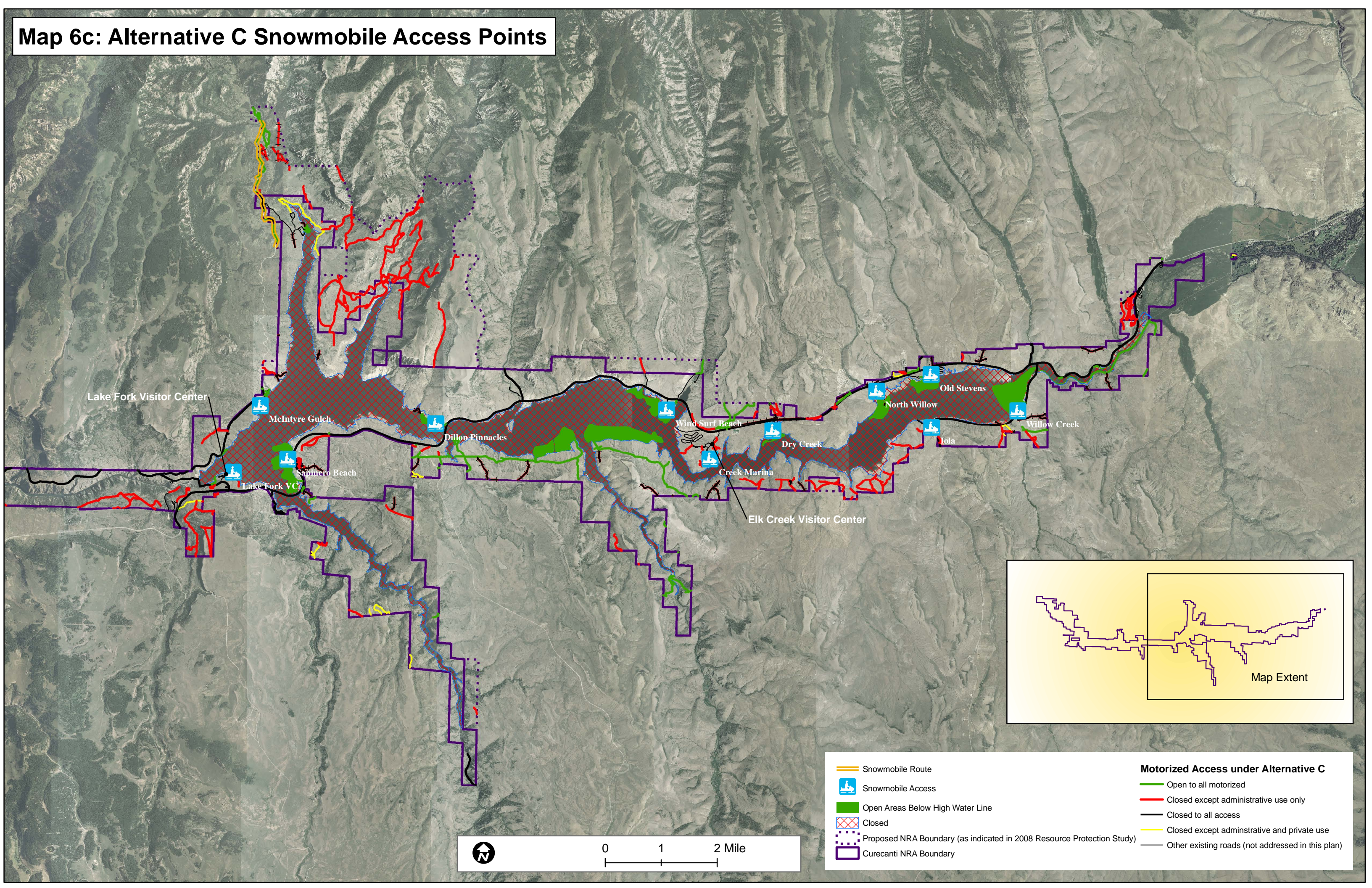


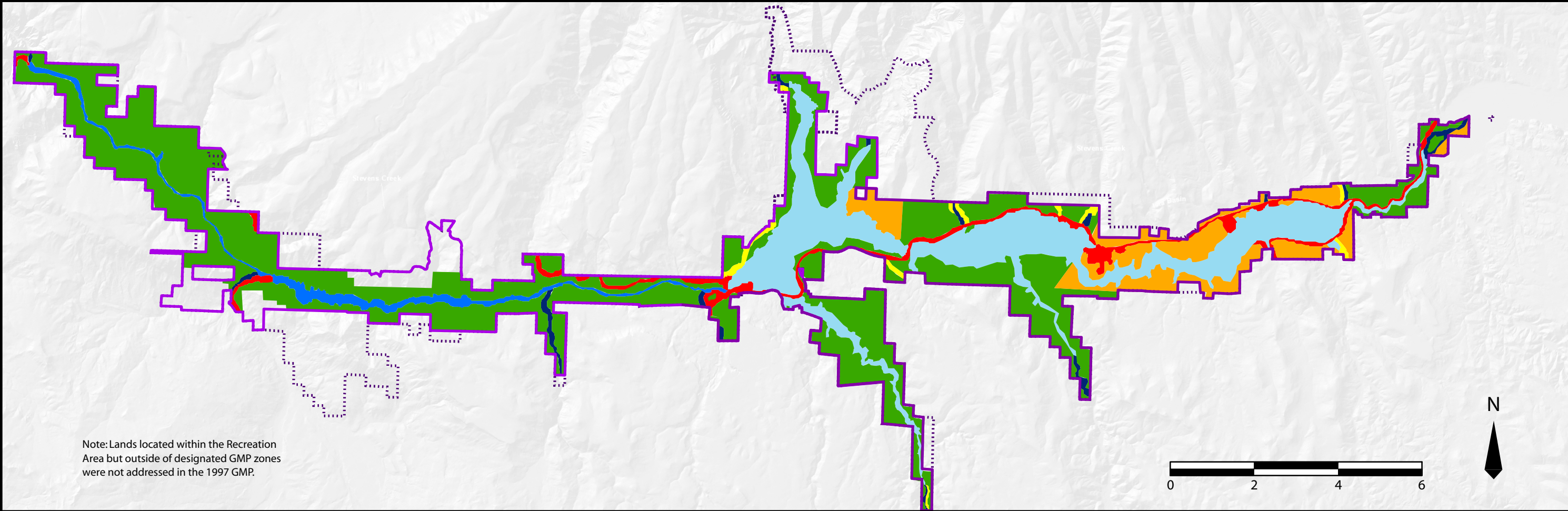
Map 6c: Alternative C Snowmobile Access Points







