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Comments: Wildlife Guidelines(Page 34)

Wildlife Guideline # 1. Change the guideline to read "avoid, minimize, or mitigate surface disturbance and long term disruptive activities to native ungulates on winter ranges during the winter season."

We don't want this guideline to shut down snowmobiling across broad sections of the forest because it is deemed a "disruptive activity." First, snowmobiling is minimally disruptive to ungulates. Second, there is not a shortage of ungulates on the Forest so we don't need to restrict snowmobiling to protect deer.

Wildlife Guideline #3. Creating a 30 acre protection zone around every raptor nest seems like it will really hamper vegetation management projects and wildfire reduction activities. Are any of the raptors threatened or endangered species? Are any of the raptors species of conservation concern? If not, then why have such a strict protection for their nests?

I think that this guideline should be worded more loosely, like "Vegetation management activities should take into account the impacts of the project on raptor nests and habitat and develop plans to reduce impacts."

Wildlife Guideline #8. Change this guideline to state "avoided, minimized, or mitigated" to give more discretion for how to protect or peregrine falcon eyries.

Timber (page 40). I recommend putting the timber suitability map embedded in the timber section of the document so that timber suitability discussions make more sense. I didn't even realize there was a timber suitability map until after I had finished reviewing the document.

Desired condition. There needs to be a desired condition that addresses the need for fuelwood/firewood by the local populations. If timber sales don't sell, they should be opened for fuelwood to the regular public. The Forest has multiple areas that have been off limits for firewood because of proposed timber sales, but many years later, nothing has been done and the dead wood is still there creating a fire hazard. If the wood can't sell for timber, then you should open it up for fuel wood or post and poll sales. In some areas, the forest could even authorize temporary roads for firewood cutters to use to get into areas and remove the wood.

Is there any reason why the regular citizen can't just cut down dead or dying trees, haul them off the mountain and use them for whatever they want. Right now it seems that the only options are to have a large scale timber operation and bid on a sale or be limited to cutting wood for firewood. Can't there be a middle ground where the public can cut down dead or dying trees and use them for small scale timber projects. I would like to be able buy logs off the mountain and then use them for building a shed or to cut into boards for various projects. It seems like having a permit for this type of activity would be a win win situation for the forest. You get dead wood off the Forest and I get to use the wood for my projects.

I recommend introducing a desired condition or a guideline or an objective that allows wood to be harvested by individual members of the public through a permit similar to a firewood permit.

Transportation Infrastructure

Desired Condition #6. I recommending changing the second sentence to include a review of temporary road closures to determine if they serve administrative, multiple use, or public needs. The desired condition should not be to automatically close a temporary road, but the forest should evaluate if there is a need to adopt the road as a permanent road. Then after the evaluation, if the forest decides to close the temporary road, it should be rehabilitated back to its natural state. A lot of old road closures were just closed by piling up a mound of dirt at the beginning. They are just enticements for ATV and side by side users.

I recommend adding a desired condition or a goal that outlines an opportunity or mechanism for the public to recommend new roads or recommend that existing "unauthorized" routes be added to the forest road system and added to Forest road maps. I realize that this comment period is not about authorizing new roads, but the Forest Plan should discuss the methods by which the public can ask for new or old roads to be "authorized."

Facilities Infrastructure

Desired condition #4. There are less and less potable water sources on the Forest. Many campgrounds that used to have water, no longer provide water, such as East Park Campground. This desired condition should mention that the Forest will continue to maintain existing water systems and develop new water systems where it serves a significant need.

I don't think the Forest should be shutting down water systems that provide an essential service to campers and the recreating public.

Developed Recreation Sites (Page 57)

I would like to see desired conditions or objectives that emphasize that developed recreation sites have more of a variety of amenities, such as potable water, marked trails leading to and from the developed recreation sites, maps or signs showing or highlighting the activities in that area. Developed recreation sites are expected to have more amenities than undeveloped recreation areas.

Outfitter and Guides (Page 59)

Desired Condition #4 should add that Outfitter and Guide activities do not degrade the environment or impact other resources.

Recreation Residences (p59)

I recommend that the Forest open up the opportunity for more recreation residences to fill in vacant lots within the existing residence areas. Perhaps the lots can be offered using a lottery system to provide an equal opportunity to those interested.

Scenic resources (p 62)

Since this is a Forest, I think there should be a desired condition or objective to emphasize the scenic quality of trees. It seems almost silly to have to emphasize this point, but the Forest seems more intent on removing trees without the same level of effort to restore trees back to the area. The scenic value of the Forest should emphasize the scenic value of a timbered or tree covered landscape. We don't go to the forest to see sagebrush covered hills, or fire killed tree trunks, we go to the Forest to see and be surrounded by trees.

The scenery objectives should be to have a forested and natural looking landscape within a National Forest.

I am not sure where to find the "scenic integrity objectives" but they should focus on having a forested landscape wherever trees naturally grow. The Wyoming Section of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation area would be the exception because it was created for a different purpose from the rest of the Forest. for the rest of the Forest, the primary scenic integrity objective should always have a focus of having trees and forested areas that mimic the natural landscape.

Destination Recreation Area (Page 79).

The plan should mention that Developed Recreation Sites are most appropriate in the Destination Recreation Areas because of high usage and ability to provide benefits to the greatest number of people.

General Recreation Area (Page 80)

Desired Condition #2 is very awkward. It would be better to state that the general recreation area is appropriate for a multi use activities which include Motorized recreation and non motorized recreation.

Desire Condition #7 should stat the "Conflicts between different uses are evaluated and user groups are given an opportunity to resolve the conflicts"

Backcountry Recreation Area (P 80)

I would recommend having a desired condition or standard that states that motorized roads or trails in this area are not appropriate. But I would not use language that restricts snowmobiles. Motorized wheeled vehicles have very different impacts from motorized snowmobiles.

I don't think that the backcountry recreation area should be "suitable" for wheeled motorized travel.

Appendix D. Maps.

The maps seem very simple and amateur. Can you add some more background terrain or contours or rivers so we can have a better idea where the different areas are located. Having a big empty green blob showing the Forest does not help us understand things are located. For example, with the timber suitability map, I can't tell where the suitable areas are located on the landscape. I can't tell if the areas are mountain tops or canyons nor can I tell which mountains are included.

It would be much better to zoom in and show the Forest on multiple maps so that we can see where different areas are located. It is hard to comment on the location of different recreation areas or timber suitability areas when I can't tell where they are on the landscape. Maybe show the forest on four different maps so we can see better details.