat (approximately 1% of critical habitat). Plan components for this recreation area (DI-SHRA-GDL-01, DI-SHRA-SUIT-01) allows for vegetation management and timber harvest to occur in this area. These activities will need to follow the provision of the NRLMD and other wildlife-based revised plan components, but there remains the potential for adverse effects to the PCE through these activities by reducing the amount of PCE 1a, as well as contributing to reductions in PCE 1b, c, and d through snow compaction and vegetation management. Effects to PCE 1b, c, and d are anticipated to be insignificant and discountable. Effects to the PCE from these area designations are mostly insignificant, and where

such effects could be adverse, would result from vegetation management (discussed below) not the area designation itself.

**Table 32. Area designations in the Canada lynx designated critical habitat action area under the preferred alternative for the 2020 Forest Plan**

Designated area	Acres critical habitat	Percent
<b>Congressionally Designated</b>		
Wilderness areas	520,911	47%
Wilderness study areas	0	0%
Inventoried roadless areas	463,101	42%
Conservation management area	129,598	12%
<b>Administratively designated in preferred alternative</b>		
Recommended wilderness areas	<b><u>52,639</u></b>	5%
Research natural areas	3,283	<1%
South hills recreation area	13,726	1%

### Vegetation Management

**Also on page 106, the text below Table 32, under the heading “Vegetation Management”, should be replaced with the following (updated numbers in underlined bold):**

A majority of critical habitat occurs in areas that have designations that mostly preclude vegetation management that is capable of diminishing the quality of critical habitat. Of the 1,099,991 acres of critical habitat in the action area, **463,655** acres (42%) would be available for timber harvest. This equates to a reduction in the area available for treatment in critical habitat by approximately 2% (Table 27). Timber production would be allowable on **60,793** acres of critical habitat. This is a reduction in the area available for treatment by approximately 1% (Table 27). While these reductions allow for natural processes to be the dominant driver of vegetation conditions across more than half of the action area, it also precludes management activities that could improve certain habitat conditions for lynx, thus contributing to certain components of the PCE (PCE 1 a, c for example). In areas where vegetation management could be undertaken in critical habitat, there is potential for adverse effects to critical habitat by altering the conditions of the PCE. PCE 1 a, c, and d are most likely to be impacted through vegetation management. Adverse effects are likely to occur to PCE 1a due to the removal or alteration of vegetation preferred by snowshoe hare, but adverse effects are not anticipated to 1b, 1c, or 1d. Minor amounts of PCE 1b could be impacted during winter logging activities and fuel breaks where snow would be compacted by machinery and vehicles, but these effects are anticipated to be insignificant.

### Other Allowable Uses - Recreation

**The text on page 110, in the last paragraph, should be replaced with the following (updated numbers in underlined bold):**

The proposed action delineates areas where specific Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) categories would apply; these categories indicate the types of uses that would be suitable, including winter

motorized over-snow use. Approximately **220,965** acres (20%) of lynx critical habitat would be in ROS categories where over-snow motorized uses could potentially be allowed during winter. That represents the overall maximum area where such uses could be allowed, without consideration of terrain, access, vegetation, or other landscape characteristics that influence potential for winter motorized use. The potential effects to PCE 1c from this ROS designation would be an area of forest where compacted snow could occur as a result of snowmobile trail grooming activities and compaction from snowmobiles and other activities such as skiing across country where those activities are authorized. These effects would be insignificant to PCE 1c. The actual area (specific locations and acreages) in which winter over-snow motorized travel may occur is determined in travel management plans, and effects are analyzed and consulted on when those plans are made or updated.