Map 7a. Existing 1997 General Management Plan Zones

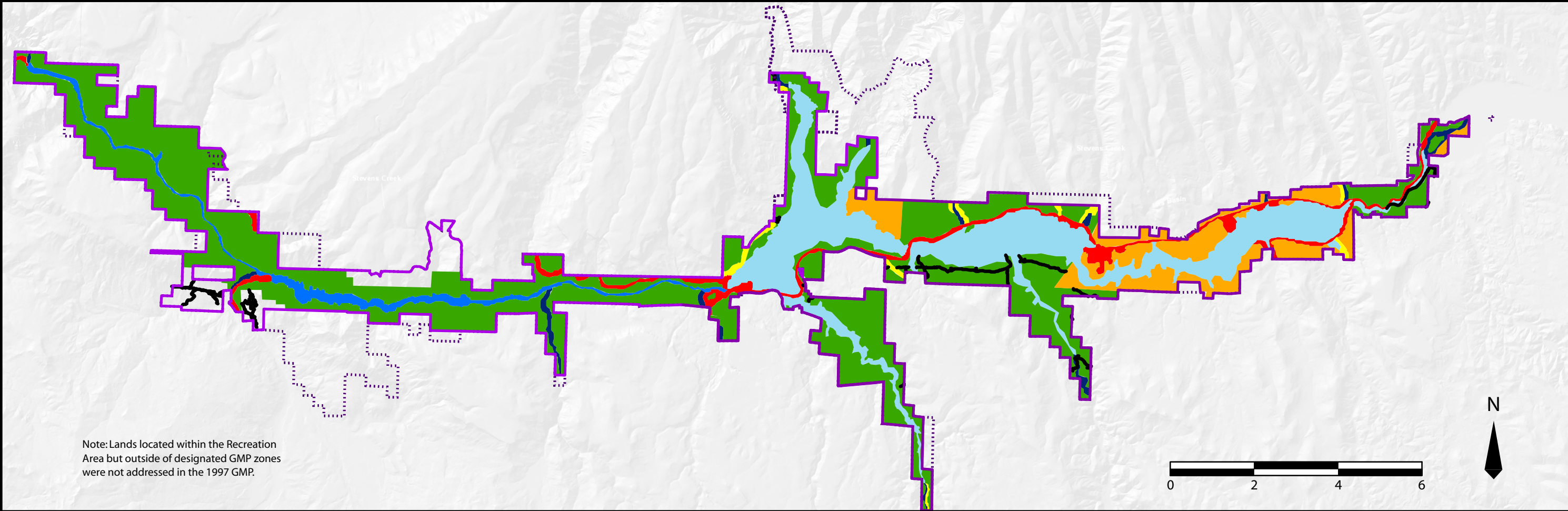


**Management Legend**

- Developed
- Motorized Rural
- Flatwater
- Semi-primitive Flatwater
- Semi-primitive Free-flowing Flatwater
- Semi-primitive / Non-motorized
- Protected Resource Area
- Curecanti NRA Boundary
- Proposed NRA Boundary (as indicated in 2008 Resource Protection Study)



Map 7b. Revised General Management Plan Zones



**Management Legend**

- Developed
- Motorized Rural
- Flatwater
- Semi-primitive Flatwater
- Semi-primitive Free-flowing Flatwater
- Semi-primitive / Non-motorized
- Protected Resource Area
- Semi-primitive Motorized
- Curecanti NRA Boundary
- Proposed NRA Boundary (as indicated in 2008 Resource Protection Study)



## HOW ALTERNATIVES MEET OBJECTIVES

As stated in the “Purpose of and Need for Action” chapter, all action alternatives selected for analysis must meet all objectives to a large degree. The action alternatives must also address the stated purpose of taking action and resolve the need for action; therefore, the alternatives were individually assessed in light of how well they would meet the objectives for this plan/EA, which are stated in the “Purpose of and Need for Action” chapter. Alternatives that did not meet the objectives were not analyzed further (see the “Alternatives or Alternative Elements Considered but Not Carried Forward” section in this chapter).

Table 1 at the end of this chapter is a comparison of the elements of the alternatives. Table 2 at the end of this chapter compares how each of the alternatives described in this chapter would meet the plan objectives. The “Environmental Consequences” chapter describes the effects of each alternative on each impact topic. These impacts are summarized in “Table 3: Summary of Environmental Consequences” at the end of this chapter.

## ALTERNATIVES OR ALTERNATIVE ELEMENTS CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD

**Equipment Requirements:** The possibility of requiring motorized vehicles to carry items such as jacks, tow ropes, or shovels to reduce damage to soils when vehicles get stranded below the high water line was considered as a possible alternative element. It was determined that any soil damage resulting from extracting vehicles from the shoreline areas generally washes away when the water level rises. It was also determined that reduced tire pressure probably would not reduce the potential for vehicles getting stuck below the high water line. Therefore, establishing equipment requirements under this plan/EA was not carried forward for detailed analysis.

**Motorized Vehicle Permit System:** Implementing a permit system as an alternative element was considered to be a sound method of providing visitor education and managing potential visitor conflicts from overcrowding. It could also be used to help inform the recreation area’s managers on the level of motorized vehicle access within the park unit. However, this would preclude unplanned opportunities for visitors to pull off the road onto the beach to access appropriate recreational activities. The idea of establishing a “crowding threshold” was discussed, but the planning team felt that most of the crowding issues at particular areas of the recreation area were “self-limiting,” due to the size of these areas, availability of parking, and impacts on visitor experience. As a result, a permit system would require additional oversight that would not necessarily be needed to minimize potential conflicts, and would not enhance resource protection when compared to current management. Because a permit system provides no environmental benefit, it would be a substantial burden on park management and operations, and vehicle counts could be obtained by other methods, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration.

**Prohibit Motorized Vehicle Use off of Existing National Park Service Roads:** Prohibition of motorized vehicle use off of existing NPS roads would not meet the purpose, need, and objectives of this plan/EA. As described in the “Purpose of and Need for Action” chapter, this plan is intended to regulate motorized vehicle access in a manner consistent with applicable laws, but also to minimize impacts to park resources and values while providing access for other appropriate recreational opportunities. Prohibition, rather than management, of off-road motorized vehicle access could substantially diminish the opportunities for visitors to participate in other appropriate recreational opportunities.

In addition, Curecanti National Recreation Area is managed as a national recreation area to provide for public use and enjoyment while ensuring visitor safety, resource preservation, and the conservation of

scenic, natural, historic, archaeological, and wildlife values. Since at least the 1980s, compendium files show that the recreation area's superintendents have used discretionary authority to allow vehicle travel below the high water line of Blue Mesa Reservoir. Both the 1980 and 1997 general management plans for the recreation area also recognize off-road motorized vehicle use as a way to access recreational opportunities at the park unit. For example, the 1980 general management plan permits vehicular use of shoreline areas below high water line when discussing shoreline management, and also permits snowmobiling on the frozen surface of Blue Mesa Reservoir in the context of winter use (NPS 1980). The 1997 general management plan also allows for off-road motorized vehicle access in management zones such as the motorized rural and flatwater zones to provide varied visitor experiences and opportunities to engage in other forms of recreation (e.g., boating, fishing) (NPS 1997b). In addition, during development of the 2008 Resource Protection Study for Curecanti National Recreation Area, NPS staff identified off-road motorized vehicle use, including the use of snowmobiles as potential uses for the park unit.

Although the use of vehicles off of established roads has been known to cause erosion and damage to vegetation, recreation area staff has not documented any serious impacts to natural resources from allowing vehicle use in areas such as those below the high water line of Blue Mesa Reservoir. While alternatives in this plan/EA provide for closure to some areas for resource protection purposes, a total ban on motorized vehicles in the recreation area would be inconsistent with the purpose, need, and objectives of this plan, and because this is a use that is accounted for in recreation area plans and policies, this alternative was not carried forward for further analysis.

**Establishing a User Capacity for Motorized Vehicles:** The interdisciplinary team considered limiting the number of vehicles in particular areas to reduce the potential for vehicle-pedestrian conflicts and general overcrowding. Although certain popular areas suffer from crowding during some summer weekends, visitors usually spread themselves out when crowding becomes an issue. Due to the amount of available area around Blue Mesa Reservoir and the lack of documented vehicle-pedestrian conflicts, it was determined that establishing a user capacity would be extremely labor intensive without producing measurable results in visitor satisfaction or safety. Therefore, this element was considered but not carried forward.

**Alternative Access/Transportation:** Establishing alternative transportation was discussed as a method of reducing the number of vehicles below the high water line. Although this might be a viable method of access for park units with extreme levels of visitor use or those with highly sensitive natural resources, it was decided that developing an alternative transportation system at Curecanti National Recreation Area would not result in a perceptible benefit to natural or cultural resources and could actually result in adverse impacts to visitor experience. Therefore, this alternative element was considered but not carried forward.

**Open up the Power Line Road West of Cebolla to Public Snowmobile Use:** Allowing snowmobile access along the power line road would result in considerable visitor safety issues as the road is poorly defined in the wintertime. Designating a lengthy, somewhat remote corridor would be inconsistent with the existing snowmobile access routes, which are short and located directly off of main thoroughfares. Therefore, because snowmobile use along this power line road would be unsafe and inconsistent with the criteria used to designate existing snowmobile access points, this proposed alternative element was not incorporated into the alternatives.

**Limit Snowmobiles to the Frozen Surface of the Reservoir or Prohibit Snowmobiles Entirely:** Per 36 CFR 7.51c.2, snowmobiles are only permitted on the frozen surface of the reservoir or on designated access routes, as shown on a map on file in the superintendent's office. This plan does not propose to expand the use of snowmobiles outside of the frozen surface of the reservoir, but merely formalizes access to the reservoir by designating direct, linear routes from snowmobile access points to the frozen



surface. Creating or eliminating snowmobile use areas is not within the scope of this planning effort, and therefore this was not considered further. Creating or eliminating snowmobile use areas within current park boundaries is not within the scope of this planning effort, and therefore this was not considered further. However, if NPS acquires administration of BLM and USFS lands as outlined in the RPS, one existing snowmobile route in the Soap Creek area would fall under NPS administration. This short access route, which connects to other existing routes on adjacent land, would remain open should NPS acquire administration of this area.

**Enforce Seasonal Closures in Areas with Wet Soils:** Although the current range of alternatives does not include predetermined seasonal closures to address wet soils on motorized vehicle access routes, recreation area staff retains the authority to establish closures at any time should there be a threat to park resources and/or public safety. Also, per 36 CFR 4.10.c.2, law enforcement staff may issue citations for operating a motor vehicle in a manner that causes unreasonable damage to the surface of a park road or route. Therefore, this alternative element was not considered further.

**Develop a “Zone System” for Separating Different Types of Visitor Use below the High Water Line:** The interdisciplinary team considered establishing a zone system for separating visitor uses. However, the recreation area staff could not provide any documentation of serious visitor use conflicts that would necessitate separating one type of recreational use from another. In addition, the implementation of a reduced speed limit under the action alternatives would help to reduce the potential for conflicts between motorized vehicle use and pedestrian recreation surrounding the reservoir. Therefore, the development of a zone system was not carried forward as part of the alternatives.

**Provide Buffers around Sensitive Resource Areas (i.e., Gunnison sage-grouse leks, cultural, and paleontological sites):** Using buffers like those in the personal watercraft regulations was discussed as a possible resource protection measure for the motorized vehicle access plan. However, it was decided that adequate protection of resources could be provided under the action alternatives because resource areas would either be closed to vehicular use or are located in areas that are extremely difficult to access. Therefore, the use of resource protection buffers was not considered further in this plan/EA.

**Eliminate Extraneous Access Points (i.e., two adjacent points near Lake City Bridge on Rt. 149):** Eliminating some extraneous vehicular access points was suggested by the public during the public scoping process. However, the existing access points are not causing impacts to resources and often provide access to areas with popular recreational activities. There are also no documented safety issues associated with the current number of access points. Therefore, this alternative was not considered further in this plan/EA.

**Prohibit Recreational Driving below the High Water Line:** The NPS does not consider recreational driving as an appropriate use below the high water line. While the alternatives do not directly ban recreational driving, the action alternatives provide a reduced speed limit which essentially limits vehicular use below the high waterline to a mode of access and not a recreational activity in and of itself. Law enforcement staff has the authority to issue citations for unsafe operation of a vehicle under 36 CFR 4.22 if it is determined that the vehicle is being operated in a manner which could result in danger to visitors, property, or wildlife.

**Increase the Amount of Motorized Routes in the Area:** In addition to numerous recreational activities, the recreation area currently provides numerous opportunities for motorized travel/access off of park roads. The purpose and mission of the recreation area involve providing for public recreation use while conserving the scenic, natural, and cultural resources of the park unit. The NPS *Management Policies 2006* recognize that resource conservation takes precedence over visitor recreation. The policies state that “when there is a conflict between conserving resources and values and providing for enjoyment of them,

conservation is to be predominant.” In addition to an ample supply of recreational opportunities (both motorized and non-motorized), the recreation area contains a large number of cultural resource sites, scenic vistas, and sensitive natural resource areas. Construction of new routes for motorized recreation that could potentially impact any of these resources would be inconsistent with the purpose of the recreation area, NPS policy, and the *Organic Act*. Therefore increasing the amount of motorized access routes at Curecanti was not carried forward for further analysis in this plan/EA.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The NPS is required to identify the environmentally preferable alternative in its NEPA documents for public review and comment. Guidance from the CEQ states that the environmentally preferable alternative is “the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources” (CEQ 1981).

Although alternative B would result in the closure of more mileage to motorized vehicle access, alternative C would result in substantially less acreage below the high water line that would be open to vehicular use. The density of known cultural resource sites and the potential for as yet undiscovered cultural resources below the high water line further underscores the importance of protecting these areas. Given that routes above the high-water line do not receive an excessive amount of use, closing them to vehicular access would not provide as much resource protection as limiting the acreage below the high water line, as in alternative C. Alternative A was not selected as the environmentally preferable alternative because of the three alternatives, it allowed the most vehicular access which would result in a higher potential for resource damage. Therefore, the NPS identified alternative C as the environmentally preferable alternative, as it best protects resources below the high water line while also limiting the potential for natural resource damage above the high water line.

## NPS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

To identify the preferred alternative, the planning team evaluated each alternative based on its ability to meet the plan objectives (see table 2) and the potential impacts on the environment (in the “Environmental Consequences” chapter and summarized in table 3).



Existing “No Vehicle” Signage

Alternative C was identified as the NPS preferred alternative. This alternative fully meets all objectives of the plan, best retains traditional motorized vehicle access, and provides the highest level of protection for known and unknown cultural resources. Alternative B was not selected as the preferred alternative because it would not preserve traditional motorized access and would not protect cultural resources below the high water line to the extent that alternative C would. Alternative A was not selected as the preferred alternative because it did not meet the objectives to the degree that the action alternatives did. Alternatives B and C used specific criteria to designate



motorized vehicle access routes and areas, while alternative A relied almost exclusively on the protection of cultural and natural resources to determine where vehicles would not be allowed access. Although alternative A would provide protection for soils, vegetation, and wildlife, alternatives B and C include additional protection measures such as vehicle width limits, improved visitor education, reduced speed limits, and reduction of route mileage which would reduce impacts to these resources. Paleontological and cultural resources would also receive greater protection under the action alternatives because of vehicle width requirements and closure of routes and areas. Alternatives B and C would also provide improvements to visitor experience, additional signage, an improved education and outreach program, and an increase in the number of snowmobile access points. All alternatives would provide for visitor safety, but the action alternatives would meet these objectives to a higher degree through the implementation of reduced speed limits, expanded education and outreach efforts, and recommendations for four-wheel-drive vehicles in areas where the condition of the route would present a safety or environmental issue. All of the alternatives would meet the recreation area operations and management objectives as the implementation costs would not differ substantially and none of the alternatives would impact access for adjacent landowners and agencies.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE ELEMENTS**

<b>Management Activity</b>	<b>Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan</b>	<b>Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan</b>
Designated Vehicle Routes and Areas	Motorized vehicle use within Curecanti would be allowed except where an area is designated closed, including routes and areas above and below the high water line of Blue Mesa Reservoir. Maps 4a and 4b show which areas would be open or closed to motorized vehicle access.	Motorized vehicle use within the recreation area would be allowed only in areas designated as open, including routes and areas above and below the high water line of Blue Mesa Reservoir. Routes and areas zoned as Semi-Primitive / Non-Motorized zone in the 1997 general management plan would be closed. Maps 5a and 5b show which areas would be open or closed to motorized vehicle access.	Same as alternative B, except routes and areas zoned as Semi-Primitive / Non-Motorized in the 1997 general management plan could remain open if located within the new Semi-Primitive/Motorized zone. Maps 6a and 6b show which areas would be open or closed to motorized vehicle access.
Snowmobile Use and Designated Access Routes	Based on the existing rule for snowmobiles (36 CFR 7.51c), snowmobiles would be permitted to operate within the boundaries of Curecanti National Recreation Area provided that their use is confined to the frozen surface of Blue Mesa Reservoir and designated access routes. A traditional access route on USFS lands acquired under RPS would be preserved to allow connection to existing adjacent routes. Designated access points for the frozen surface of Blue Mesa Reservoir are shown on maps 4a and 4b.	Same as alternative A, but routes would be designated from snowmobile access points to the frozen surface of Blue Mesa Reservoir. These routes would be considered the most direct route from the access points to the frozen surface. Two new snowmobile access points would be formalized: one at the Lake Fork Visitor Center boat ramp and one on the southeast shore of Lola Basin near Willow Creek.  Designated access points for the frozen surface of Blue Mesa Reservoir are shown on maps 5a and 5b.	Same as alternative B, except that an additional snowmobile access point would be provided near McIntyre Gulch. Designated access points for the frozen surface of Blue Mesa Reservoir are shown on maps 6a and 6b.
Motorized Vehicle Access Points for Areas below the High Water Line of Blue Mesa Reservoir (Land-based)	Access to areas below the high water line would be primarily from maintained roads although a few areas of non-maintained access exist. Maps 4a and 4b show which areas would be open or closed to motorized vehicle access.	Access to areas below the high water line would only be from routes and areas designated as open. Access points in areas zoned as Semi-Primitive / Non-Motorized would be closed. Maps 5a and 5b in this plan/EA show the motorized vehicle access points.	Same as alternative B, except access points in areas zoned as Semi-Primitive/Non-Motorized in the 1997 general management plan could be opened if located within the new Semi-Primitive/Motorized zone. Maps 6a and 6b in this plan/EA show the motorized vehicle access points.



Management Activity	Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan
Approximate Mileage of Routes Open to Public Motorized Vehicle Access (includes approximately 4.9 miles of routes on BLM/USFS lands to be transferred to NPS upon approval of the 2008 Resource Protection Study)	61 miles	14 miles	29 miles
Acreage below High Water Line at Blue Mesa Reservoir Open to Public Motorized Vehicle Access	8,239 acres, of which 7,280 are open but not traditionally used because of access limitations caused by terrain or reservoir levels.	Same as alternative A.	958 acres (Note: this alternative preserves the areas traditionally used under alternative A, but closes those areas not traditionally used because of access limitations caused by terrain or reservoir levels.)
Vehicle Requirements	<p>Colorado Department of Transportation road regulations would apply to motorized vehicles in the park unit. Snowmobiles would be permitted to operate within the boundaries of Curecanti National Recreation Area provided that</p> <p>The operators and machines conform to the laws and regulations governing the use of snowmobiles as stated in 36 CFR 7.51 and those applicable to snowmobile use promulgated by the state of Colorado where they prove to be more stringent or restrictive than those of the Department of the Interior.</p> <p>Snowmobile gross weight would be limited to a maximum of 1,200 pounds (machine and cargo) unless prior permission is granted by the superintendent (36 CFR 7.51).</p>	<p>Same as alternative A, plus:</p> <p>implement maximum wheel width (track) requirement of 810 feet 6 inches for public vehicles</p> <p>NPS may recommend, but not require, four-wheel-drive and/or high-clearance vehicles on particular routes above the high water line based on safety and route conditions.</p> <p>Limit all vehicles on the frozen surface to 1,200 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW). Exception: Vehicles exceeding 1,200 pounds GVW, but not exceeding 1,800 pounds GVW may be permitted on the frozen surface by special use permit.</p>	Same as alternative B.

Management Activity	Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan
Speed Limits	Snowmobiles: 45 miles per hour (mph) (36 CFR 2.18d.4) Other motorized vehicles: No speed limits on designated routes and areas above or below the high water line or on the frozen surface of Blue Mesa Reservoir	Snowmobiles: 45 mph (36 CFR 2.18d.4) Other motorized vehicles: On designated routes and areas above the high water line: 15 mph unless posted otherwise On designated routes and areas below the high water line and on the frozen surface of the reservoir: 15 mph	Same as alternative B.
Motorized Vehicle Closures	Per the Superintendent's Compendium, the following areas would be closed to vehicle travel as indicated by carsonite markers: Dry Creek, from boat ramp west along shoreline at the approximate 7,500-foot elevation mark Two track along north side of highway from MP 144 to Rainbow Lake Road Two track on Sometime Island Two track access above high water line from Old Stevens Travel from North Willow restroom east to next drainage From South Willow west to Iola Along shoreline of Dillon Pinnacles where marked (during low water) Barricaded access from Hwy 149 to south shore Barricaded access from Soap Creek road to shore Maps 4a and 4b show which areas would be open or closed to motorized vehicle access. Per the interim management plan, closures would be implemented if and when testing reveals a potential for disturbance of cultural resources from ORV travel.	All routes and areas not officially designated as open would be closed to motorized vehicle access. This includes, but is not limited to: Routes/areas within the Semi-Primitive/Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Flatwater, or Protected Resource Areas zones defined in the 1997 general management plan Dry Creek, from boat ramp west along the shoreline at the approximate 7,500-foot elevation mark Two track on Sometime Island Travel from the North Willow restroom east to the next drainage From South Willow west to Iola Maps 5a and 5b show which areas would be open or closed to motorized vehicle access.	All routes and areas not officially designated as open would be closed to motorized vehicle access. This includes, but is not limited to: Areas not traditionally used below the high water line of Blue Mesa Reservoir Dry Creek, from boat ramp west along the shoreline at the approximate 7,500-foot elevation mark Two track on Sometime Island Travel from the North Willow restroom east to the next drainage From South Willow west to Iola Maps 6a and 6b in this plan/EA show which areas would be open or closed to motorized vehicle access.



Management Activity	Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)	Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan
Education/Outreach Component (includes signage, brochures, etc.)	Per the interim management plan, during the main visitor use season, interpretive staff would provide visitors with motorized vehicle access information and restrictions during roving contacts, visitor center contacts, interpretive programs, press releases, and on the recreation area website.	Same as alternative A, plus: Provide education about driving below high water and how to avoid getting stuck, and how to dig out without causing major soil damage. Additional signage, bulletin boards, marking, speed limits, details of the new plan on the recreation area website, and in press releases. Provide postings about four-wheel-drive and high-clearance vehicle recommendations. Invasive species education – reduce spread through education (staying on routes, recognizing that seeds can spread on vehicles tires). All prescriptions for visitor education/interpretation in the 1997 general management plan would be applied.	Same as alternative B.
Approximate Total Cost for Implementation	\$63,623	\$198,422	\$158,628

**TABLE 2: HOW ALTERNATIVES MEET OBJECTIVES**

	<b>Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan</b>	<b>Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan</b>
<b>Management Methodology</b>			
Identify criteria to designate motorized vehicle access areas and routes.	Fully meets objective: In accordance with interim OHV management plan, motorized vehicle access and routes and areas have been designated based on sensitive cultural and natural resources.	Fully meets objective: In addition to applying the existing management prescriptions from the 1997 general management plan, recreation area staff formalized a list of criteria that took into consideration: Consistency with the park's purpose Unacceptable resource impacts Visitor and employee safety Impact on future generations Existing plans for public use and resource management Existing park programs or activities, or appropriate uses Enforcement issues	Fully meets objective: The criteria used were the same as those under alternative B, and an amendment to the general management plan would be required to allow for motorized access in areas traditionally used above the high water line of Blue Mesa Reservoir.
<b>Soils</b>			
Minimize impacts of motorized vehicle access on soil erosion and compaction.	Partially meets objective: The interim OHV plan considered soils, but did not result in closures for soils or erosion reasons.	Fully meets objective: Maximum vehicle width would minimize soil compaction outside of existing route footprints. Visitor education on driving below high water would reduce instances of stranding and soil damage. Lower speed limits would reduce erosion and dust caused by vehicles. NPS recommendations on what routes to avoid and use of four-wheel drive vehicles would reduce erosion on routes. The 1997 general management plan management prescriptions and zones considered impacts to soils and erosion impacts. Reduction of route mileage would result in reduced impacts to soils in these areas.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.



	<b>Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan</b>	<b>Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan</b>
<b>Vegetation</b>			
Minimize adverse impacts to native plant species related to motorized vehicle access.	Partially meets objective: The interim OHV plan considered vegetation, but did not result in closures based on impacts to vegetation.	Fully meets objective: Maximum vehicle width would minimize vegetation damage outside of existing route footprints. NPS recommendations on what routes to avoid and use of four-wheel drive vehicles would reduce potential for vegetation damage. The 1997 general management plan management prescriptions and zones considered impacts to vegetation. Reduction of route mileage would result in reduced impacts to vegetation in these areas.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.
Minimize the potential introduction or spread of non-native plant species.	Fully meets objective: Monitoring and management of weeds on existing routes and areas, as well as closures, minimize the potential introduction and spread of non-native plants.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative A, plus education regarding the introduction and spread of invasive species associated with motorized vehicle access. Additional closures would minimize potential introduction of non-native species in these areas.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.
<b>Wildlife</b>			
Minimize impacts to native wildlife and their habitats related to motorized vehicle access.	Fully meets objective: Monitoring and management of weeds on existing routes and areas would reduce impacts on wildlife habitat. Resource closures would limit potential for introduction of non-native species in these areas.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative A, plus education regarding the introduction and spread of invasive species associated with motorized vehicle access. Reduced speed limits would result in reduced potential for vehicle-wildlife collisions. Limits on vehicle width would reduce impacts to wildlife habitat adjacent to vehicle routes.  Additional closures would minimize potential impacts along with implementing general management plan zones which consider wildlife in management prescriptions. Establishment of new snowmobile access points would reduce travel around the reservoir and reduce potential disturbances to wildlife.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.

	<b>Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan</b>	<b>Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan</b>
<b>Species of Special Concern</b>			
Provide protection for threatened, endangered, and other protected species (e.g., state-listed species) and their habitats.	Fully meets objective: Monitoring and management of weeds on existing routes and areas would reduce impacts on habitat for species of special concern. Resource closures would limit potential for disturbance to species of special concern using those areas.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative A, plus education regarding the introduction and spread of invasive species associated with motorized vehicle access. Reduced speed limits would result in reduced potential for vehicle-wildlife collisions. Limits on vehicle width would reduce impacts to habitat for species of special concern adjacent to vehicle routes.  Additional closures areas would minimize potential impacts along with implementing general management plan zones which consider species of special concern in management prescriptions. Establishment of new snowmobile access points would reduce travel around the reservoir and reduce potential disturbances to wildlife.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.
<b>Paleontological Resources</b>			
Protect known localities of paleontological resources from adverse impacts related to motorized vehicle access.	Fully meets objective: Paleontological resources are identified and protected through the establishment of closures.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative A, plus maximum vehicle width would minimize impacts to resources outside of existing route footprints. Additional closures would result in reduced potential for impacts to undocumented paleontological resources.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.
<b>Cultural Resources</b>			
Protect cultural resources, such as prehistoric and historic archeological sites and cultural landscapes, from adverse impacts related to motorized vehicle access.	Fully meets objective: Cultural resources are identified and protected through the establishment of closures.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative A, plus maximum vehicle width would minimize impacts to resources outside of existing route footprints. Additional closures areas would result in reduced potential for impacts to undocumented cultural resources.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.



	<b>Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan</b>	<b>Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan</b>
<b>Visitor Use and Experience</b>			
Manage motorized vehicle access for appropriate recreational opportunities.	Partially meets objective: The interim OHV plan managed vehicular access for recreation, but not in a formal, comprehensive manner.	Fully meets objective: The implementation of a formalized motorized vehicle access management plan and a more systematic review (including public input) of open routes and areas would ensure access to appropriate recreational opportunities. Establishment of additional snowmobile access points would increase recreational access. However, the 1997 general management plan would restrict recreational access in certain areas.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B although amending the 1997 general management plan would provide more public access than alternative B.
Ensure that motorized vehicle operators are informed about the rules and regulations regarding motorized vehicle access and use at the recreation area.	Fully meets objective: During the main visitor use season, interpretive staff would provide visitors with motorized vehicle access information and restrictions during roving contacts, visitor center contacts, interpretive programs, press releases, and on the recreation area website. These measures ensure that visitors are informed about motorized vehicle regulations.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative A, plus expanded education and outreach initiatives including additional signage and posting of details of the formalized motorized vehicle access management plan.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.
<b>Visitor and Employee Safety</b>			
Ensure that management of motorized vehicle access promotes the safety of all visitors and employees.	Fully meets objective: Safety closures established in the Superintendent's Compendium, limitations on the gross weight for snowmobiles on frozen surface of the reservoir and education / outreach efforts promote the safety of visitors and employees.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative A, plus reduced speed limits, expanded education and outreach efforts, and recommendations for four-wheel-drive high clearance vehicles on certain routes would improve visitor safety.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.

	<b>Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan</b>	<b>Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan</b>
<b>Recreation Area Operations and Management</b>			
Consult with adjacent landowners regarding management of motorized vehicle access.	Partially meets objective: the interim OHV management plan was more resource-based and formal consultation was not preformed.	Fully meets objective: The recreation area conducted agency scoping meetings in preparation of a formalized plan to ensure consistency with BLM/USFS plans. NPS conducted public scoping meetings to gather input on access routes used by adjacent landowners.	Fully meets objective: Same as alternative B.
Prevent impacts to the works and facilities of the Aspinall Unit, including dams, power plants, transmission lines, and access roads from motorized vehicle access.	Fully meets objective: None of the alternatives would impact the operational needs of facilities of the Aspinall Unit. In addition, agency scoping meetings were conducted under alternatives B and C in preparation of a formalized vehicle management plan to ensure consistency with BLM/USFS plans.		

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

	<b>Alternative A: No Action (Continuation of Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B: Designate Motorized Vehicle Access Consistent with the 1997 General Management Plan</b>	<b>Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate Motorized Vehicle Access and Amend the 1997 General Management Plan</b>
Archeological Resources	Localized long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts on archeological resources could result from implementation of alternative A. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the minor impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in long-term, minor to moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on archeological resources. Direct impacts to archeological resources could occur if motorized vehicles drive over and/or near archeological sites. Alternative A would result in potential impacts to 27 prehistoric or historical archeological resources along or near open routes and areas. However, there would be no impairment of archeological resources under alternative A because impacts, including cumulative effects, would only affect some archeological resources, but spread over a large area. While these impacts may be noticeable in some places, there would be no change to the cultural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	Although there could be localized, long-term, minor adverse effects on archeological resources along open routes and areas, there would also be long-term beneficial effects as a result of closing 47 miles of motorized vehicle access routes. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative B, would result in long-term, minor to moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on archeological resources. Direct impacts to archeological resources could occur if motorized vehicles drive over and/or near archeological sites. Alternative B would result in potential impacts to four archeological resources within the Curecanti Archeological District and one site at the Dickerson Pit along or near open routes and areas. Three sites would suffer long-term minor adverse impacts from continued use of the route; two sites would see reduced adverse impacts (i.e., long-term minor beneficial impacts) as a result of partial closure of routes. However, there would be no impairment of archeological resources under alternative B because impacts, including cumulative effects, would only affect some archeological resources, but over a relatively large area. There would be no change to the cultural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	Although there could be localized, long-term, negligible adverse effects on archeological resources along open routes and areas, there would also be long-term beneficial effects as a result of closing 32 miles of motorized vehicle access routes. Closing 7,280 acres below the high water line that are not traditionally used would not affect archeological resources because no known sites are located in this area. Past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the long-term minor adverse and long-term minor beneficial impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative C, would result in minor to moderate adverse cumulative impacts on archeological resources. Direct impacts to archeological resources could occur if motorized vehicles drive over and/or near archeological sites. Alternative C would result in potential impacts to eight sites within the Curecanti Archeological District, and one site at the Dickerson Pit along or near open routes and areas. Six sites would suffer long-term minor adverse impacts from continued use of the route; two sites would see reduced adverse impacts (i.e., long-term minor beneficial impacts) as a result of partial closure of routes. However, there would be no impairment of archeological resources under alternative B because impacts, including cumulative effects, would only affect some archeological resources, but over a relatively large area. There would be no change to the cultural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.



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Historic Structures and Districts	Localized long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on historic structures and districts could result from implementation of alternative A. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the negligible impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in long-term, negligible adverse cumulative impacts on historic structures and districts. There would be no impairment of historic structures and districts under alternative A because impacts, including cumulative effects, would be barely measurable, with no perceptible consequences to historic structures. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	Localized long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on historic structures and districts could result from implementation of alternative B. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the negligible impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative B would result in long-term, negligible adverse cumulative impacts on historic structures and districts. There would be no impairment of historic structures and districts under alternative B because impacts, including cumulative effects, would be barely measurable, with no perceptible consequences to historic structures. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	Localized long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on historic structures and districts could result from implementation of alternative C. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the negligible impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative C would result in long-term, negligible adverse cumulative impacts on historic structures and districts. There would be no impairment of historic structures and districts under alternative C because impacts, including cumulative effects, would be barely measurable, with no perceptible consequences to historic structures. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.
Cultural Landscapes	Localized long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on cultural landscapes could result from implementation of alternative A. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the negligible impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in long-term, negligible adverse cumulative impacts on cultural landscapes. There would be no impairment of cultural landscapes under alternative A because impacts, including cumulative effects, would be at the lowest levels of detection with	Localized long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on cultural landscapes could result from implementation of alternative B. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the negligible impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative B, would result in long-term, negligible adverse cumulative impacts on cultural landscapes. There would be no impairment of cultural landscapes under alternative B, because impacts, including cumulative effects, would be at the lowest levels of detection with neither adverse nor beneficial consequences. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation	Localized long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on cultural landscapes could result from implementation of alternative C. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the negligible impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative C, would result in long-term, negligible adverse cumulative impacts on cultural landscapes. There would be no impairment of cultural landscapes under alternative C because impacts, including cumulative effects, would be at the lowest levels of detection with neither adverse nor beneficial consequences. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation

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	neither adverse nor beneficial consequences. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.
Section 106 Assessment of Effect	In accordance with Section 106 of the <i>National Historic Preservation Act</i> , potential adverse impacts (as defined in 36 CFR 800) on archeological resources, historic structures and districts, and cultural landscapes listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places would be coordinated between the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Officer to determine the level of effect on the property and to determine any necessary mitigation measures. Continuing implementation of the Cultural Resource Management Guideline (NPS 1997b) and adherence to NPS <i>Management Policies 2006</i> (NPS 2006b) and the 2008 Servicewide programmatic agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NPS 2008e) would all aid in reducing the potential to adversely impact historic properties.		
Visitor Use and Experience	Long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on visitor use and experience could result from implementation of alternative A. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the long-term, negligible, adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in short- and long-term beneficial cumulative impacts on visitor use and experience.	Long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts on visitor use and experience could result from implementation of alternative B for some users. However, there would also be long-term beneficial effects for users seeking opportunities for quiet and solitude. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area would result in short- and long-term beneficial cumulative impacts when combined with alternative B.	Long-term minor adverse impacts on visitor use and experience could result from implementation of alternative C for some users. However, there would also be long-term beneficial effects for users seeking opportunities for quiet and solitude. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area would result in short- and long-term beneficial cumulative impacts when combined with alternative C.
Vegetation	Short- and long-term minor adverse effects on vegetation could occur as a result of localized impacts including damage to plants; erosion that can cause further loss of vegetation; impacts on soil productivity that can affect natural recovery; and the potential introduction or spread of non-native plants. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short-	Localized, short- and long-term, negligible to minor adverse impacts on vegetation could occur in areas open to motorized vehicle access. The impacts would occur in fewer vegetation types, as approximately 47 miles of motorized vehicle access routes would be closed as compared to alternative A (access below the high water line at Blue Mesa Reservoir would remain the same). These closed routes would be allowed to recover or would be rehabilitated if funding is available. As a result, there would be long-term beneficial	Localized, short- and long-term, negligible to minor adverse impacts on vegetation could occur in areas open to motorized vehicles. The impacts would occur in fewer vegetation types, as 32 miles of motorized vehicle access routes would be closed as compared to alternative A. These closed areas would be allowed to recover or would be rehabilitated if funding is available. In addition, although these areas are not traditionally used, closing 7,280 acres below the high water line at Blue Mesa Reservoir would remove the potential for impacts to vegetation

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	and long-term minor adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in short- and long-term, moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on vegetation. There would be no impairment of vegetation under alternative A, because impacts, including cumulative effects, would not have considerable effects on native plant populations over a large area. Impacts would be localized and would not affect overall population numbers or ecological or biological processes to the point that viability and stability of the plant communities would be compromised. Motorized vehicle access below the high water line has the potential to cause damage and loss of herbaceous plants but recovery would occur by the next growing season as a result of the periodic inundation of the area as the reservoir fills. Damaged vegetation above the high water line would take more time to recover from motorized vehicle travel off designated routes, whether intentional or not. Overall, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established, or other resource management goals.	impacts to vegetation associated with closed routes. Establishing and enforcing vehicle track width requirements and educating visitors about driving below the high water line would contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short- and long-term negligible to minor adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative B, would result in short- and long-term, moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on vegetation. There would be no impairment of vegetation under alternative B, because impacts, including cumulative effects, would not have considerable effects on native plant populations over a large area. Impacts would be localized and would not affect overall population numbers or ecological or biological processes to the point that viability and stability of the plant communities would be compromised. Motorized vehicle access below the high water line has the potential to cause damage and loss of herbaceous plants but recovery would occur by the next growing season as a result of the periodic inundation of the area as the reservoir fills. Damaged vegetation above the high water line would take more time to recover from motorized vehicle travel off designated routes, whether intentional or not. Overall, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established, or other resource management goals.	from motorized vehicle access in these areas. As a result, there would be long-term beneficial impacts to vegetation associated with closed routes and areas. Establishing and enforcing vehicle track width requirements and educating visitors about driving below the high water line would contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short- and long-term negligible to minor adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative C, would result in short- and long-term, moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on vegetation. There would be no impairment of vegetation under alternative C, because impacts, including cumulative effects, would not have considerable effects on native plant populations over a large area. Impacts would be localized and would not affect overall population numbers or ecological or biological processes to the point that viability and stability of the plant communities would be compromised. Motorized vehicle access below the high water line has the potential to cause damage and loss of herbaceous plants but recovery would occur by the next growing season as a result of the periodic inundation of the area as the reservoir fills. Damaged vegetation above the high water line would take more time to recover from motorized vehicle travel off designated routes, whether intentional or not. Overall, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established, or other resource management goals.



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Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat	<p>Localized, short- and long-term, minor adverse impacts on wildlife could result from species disturbance and displacement, habitat damage and fragmentation, and species mortality. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short- and long-term minor adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in short- and long-term minor to moderate cumulative impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat. There would be no impairment of wildlife or habitat under alternative A because species populations would most likely recover from impacts in less than a year, although it could take longer for impacted habitat to recover. Locally, along open routes and areas, habitat fragmentation would continue to be apparent and species mortality could occur, but overall, populations would remain stable in the recreation area. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of wildlife in the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>	<p>Localized, short- and long-term, negligible to minor adverse impacts on wildlife and habitat could occur in areas open to motorized vehicles, but the impacts would occur in fewer areas, as approximately 47 miles of motorized vehicle access routes would be closed as compared to alternative A (access below the high water line at Blue Mesa Reservoir would remain the same). In addition, there would be long-term beneficial impacts to wildlife and habitat along the closed routes, which would be allowed to recover or would be rehabilitated if funding is available. Establishing and enforcing rules regarding motorized vehicle use and educating visitors would contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short- and long-term negligible to minor adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative B, would result in short- and long-term, minor to moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on wildlife. There would be no impairment of wildlife or habitat under alternative B because species populations would most likely recover from impacts in less than a year, although it could take longer for impacted habitat to recover. Locally, along open routes and areas, habitat fragmentation would continue to be apparent and species mortality could occur, but overall, populations would remain stable in the recreation area. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of wildlife in the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>	<p>Localized, short- and long-term, minor to moderate adverse impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat could occur in areas open to motorized vehicles. The impacts would occur in fewer areas, as 32 miles of motorized vehicle access routes would be closed as compared to alternative A. In addition, 7,280 acres below the high water line at Blue Mesa Reservoir not traditionally used because of difficult access would be officially closed to motorized vehicles. Consequently, there would be long-term beneficial impacts to wildlife and habitat along the closed routes, which would be allowed to recover or would be rehabilitated if funding is available. This would contribute to beneficial impacts by reducing habitat fragmentation. Establishing and enforcing rules regarding motorized vehicle use and educating visitors would also contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short- and long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative C, would result in short- and long-term, minor to moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat. There would be no impairment of wildlife or habitat under alternative C because species populations would most likely recover from impacts in less than a year, although it could take longer for impacted habitat to recover. Locally, along open routes and areas, habitat fragmentation would continue to be apparent and species mortality could occur, but overall, populations would remain stable in the recreation area. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of wildlife in the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park</p>

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			unit was established or other resource management goals.
Species of Special Concern	<p>Long-term, minor to moderate adverse effects on species of special concern could occur as a result of localized impacts including disturbance, displacement, or injury/mortality of Gunnison sage-grouse; damage to/loss of adobe thistle plants; and impacts to habitat. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the long-term, minor to moderate adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in long-term, moderate adverse cumulative impacts on species of special concern. There would be no impairment of species of special concern under alternative A because impacts, including cumulative effects, would affect a relatively small percentage of the species population. Localized impacts to Gunnison sage-grouse and adobe thistle would occur along open routes and areas and could result in disturbance, injury, or mortality from direct vehicle impact, or habitat modification. However, populations of species of special concern would remain viable in the recreation area. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>	<p>Localized, long-term, minor to moderate adverse effects on species of special concern could occur along routes designated as open. There would also be long-term beneficial effects to Gunnison sage-grouse and adobe thistle plants as a result of closing approximately 47 miles of motorized vehicle access routes. Recovery or rehabilitation of closed routes, as well as establishing and enforcing vehicle width requirements, would contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the impacts from under alternative B, would result in long-term, moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on species of special concern. There would be no impairment of species of special concern under alternative B because impacts, including cumulative effects, would affect a relatively small percentage of the species population. Localized impacts to Gunnison sage-grouse and adobe thistle would occur along open routes and areas and could result in disturbance, injury, or mortality from direct vehicle impact, or habitat modification. However, populations of species of special concern would remain viable in the recreation area. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>	<p>Although long-term, minor to moderate adverse effects on species of special concern could occur along routes designated as open, there would also be long-term beneficial effects to Gunnison sage-grouse and adobe thistle plants as a result of closing 32 miles of motorized vehicle access routes, as well as 7,280 acres below the high water line of Blue Mesa Reservoir. Recovery or rehabilitation of closed routes, as well as establishing and enforcing vehicle width requirements, would contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the impacts under alternative C, would result in long-term, moderate adverse cumulative impacts on species of special concern. There would be no impairment of species of special concern under alternative C because impacts, including cumulative effects, would affect a relatively small percentage of the species population. Localized impacts to Gunnison sage-grouse and adobe thistle would occur along open routes and areas and could result in disturbance, injury, or mortality from direct vehicle impact, or habitat modification. However, populations of species of special concern would remain viable in the recreation area. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>

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Soils	<p>Short- and long-term, moderate, adverse, generally localized impacts on soils could result from soil compaction and erosion; loss of fertility and productivity; and loss of biological soil crusts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short- and long-term, moderate, adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in short- and long-term, moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on soil. Motorized vehicle use under alternative A would result in soil compaction, erosion, and potential loss of biological soil crusts, especially if vehicles travel off established routes/areas. Although there would be readily apparent measurable disturbance to soils, there would be no impairment under alternative A because impacts would be localized around existing routes and would not be severe in nature. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>	<p>Impacts to soils would be short term and long term, moderate, and generally localized in areas open to motorized vehicle access. The impacts would occur in fewer areas, as approximately 47 miles of motorized vehicle access routes would be closed as compared to alternative A (access below the high water line at Blue Mesa Reservoir would remain the same). In addition, there would be long-term beneficial impacts to soils along the closed routes, which would be allowed to recover or would be rehabilitated if funding is available. Establishing and enforcing vehicle width requirements and educating visitors about driving below the high water line would contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the short- and long-term, moderate, adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative B, would result in short- and long-term, moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on soil. Motorized vehicle use under alternative B would result in soil compaction, erosion, and potential loss of biological soil crusts, especially if vehicles travel off established routes/areas. Although there would be readily apparent measurable disturbance to soils, there would be no impairment under alternative A because impacts would be localized around existing routes and would not be severe in nature. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>	<p>Impacts to soils would be short term and long term, moderate, and generally localized to areas open to motorized vehicle access. The impacts would occur in fewer areas, as 32 miles of motorized vehicle access routes would be closed as compared to alternative A. In addition, 7,280 acres below the high water line at Blue Mesa Reservoir not traditionally used because of difficult access would be officially closed to motorized vehicles. Consequently, there would be long-term beneficial impacts to soils along the closed routes, which would be allowed to recover or would be rehabilitated if funding is available. Establishing and enforcing vehicle width requirements and educating visitors about driving below the high water line would contribute to these beneficial impacts. Past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the localized short- and long-term, moderate, adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative C, would result in short- and long-term, moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on soils. Motorized vehicle use under alternative C would result in soil compaction, erosion, and potential loss of biological soil crusts, especially if vehicles travel off established routes/areas. Although there would be readily apparent measurable disturbance to soils, there would be no impairment under alternative A because impacts would be localized around existing routes and would not be severe in nature. Consequently, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park unit was established or other resource management goals.</p>



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Paleontological Resources	Localized long-term, minor, adverse impacts on paleontological resources could result from implementation of alternative A. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the minor impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative A, would result in long-term, minor to moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on paleontological resources. Direct impacts to paleontological resources could occur if motorized vehicles drive over and/or near paleontological sites. Therefore, some fossils could be lost due to a medium probability of impact from ground-disturbing activities associated with motorized vehicle access. Although impacts would be noticeable, there would be no impairment of paleontological resources under alternative A because impacts, including cumulative effects, would only affect a limited number of fossils, if any, and would not substantially change the character of the resource. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	Although there could be localized, long-term, minor adverse effects on paleontological resources along open routes and areas, there would also be long-term beneficial effects as a result of closing approximately 47 miles of motorized vehicle access routes. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative B, would result in long-term, minor to moderate, adverse cumulative impacts on paleontological resources. Direct impacts to paleontological resources could occur if motorized vehicles drive over and/or near paleontological sites. Therefore, some fossils could be lost due to a medium probability of impact from ground-disturbing activities associated with motorized vehicle access. Although impacts would be noticeable, there would be no impairment of paleontological resources under alternative B because impacts, including cumulative effects, would only affect a limited number of fossils, if any, and would not substantially change the character of the resource. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.	Although there could be localized, long-term, negligible adverse effects on paleontological resources along open routes and areas, there would also be long-term beneficial effects as a result of closing 32 miles of motorized vehicle access routes. Closing 7,280 acres below the high water line that are not traditionally used would not affect paleontological resources because none are located in this area. Past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future activities both inside and outside the recreation area, when combined with the localized, negligible, adverse impacts from continued motorized vehicle use under alternative C, would result in minor to moderate adverse cumulative impacts on paleontological resources. Direct impacts to paleontological resources could occur if motorized vehicles drive over and/or near paleontological sites. Therefore, some fossils could be lost due to a medium probability of impact from ground-disturbing activities associated with motorized vehicle access. Although impacts would be noticeable, there would be no impairment of paleontological resources under alternative C because impacts, including cumulative effects, would only affect a limited number of fossils, if any, and would not substantially change the character of the resource. As a result, there would be no change to the natural integrity of the recreation area during the life of this plan, and the NPS would not be precluded from fulfilling either the purposes for which the park was established or other resource management goals.

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Recreation Area Management and Operations / Agency Coordination	Existing staffing and funding levels would be sufficient to continue the implementation of current motorized vehicle management practices, if formalized through the selection of alternative A. The total approximate cost of implementing alternative A would be \$63,623. Implementation of alternative A would result in long-term, negligible to minor impacts to recreation area management and operations. Past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions, when combined with the impacts of implementing alternative A, would result in long-term, minor, adverse impacts to recreation area management and operations.	Implementation of alternative B would require additional efforts from park staff and would necessitate creating one new position in the Resource and Visitor Protection Division to enforce the route closures associated with this alternative. The total approximate cost of implementing alternative B would be \$198,422. Implementation of alternative B would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to recreation area management and operations. Past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions, when combined with the impacts of implementing alternative B, would result in long term minor adverse impacts to recreation area management and operations.	Existing staffing levels would be sufficient to implement alternative C although it would require additional efforts from park staff. The total approximate cost of implementing alternative C would be \$158,628. Implementation of alternative C would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to recreation area management and operations. Past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions, when combined with the impacts of implementing alternative C, would result in long-term minor adverse impacts to recreation area management and operations.

